

**CRITICAL THEORY AND SCHOOL  
GOVERNANCE: ADVANCING AN  
ARGUMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC  
CITIZENSHIP**

**FARIED ADAMS**

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**Promotor: Professor Yusef Waghid**

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# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

**SIGNATURE:** .....

**FARIED ADAMS**

**DATE:** .....

## **ABSTRACT**

In this dissertation I critically explore school governance in relation to a liberal conception of deliberative democracy incorporating an argument for democratic citizenship. The notion of decentralisation and representative democracy informed collective decision making with the advent of South Africa's constitutional democracy. This emphasis on participatory democracy aims to enhance nation building/citizenship as South Africa endeavours to sever its ties with its Apartheid past. Entrenched in the practice of representative democracy particularly in the context of schools is educational governance implemented through School Governing Bodies (SGBs). I argue that the legitimate learner and parent voices seem to be excluded from SGB practices – a notion which reinforces the presence of weak democratic practices.

My concern is that SGBs in disadvantaged communities do not necessarily adhere to the tenets of democracy as accentuated in the Constitution of South Africa, incorporating the Bill of Rights and the South African Schools Act (SASA of 1996). A weak form of democratic practice seems to manifest itself when the SASA and the implementation thereof are inconsistent with each other, resulting in school governance practices operating in a manner contrary to what the Act purports. The promotion of democracy customarily involves protecting the legitimate (individual and community) interests of all. It is in this context that this dissertation attempts to find a route towards stronger democratic practices, therefore endorsing some of the principles of the South African Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the SASA. I argue that SGB practices seem to undermine these legitimate interests thus posing a dilemma for democracy. In addition current SGBs do not seemingly establish conditions according to which deliberative democratic practices can be achieved. And, unless SGBs also connect deliberative practices with citizenship as well as to “experiencing what is Other”, it would remain weakly democratic. For deliberative practices to happen I propose that conditions ought to be established whereby reasonableness and the incorporation of “the

Other”, that is, learners and parents need to be included through pedagogic attentiveness – what can epistemologically referred to as “witnessing the “unknowability of the Other”, can counter such a weak democracy. In other words by including the marginalised voices that are seemingly excluded from SGBs, the potential to move towards strong democratic practices shall be enhanced.

**KEYWORDS:** Liberal democracy, critical, deliberation, citizenship, globalisation, school governance

## UITTREKSEL

In hierdie proefskrif eksplorieer ek krities skoolbeheer in verhouding tot 'n liberale konsepie van beraadslagende demokrasie, tesame met 'n argument vir demokratiese burgerskap. Die begrip van desentralisasie en verteenwoordigende demokrasie het gesamentlike besluitneming met die aanvang van Suid Afrika se konstitusionele demokrasie ingelig. Hierdie klem op deelnemende demokrasie beoog om nasie-bou/burgerskap te verhef, terwyl Suid Afrika streef om sy leiwants met die verlede van apartheid te verbreek. Ingeboesem in die praktyk van verteenwoordigende demokrasie veral in die konteks van skole, is onderwysbeheer, geïmplimenteer deur skoolbeheerliggame (SBL). In hierdie proefskrif word daar geargumenteer dat dit voorkom asof die legitieme stemme van leerders en ouers in skoolbeheerliggaampraktyke geminimaliseer is - 'n begrip wat die teenwoordigheid van swak demokratiese praktyke onderskraag.

My kommer is dat SBL in benadeelde gemeenskappe nie noodwendig trou bly tot die beginsels van demokrasie soos dit in die Grondwet van Suid Afrika, insluitend die Wetsontwerp van Regte en die Suid Afrikaanse Skole Beleid (SASB van 1996) voorgeskryf is nie. Dit wil voorkom asof 'n swak stel van demokratiese gebruike openbaar word wanneer die SASB en die implimentering daarvan nie konsekwent met mekaar loop nie met die gevolg dat skoolbeheerpraktyke in teenstelling werk met beleidsverklarings. Die bevordering van demokrasie betrek gewoonlik die beskerming van almal (individue en gemeenskap) se legitieme belange. Dis in hierdie konteks wat hierdie proefskrif poog om 'n roete te vind tot sterker demokratiese praktyke en sodoende die beginsels van die Suid Afrikaanse Grondwet, insluitend die Wetsontwerp van Regte en die SASA te steun. Ek argumenteer dat dit voorkom asof SBL praktyke hierdie legitieme belange ondermyn, wat sodoende 'n verleentheid vir die demokrasie skep. Bykomend wil dit voorkom asof huidige SBL nie die nodige omstandighede/geleenthede skep waarvolgens beraadslagende demokratiese praktyke behaal mag word nie. Ofskoon SBL beraadslagende praktyke in samehang met burgerskap, sowel

as met die “ondervinding van wat Anders is” laat saamsnoei, sal dit waarskynlik ‘n swak demokrasie handhaaf. As demokratiese praktyke wil bloei stel ek voor dat omstandighede geskep moet word sodat “redelikheid” en “die Ander”, dit is leerders en ouers, ingelyf kan word. Dit mag verhaal word deur pedagogiese oplettendheid en beleefdheid – wat epistemologies na verwys word as ‘n “getuigenis tot die onkenbaarheid van die Ander”. So ‘n inlywing kan as teenstander dien vir ‘n swak demokrasie. Met ander woorde deur die gemarginaliseerde stemme wat waarskynlik op SBLe uitgesluit is, in te sluit sal die potensiaal vir sterk demokratiese praktyke moontlik bevorder word.

**SLEUTELBEGRIPPE:** Liberale demokrasie, kritiese, beraadslaging, burgerskap, globalisasie, skool beheer

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ANALYTICAL DISCOURSE, DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

#### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

During the 1980s, while apartheid rule was the norm, the cry from the oppressed masses was, “the people shall govern”. This slogan became a rallying phrase, giving the politically expelled majority of South Africa a sense of incorporation or assimilation into some form of political opposition. It is my contention that the majority of those who rallied around this slogan might not have fully comprehended the significance and concomitant consequences of “the people shall govern”. The 1994 democratic elections gave meaning to what might be termed the first phase of “the people shall govern”. The resultant emergence of local school governance, consequently, had its origin within the framework of the anti- apartheid struggle.

During this period, and from organising within this framework of the school environment, the national “Education Crisis Committee” (later to become the National Education Coordinating Committee) originated. At this stage most learners were on the streets challenging the forces of apartheid oppression, meaning the state’s security machinery (police force and at times even the army). By then the cry was “liberation before education”. These forces were responsible for securing the unjust apartheid regime against the oppressed masses who clamoured for their right to citizenship in the country of their birth. Education became the catalyst for a much broader struggle against apartheid. One of the National Education Coordinating Committee’s (NECC) first tasks was to convince learners to surrender their slogan of “liberation before education”, thus agreeing to go back to school. This was a slogan around which learners rallied, galvanising their intention to move towards freedom at the expense of their education.

It is against such a background that it was essential that South Africa’s newly found democracy initiate an education system grounded in principles of

democracy, such as equality, freedom of association and movement, tolerance and rationality. This realisation on the part of government implied that the education system was in need of transformation in order to meet the demands of a democratic society. The government realised that education has an important role to play in the implementation process of a new socio-political ideology within South Africa. This goal of a new and more acceptable democratic political system of the new government, included education transformation, which is reflected in the White Paper on Education and Training of 1996. The promulgation of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) also has as its aim to “advance the democratic transformation of society” (Schools Act 1996: 2). The Schools Act makes provision for democratically elected community-based school governing bodies (SGBs). School governance is a new terrain for the overwhelming majority of South African communities precisely because they had scant prior exposure or training to this form of governance. Prior to the promulgation of the South African Schools Act, education policy and governance were heavily centralised, meaning that the state maintained control in ways that were bureaucratically centralised, racially exclusive and politically authoritarian. This pattern was firmly established up to 1990 (Jansen 2001a: 42). It is my understanding that the government’s aim was to abandon the old established educational dogmas which were rooted in a fundamental pedagogical framework, thus reinforcing the existing inequalities and creating the space to defend and even enhance such policies. I contend that the rationale behind this shift is to create the necessary space for a new educational system that would enhance critical reflection, dialogue and rationality.

Peters (in Aspin 1995: 56) states that: “Citizens of a democracy do not simply arrive at political maturity and stand ready, willing and able to run its institutions”. What follows from this is the need for training of those governors serving on SGBs. Consequently, for school governing bodies to function effectively, it is of paramount importance to ensure that those most affected by the decisions be included in the decision-making processes, something which was almost non-existent prior to 1990. Furthermore, for any structure to function democratically, its participants should have a fair understanding of

what democracy is. Participants need to be educated and empowered regarding the principles of democracy, a process which involves exploring the notion of democratic citizenship. Enslin and White posit that an increased interest in theories of citizenship and citizenship education is attributable to several factors arising in different contexts, including regional and political restructuring in moves towards an integrated Europe as well as problems of democratic consolidation in societies in transition to democracy (2003: 110). Kymlicka refers to two other contexts, which include the failure of environmental policies that rely on citizens' voluntary co-operation, and the stresses created by increasingly multicultural and multiracial populations (2002: 284). South Africa exhibits features of these trends of which two are conspicuous, with reference to its transition to democracy and its multi-cultural/religious and multiracial population.

My reading of these trends leads me to the realisation that an emerging democracy like South Africa cannot only depend on the space that its institutions for justice create. The South African Constitution, its Bill of Rights, the Constitutional Court and its multi-party democratic system cannot automatically transform its citizens into democratic beings. What is needed are citizens of a certain quality, imbued with a specific attitude, for example, their sense of identity and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold authorities accountable; their willingness to show self restraint and exercise personal responsibility. Without citizens who possess these qualities democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable (Kymlicka 2002: 285). I would, therefore, argue that SGBs would not necessarily function democratically, or alternatively, that effective school governance should inevitably rely on responsible and accountable citizens. In other words individuals who pursue only their own self-interest with a disregard for the common good could potentially undermine democratic practices notwithstanding such mechanisms as the Constitution, Bill of Rights and South African Schools Act. Waghid cogently points to an understanding that

effective education policy implementation relies on responsible citizenship (2003a: 75). It is this type of citizen whom I claim can create the potential for more democratic school governance, thus contesting less democratic practices, which still persist in disadvantaged schools.

South Africa's new democracy merits an education system that aims to emancipate both learners and educators from practices grounded in inequity. This implies that the growth of any democratic society is directly dependant on the principles of a democratic school system which serve as a guide to define our relationships with our fellow human beings/citizens. Gazman (in Chapman *et al.* 1995: 14) argues that the fundamental psychological shifts necessary to bring about democracy in education and in society depend largely on the possibility of qualitative changes taking place in the social and economic life of the country. It is this notion of qualitative changes, which includes a movement towards equality and liberty, justice and respect for evidence and people that partially guide this dissertation. I shall investigate these issues in chapter three when I explore constitutive meanings of democratic citizenship, particularly in relation to equity, justice and freedom.

## **1.2. RATIONALE OF STUDY**

As an educator in South Africa since 1980, I have been part of many changes which impacted on education in schools. My interest in the process of democratic transformation of education is embedded in a desire to actuate meaningful change in South African society. The moral foundation in terms of which the majority of South Africans were denied access to serve and guide the democratisation process includes the principles of "equity, justice, tolerance, respect for others and personal freedom" (Chapman *et al.* 1995: 7), all significant instances of democratic citizenship. This implies that in order to transform and accommodate principles of democracy, government structures had to change in a drastic way to meet these challenges, and in doing so, the Department of Education needed to put an education system in place which would be attuned to the democratic demands of the citizens of this country. For the past ten years I felt the direct impact of this restructuring process. I



have witnessed the trauma and disbelief which accompanied the teacher rationalisation programme, as well as the difficulties teachers encountered when they were forced to deal with larger class numbers. I subsequently developed a specific need to understand the current processes, which guide democratic transformation in schools, including whether SGBs ought to be shaped according to the notion of democratic citizenship. I contend that if SGB practices are attuned to the notion of democratic citizenship, the potential exists for individual governors to become critical, and, therefore, effect their emancipation. I now turn to a discussion on the motivation for embarking on a study of school governance.

The adoption of a new school governance policy with its commitment to empower all stakeholders in the education framework should be interpreted as an effort by government which could contribute towards the transformation process in South Africa in order to transcend Afrikaner Nationalist Education. The notion of collective or participatory decision-making guided by individual rights gained considerable momentum with the advent of a constitutional democracy in South Africa. It was inevitable that South Africa's schooling system would reflect the impact of the political changes which influence general life in this country. A break from the old system of domination, authority, control and manipulation by a minority became inevitable. The transformation of the Department of Education brought with it a form of school governance attuned to the democratic principles as announced in the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights of 1996. It is my understanding that the new system of school governance offers a practical foundation to transform South African society, thus giving meaning to the concept of democratic citizenship. This emphasis on collective decision-making aims to enhance the notion that "the people shall govern", or alternatively, the process of nation building which links with a process towards achieving democratic citizenship in this country. This shift towards the devolution of power in a form of local school governance creates space for ordinary individuals within specific communities to influence decisions which have a direct bearing on their community, particularly its younger generation (learners). This opportunity for communities may be considered as a direct break from the

apartheid culture of segregating South African individuals into subjects and citizens. Since 1948 the South African population was divided into those with the franchise and those without it. Those with the franchise became legitimate citizens, while those without it could conceivably be seen as subjects under the rule and control of those with voting power. The upshot of this is that citizens were White and subjects were Black. The 1994 elections negated this dichotomy, thus conferring on all South Africans the status of citizenship. Now these citizens have the opportunity to have their voices heard in a meaningful sense with regard to them now having the potential to influence important outcomes which directly affect them. For this reason the new system of school governance offers a practical space to transform societies because the previously disenfranchised now have the right to exercise their civic duty.

However, embedded in the practice of collective or participatory decision making with regard to educational governance in schools is the notion that SGBs need to function according to the principles of democracy as espoused in the South African Constitution of 1996. The South African Schools Act emphasises the establishment of a system of school governance that responds to the needs of the South African society/citizens served by such institutions. Educational governance should, therefore, as one of its objectives, prepare and develop citizens in line with the government's manoeuvre towards nation building. By this I do not suggest that virtuous citizens should only be nurtured in line with what politicians desire. On the contrary, the development of this country's citizenry should ultimately be for achieving the common good. However, it seems as if school governance practices do not necessarily adhere to those tenets of democracy as accentuated in the South African Schools Act of 1996. Problems seem to arise when the South African Schools Act and the implementation thereof seem to be at variance with each other, that is, the practice of school governance seems to be contrary to what the Act purports in relation to cultivating virtuous citizens, or alternatively nation builders. It is in such a context that this dissertation attempts to explore the conceptual and pragmatic relationship between deliberative democracy incorporating democratic citizenship, school governance and a critical framework of thinking. I contend

that if school governance is framed according to deliberative/democratic citizenship, it has the potential to be critical and, therefore, emancipatory, thus enabling sustainable societal transformation, including citizens who exhibit what Galston refers to as “civic virtue” or “public-spiritedness” (1991: 217), precisely what the government professes needs to be accomplished.

During the 1970s and early 1980s analytical and fundamental pedagogic philosophy of education dominated the field of education and hence permeated through school governance in this country. This resulted in a system of school governance which was less democratic, oppressive, and in a sense unsustainable. The consequences for school governance have been devastating in relation to our new democratic ethos. Nowhere in that system could the majority of the citizenry of this country claim that they had a meaningful input. The reality was that they were actually excluded from any major influence. This, however, does not translate into no influence at all. On the contrary, the influence that the disenfranchised majority had, fell outside of the bureaucratic boundaries of educational governance and within non-governmental organisations.

The promotion of democracy invariably involves securing the legitimate interests of all people whether as individuals or as a community. I shall argue that school governing body practices do not necessarily secure these legitimate interests, an idea which, therefore, poses a potential problem for democracy. I shall further argue that locating the debate on school governance within the framework of critical theory and democratic citizenship, it seemingly has the potential to lead to more democratic practices within the educational environment. In line with such reasoning I contend that for the democratisation of school governance to take place, it should become the preserve of the ordinary lay person, or alternatively, the democratic citizen. This is so because democratic citizenship incorporates a “vital function to perform an integrated role, a device to cultivate a sense of community and a common sense of purpose. Citizenship binds various groups in society and works against mutual mistrust and conflict”, (Kymlicka 1996: 162). Given that on the one hand democratic school governance operates within a terrain of

conflict, whilst the underlying rationale is to resolve such conflict, the notion of citizenship has the potential to sustain democratic governance precisely because it militates against conflict. I do not suggest that conflict or dissent is necessary bad for school governance. On the contrary, democracy thrives on these notions. The point is the manner in which such conflict or dissent is resolved becomes pertinent. On the other hand citizenship includes a notion of responsibility. Responsibility in terms of one's civic duties which might include honesty, freedom of association, and freedom of speech are all moments in deliberative democracy, being the type of democratic order for which I shall argue in relation to school governance. Regarding the deliberative democratic ideal, I shall argue for the liberal communitarian interpretation which posits that the self cannot be understood apart from the social relations in which it is embedded, meaning that individuals pursue their objectives in collaboration with one another. The group or community conception of the common good has precedence over the individuals' right to freely pursue his/her individual interests (Miller 2000: 99-103). I shall explore these notions and its influence on civic practices in chapter three.

Policies promulgated in the South African Schools Act create space for the application of democratic principles. These spaces need to be filled or utilised with the distinct purpose of contributing towards sound school governance based on the principles as provided in the Act. Hendricks (2000: 25) posits that:

... Participation in school-based governance has the potential of contributing in (sic) the democratic transformation of whole school communities.

However, Waghid (2001a: 1) argues that:

... effective policy initiatives driven by functional or instrumental preoccupations are not only conceptually flawed but also deprive education of its wider human purposes.

In my reading of Waghid's interpretation, he presupposes that by simply participating in the system of SGBs would not necessarily lead to democratic transformation, as Hendricks claims. On the contrary, there are many variables that impact on SGBs, which have to be considered to determine whether their practices contribute towards principles of democracy. Although the South African Schools Act theoretically provides space for democratic transformation, it is when the Act is transformed into practice that I suspect problems seem to arise. I concur with Waghid's analysis, for it is my contention that the manner in which SGBs give meaning to the Act, make these SGBs vulnerable to less democratic practices. Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis (2002) reinforce this view when they argue that:

Since the establishment of governing bodies, one of the key problems confronting provincial departments has been building the capacity of governing body members, especially among the previously marginalised and disadvantaged school communities. Without the necessary skills for members to participate fully in governance, these structures cannot claim to be democratic (in Motala & Pampallis 2002: 168).

They further posit the following:

At a local level, a school community given power by legislation could have that power rendered useless by a lack of skills necessary for exercising it. This is a real danger in the newly decentralised South African school system, where SGBs have been given considerable powers but in many schools lack the skills necessary to exercise them effectively. (2002: 144).

This finding reinforces my suspicion that school governors do not always possess the necessary skills to engender a system of democratic governance without having been trained towards such practices. Karlsson *et al.* (2002: 144), however, caution that one of the reasons contributing to this state of affairs hinges on the claim that budgetary constraints hinder capacity building

projects. I am not convinced that budgetary constraints threaten the skills development programmes initiated by provincial education departments to the extent that it negates more democratic practices. I argue that it is an issue of priorities. If the rationale is that the system of decentralisation and, therefore school governance represents a break with the apartheid past, then the necessary mechanisms should be in place in order to drive the school governance strategy. Furthermore, this training which the South African Schools Act refers to, is law. A failure to apply this law is tantamount to breaking the law. Therefore, to argue in terms of budgetary constraints is to adopt an escapist attitude. My understanding is that school governance, to which the South African Schools Act alludes, drives the education process at public school level. To argue only along budgetary lines to justify less democratic practices seems unconvincing. Instead, I argue that a movement towards responsible citizenship where individuals become convinced of their civic duties could potentially erode the “burden of budget”. I argue that citizens should heed the call by President Thabo Mbeki of voluntary work to promote the common good that can be linked to the notion of civic duty, thus going some way in negating these budgetary constraints. The President made this call under the slogan of “Vukuzenzele”, meaning taking responsibility with the aim of getting the job done. I shall, therefore, argue that a means to overcome the stated constraints could conceivably be realised through governors becoming democratic citizens in the sense used by theorists of democratic citizenship. In this dissertation I argue that SGBs ought to be shaped by the notion of democratic citizenship which could possibly result in critical and emancipatory governance discourses.

### **1.3.1. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

To appreciate how school governance in South Africa had to transform, I shall clarify the situation prior to the implementation of the School Governing Body system. I intend providing a general overview of education transformation prior to 1990, and later on proceed to the different phases in policy development. These phases in policy development extended over a period of time. They can be described as:

The positioning phase, which refers to the period 1990-1994, the frameworks phase, refers to the early work of the first ANC (African National Congress) led government from 1994 and the implementation phase from 1996 till present (Young in Kraak & Young 2001: 7).

Until 1990 education policy in South Africa was heavily centralised. The State maintained control of education in ways that were bureaucratically centralised, racially exclusive and politically authoritarian. This pattern was firmly established up to 1990 (Jansen 2001a: 42). Notwithstanding this fact, the demand for democracy and participation in education in South Africa has a long history, reaching a peak of intense and bitter student struggles in the 1980s. I shall explore this issue in detail in chapter 2. In relation to the struggle for democratic school governance Karlsson posits that:

The South African ideal of democratic governing bodies, which would involve representatives of various constituencies in a school community, was born in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto school uprising and the development of a People's Education discourse in the 1980s (in Karlsson 2002: 327).

Central to these struggles was that decision-making in schools and school governance structures should include all legitimate role-players. The upshot of this was that greater representation would ensure educational accountability, legitimacy and democracy (Carrim & Sayed 1997: 91). The call *for greater participation* is based on the assumption that if more people were included in school governing bodies, then democracy would be boosted and equality among schools would be ensured (Dieltiens & Enslin 2002: 5, *my italics*). The development and growth of Parent, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs) concretised these demands, giving political voice to the then disenfranchised. The vision of People's Education took on a systematic momentum when the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) which had its origins within the Education Crisis Committee, supported the establishment of PTSAs as alternatives to what they termed to be "puppet governance structures" of the apartheid-era education authorities (Karlsson

2002: 328). As structures contesting the State, PTSAs operated parallel to State structures such as School Management Councils (Carrim & Sayed 1997: 91). The School Management Councils were apartheid state organs, considered to be illegitimate by the oppressed (disenfranchised) citizenry of this country. From the State's perspective PTSAs were illegitimate bodies that had as one of its goals to undermine the *status quo*. It is for this reason that the education authorities (under the apartheid regime) called on the security forces of the state to vigorously repress the PTSA system. This tension between the “legal” education structure of the state and the “illegal” mass-movement structure needs to be analysed in order to gain some insight into the rationale which drove these opposing parties. I shall explore this dichotomy of legitimacy/illegitimacy, its resultant repression and concomitant impact on school governance in detail in chapter two.

Continuing with this overview, the early 1990s is characterised by a “race for policy position”, while the next period (up to and including 1994) could be described as the “race for policy frameworks” (Jansen 2001a: 42). The Minister of Education initiated the most important policy framework in 1995, focusing on the work of the Hunter Committee. Part of this committee’s framework of reference was to unify the education system of South Africa. Nineteen education departments based on race and ethnicity had restricted space within the democratic ethos of the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights. New norms and, therefore, new legislation was critical to transform not only the racially divided system of education, but also the governance and financing of schools. To this end the Hunter Committee was instituted. This “national framework would govern the organisation, funding and management of education” (Jansen 2001a: 44). This report provided the framework which led to the production of the South African Schools Bill (April 1996), which later became the South African Schools Act of November 1996. Although the Act emphasises the notion of participation, it also supports the task of equity and redress. My suspicion, however, is that eight years later disadvantaged schools are still struggling with the same problems that enveloped them during the apartheid period, raising the issue of whether the impact of eight years of a new form of governance brought the equality, under



the redress principle, as envisaged in 1996. I shall return to the principles of equity and redress in chapter two.

From the outset it was clear that school governance was a politically volatile issue and that the prime function of the policies was to ensure that hegemonic consensus could be engendered (Carrim & Sayed 1997: 92). In fact Jansen claims that, “the result is that policy makers have worked more diligently on appearing to improve schooling than on actually doing so”. So, despite the “flurry of policy” since the first democratic elections, the Minister of Education late in 1999 acknowledged that there still remained a crisis in education. This then resulted in “Tirisano” or his “Call to Action”, meaning, a race for policy implementation (Jansen 2001a: 51). I explore these developments and its resultant influence on democratic school governance in chapter two.

The appointment of a new Minister of Education in 1999 had as part of his agenda to expedite policy implementation. Jansen questions whether the current political and bureaucratic machinery can in fact “deliver”. He argues that the instrument of choice (to speed up the delivery process) is “policy review”. Constitutive in the concept “review” is a suggestion that something is erroneous or misplaced. Conversely, if everything is adequate and satisfactory, a review obviously becomes unnecessary. To clarify this point I turn to Jansen who claims:

Merely to call for a review is to concede the possibility of failure. A review, by its very nature, carries the threat of exposure. In the case of a weak state – by which I mean a state with limited bureaucratic and political capacity to change the practice of education “on the ground” – reviews are particularly dangerous (Jansen 2001a: 52).

I interpret “exposure” in this context, as meaning that the shortcomings or what is perceived to be wrong with the original policy becomes public knowledge. In the public domain these “mistakes” are then scrutinised and criticised. Exposure or admitting to making mistakes could be perceived as the government operating from a position of weakness, something which any

government would want to avoid. Furthermore the process of policy review is in itself a time consuming exercise, putting another strain on implementation/”tirisano”. This eventually translates into an inactive period of non-implementation, because of “an investiture in political symbolism in Curriculum 2005 in the late 1990s, which means that any attempt to change the curriculum would be fiercely contested” (Jansen 2001a: 57). Current developments surrounding Curriculum 2005 bears testimony to this interpretation. Grade nine (according to Curriculum 2005) was established as an exit point where the learner shall receive a certificate which would serve as the entry requirement for the Further Education and Training (FET) band. However, the reality is that this did not materialise, resulting in a reversal towards the “old subject system” as opposed to the learning areas which Curriculum 2005 endorses. The upshot of this is that, if the current group of learners (now in grade twelve) progress without fail, they shall not make contact with the learning areas (of Outcomes Based Education [OBE] to which the new curriculum introduced them), again. The other hurdle that these learners will have to overcome is the system of exams, for which the OBE system did not prepare them. Another worrying issue is the reality that the common tasks for assessment (CTAs) were first introduced as formal tests involving all grade nines in 2002. The next round of tests took place in 2003, however, no formal results on a national level has yet been made public, putting into question whether the Education Department actually have the capacity to initiate and oversee this system of “external examinations”. One should bear in mind that this form of assessment will materially contribute towards the achievement of a General Education and Training (GET) certificate at the end of grade nine.

I expose the inherent difficulties in relation to Curriculum 2005 and its surrounding policies to give some insight into the space that exists between policy legislation, and its implementation. It is thus my contention that since 1990, the road to securing a new education system for South Africa has proved to have many pitfalls. In fact, the space for securing the educational needs for the future of this country is a space of fierce and protracted struggle. This struggle will eventually impact on the manner in which schools

are governed, given the fact that the individual governors (representing their stakeholder groups) should ultimately implement these contested policies. This understanding creates the impression that the implementation of policy phase is still evolving, thus creating space for further development particularly in the arena of school governance. It is on this level that I argue that school governance and the implementation of contested policies can best be resolved by engendering a notion of democratic citizenship which has the potential to transform governor practices by making it more critical and, therefore, emancipatory. The reason is that critical governors who have the potential to reflect and question their decisions, have a better chance of implementing policies more democratically. These conceptions of empowerment and emancipation (to think critically and to transform) which democratic citizenship may effect, has its roots in a critical framework of thinking and acting. This is so because critical theory is based on its potential to transform, empower and emancipate – those features democratic citizenship aims to engender. When school governors are empowered as to their civic role within a democratic state they then have the potential to make informed decisions about policy. To this degree they might even be able to contest policies which in a sense impacts on the lives of their children. In this way they have the potential to enter the debate thus fulfilling in some sense their role as democratic citizens. I now turn to a discussion of a critical paradigm.

### **1.3.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

One of the major aims of this dissertation is to ascertain whether deliberative democracy can foster democratic citizenship and whether it has the potential to engender more critical discourse practices within the realm of school governance. I, therefore, have to interact with individual school governors and also conceptually analyse the work of other researchers in this field in order to determine the type of practices in which they are involved. The reason is to ascertain the reasons that they offer in defence of their actions. In doing this I shall be able to determine whether their practices are either more or less critical. The point is that my analysis of school governance shall firstly rely on

the reasons that governors give for acting the way they do. In other words what meanings do they give in order to explain how they perceive, and interpret their actions? Put differently, I attempt to understand the reasons that they give in fulfilling their intentions and desires.

As I have earlier argued, I suspect that governors are engaged in less democratic practices. My suspicion is that it might be because the interpretation and consequently the meaning that they give of school governance policy is confused, fragmented and cloudy. If, however, the meanings can be made clear, in other words if it can be expressed in a critical way the potential exists that their actions would be altered, thus becoming more democratic. After I have exposed their understandings of their practices, I shall attempt to subsequently move towards a sense where they realise that they could and “perhaps” should alter their practices to facilitate a more democratic form of action. My subsequent aim is thus to bring the governors to a realisation that they have the potential to transform their understandings, thus leading them to empowerment, which means making their practices more critical. I say “perhaps” because I do not propose that my interpretation, or hopeful form of empowerment, is the final answer or truth. In my deliberation with governors they might potentially gain greater insight and thus move beyond the practices, which I might propose.

I have thus far argued that through interpretive and critical discourses with its aim to understand (interpret) and empower (in order to transform) SGBs have the potential to become more critical. My contention is that through cultivating the notion of democratic citizenship the critical school governor could potentially be awakened, thus enhancing the capacity to empower and subsequently transform his/her practices to become more democratic.

Before I expound on a critical framework of thinking it seems prudent to first give some understanding of the interpretive paradigm. I base this thinking on a visionary claim by Fay (1975: 93) who posits that: “a critical social science is characterised by three main features. The first of these is that it accepts the necessity of interpretive categories in social science; in this regard it rests on

the arguments in support of the interpretive model”. The critical paradigm asserts that in order to have a subject matter at all the social scientist should attempt to understand the intentions and desires of the actors (school governors) he is observing. To further elucidate this point I draw on Fay who claims that:

Critical theory is rooted in the *felt* needs and sufferings of people, and therefore it is absolutely necessary that the critical theorist come to understand these actors from their own point of view (Fay 1975: 94).

This notion of *felt needs*, however, goes to the heart of the interpretive framework, for interpretivists “seeks to uncover those systems of social relationships which determine the actions of individuals ...” (Fay 1975: 94). My reason for discussing both paradigms is simply to satisfy a potential critic by exposing that the critical framework has its roots in the interpretive paradigm. I reiterate that I am conversant with the interpretation that the two methodologies are not necessarily conflicting. I now proceed to discuss the interpretive model.

### **1.3.2.1. AN INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM**

The interpretive research framework is concerned with understanding the daily occurrences which confront people, as well as the meanings they give in order to show how they perceive and interpret these occurrences. The two pivotal issues within the interpretive framework are therefore the self-understanding of the individual (the basis for all social interpretations) and as Waghid (2002: 47) states, that human consciousness remains transparent, meaning that human explanations, as they appear, do not conceal any deeper understanding of events. Interpretive theory stresses the notion that analysis involves more than observation. In this regard Danner (1995: 223) explains social interpretation as *hermeneutic understanding* which aims to make meaning explicit, to explain, to understand and to interpret meaning. It is this concept of *hermeneutic understanding* on which I shall heavily rely when I argue for democratic citizenship in the quest of achieving critical school

governance. According to Danner, hermeneutic understanding occurs every time a person encounters another human being.

The crucial point is, according to Fay (1975: 74), to reach the self-understanding of the person acting in the situation, analysing and understanding his or her reasons for their actions. Taylor corroborates this view when he argues that a “successful interpretation is one which makes clear the meaning originally present in a confused, fragmentary, cloudy form. ... what is strange, mystifying, puzzling, contradictory is no longer so, is accounted for” (Taylor 1985: 17). In other words, actions cannot just be observed, but they have to be explained. We need to know the reasons for performing the action, or self-understanding for performing the act. Fay (1975: 71) argues that the interpretive approach to social science is comprised of action concepts; the term which he employs to describe - “doings as opposed to happenings”. This analysis involves describing behaviour, which is done purposefully, as opposed to behaviour, which occurs without intent. An action concept is consequently a distinct act for which the actor had a definite aim or intent. The intention of interpretivism is to unearth the rationale behind the reason or desire of a person to perform this particular action. The crux according to such reasoning is to interpret. It makes sense that one cannot interpret any act without giving a description of that act. There is thus a link between interpretation and description which cannot be divorced from explanation (Fay 1975: 72).

My reading regarding this analysis leads me to a notion of reaching the self-understandings of those acting in the situation, in other words understanding their reasons for acting the way they do. For example, one person among a group raises his arm. How does one interpret this action? Perhaps the one is trying to attract the other’s attention; or is intent on neutralising some stiffness in his shoulder; or is attempting to warn the group of impending danger; or is simply waving to a person passing by. In the interpretive mode the action needs to be explained, that is, one needs to know the reasons for performing such an action; one needs to uncover its self-understanding, or alternatively its *hermeneutic understanding*. However, one should not omit what Fay calls

the “social element”, meaning, the set of social rules that provide the criteria for the action. In this regard rules mean all those shared assumptions, definitions, and conceptions which structure the world in certain definite ways (Fay 1975: 74). Taylor refers to this as “common meanings”. He argues that, “to understand ... we have to be in on a certain experience, we have to understand a certain language (not just words), but also a language of mutual action and communication. In the end we are in on this because we grow up in the ambit of certain common meanings” (1985: 24). My interpretation of this is that an individual can only have an understanding of an action, if he/she is privy to certain rules (social context) within which an action occurs. It is this manner of understanding which informs the concept of a “social practice”. In this regard I support Fay’s argument which states:

An interpretive theory is one which attempts to uncover the sense of a given action, practice or constitutive meaning; it does this by discovering the intentions and desires of particular actors, by uncovering the set of rules which give point to these sets of rules and practices, and by elucidating the basic conceptual scheme which orders experience in ways that practices, actions, and experiences which a social scientist observes are made intelligible, by seeing how they fit into a whole structure which defines the nature and purpose of human life (1975: 79).

Taylor (1985: 17) corroborates this understanding when he emphasises that interpretation appeals throughout to our understanding of the “language” of expression (Fay’s rules), which understanding allows us to see that this expression is puzzling ... and that these difficulties are cleared up when the meaning is expressed in a new way”.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein (1958: 23) posits that to understand the meanings implicit in a concept, is to understand “forms of life”, meaning that we can only understand human action within its context, or within the form of life within which it occurs. By implication, school governance means different things to different people, depending on how they interpret the concept. In this

Wittgensteinian sense there cannot be one overarching meaning of educational governance. Interpreting school governance in terms of the meanings that governors give to the practice is, therefore, essential. With regard to “rules”, “language of expression” and “forms of life”, I interpret them as interchangeable concepts, thus being founded on the same principle, meaning all refer to the social context within which the act occurs. The interpretive model thus asserts that social conflict is the result of misunderstandings which, if reconciled, could restore the order. The upshot of this is that the interpretive model would want to lead its participants to change the way they think about what they and others are doing, rather than provide them with a theory which could change what they and others are doing. It is precisely this interpretation which I aim to utilise in uncovering the school governors' “misinterpretations” with the view of changing the way they “think about what they and others are doing”. Alysdaire MacIntyre (1981: 64) links “rule following” and “forms of life” to narratives. He argues that human beings are by nature story-telling beings and that narrative is a form of rule following that accounts for the way we give significance to our lives. Put differently, we give significance to what school governance mean by telling stories about the way we understand their meanings. In following my argument in terms of the interpretive framework, the interpretive paradigm seeks to change thinking as opposed to changing the actions of those who are acting. Consequently it does not claim to seek a change in behaviour, meaning it stops short from real empowerment, something that the critical social paradigm purports to do. Part of my aim is to empower school governors to indulge in more democratic practices and thus I aim to change their current practices which I suspect to be less democratic. It is in this regard that I now discuss critical theory.

#### **1.3.2.2. A CRITICAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Critical theory has its origins in the Frankfurt School (in Germany) where the Institute for Social Research was founded in 1923. Critical theory represents a different way of thinking, being concerned with primarily solving particular social problems. For critical theory the main interest of human beings would be to liberate themselves from forms of domination, which are best



understood as what occurs when people's goals and means of achieving such goals are prescribed for them. This framework of thinking emanates from problems of everyday life, and is constructed with a mechanism of solving them. In short, the empowerment and emancipation of humanity lies at the heart of the critical paradigm.

The critical model attempts to integrate theory and practice in that it sees theories as an analysis of a social situation in terms of those features, which can be altered in order to eliminate certain frustrations which members in this model are experiencing. The Habermasian notion of "theory and praxis" finds resonance with this type of reasoning, for Habermas argues that: "... theory encompasses a dual relationship between theory and practice ... , therefore, connecting with the Aristotelian view of the distinction between *praxis* and *techne*" (1971: 2). Fay (1975: 94) gives some insight into this understanding when he posits that a critical social science is characterised by three main features. Firstly, this theory is rooted in the *felt* needs and sufferings of people and, thus the critical theorist should understand the actors from *their point of view*. Secondly, the theory recognises that people's actions are caused by social conditions over which they have no control. The critical paradigm thus seeks to uncover systems of social relationships, which determine the actions of individuals and the unanticipated (not accidental) consequences of these actions. Thirdly, critical social science is built on the explicit recognition that social theory is interconnected with social practice. This connection between theory and practice means that critical theory "ties its knowledge claims to the satisfaction of human purposes and desires" (Fay 1975: 95). In this regard it employs the quasi-causal and functional laws to explain the contradictions in social life that underlie the tensions and conflicts which the actors experience. Fay explains that:

This involves an attempt to develop an historical account which reveals how it is that the relevant social actors came to be what they are. The explanations, which result from such an approach would always be in terms of the felt needs and experienced privations or sufferings of the agents involved (Fay 1975: 96).

My understanding of this reasoning is that the critical paradigm attempts to account for the sufferings and felt needs of the actors in a social group by seeing them as the result of certain structural conflicts. It is in this regard that it gives an historical account in quasi-causal terms. It is with this interpretation in mind that my exposition on the historical development of School Governing Bodies (which I initiated in this chapter and) that I shall discuss in chapter two starts to make sense. It is by understanding the context within which School Governing Bodies had its origins (its quasi-causal terms) that one may begin to interpret the reasons why school governors act the way they do. Understanding the sources and nature of social action and the rationale for its discontent is, however, not enough. The critical paradigm envisages to demonstrate how such forms of (scientifically produced in an interpretive paradigmatic sense) discontent can potentially be eliminated by removing “in some specified way, the structural contradictions which underlie it”. To further elucidate this claim I turn to Fay who posits:

This means that the quasi-causal explanations which are given must be related to the felt needs ... in such a way that they show how these feelings can be overcome by the actors coming to understand themselves in their situation as the product of certain inherent contradictions in their social order, contradictions which they can remove by taking an appropriate course of action to change this social order. ... It does so by revealing how the irrationalities of social life, which are causing the dissatisfaction, can be eliminated by taking some specific action which the theory calls for (Fay 1975: 97–98).

An integral part of the critical paradigm is, therefore, to demonstrate in what ways the ideologies of the actors are illusions. The idea is to strip these ideologies of their power and in the process seek to reveal a rational way of going about in getting what the actors feel they deserve. Ideology in this sense refers to a set of ideas that serve the interests of a particular social class. The Frankfurt School refers to this emancipatory agenda as “ideology-critique”. The ideal underlying an ideology-critique is that of autonomous people who rationally analyse and criticise different ideological discourses

imposed upon them. In this way critical theory becomes a form of criticism in which everything should be questioned, and in which critical and reflective thinking becomes processes of criticising questioning itself. In this way ideology critique not only seeks to point out error, but it also attempts to reveal “the truth which these ideas contain by demonstrating how they point to an important dimension in the psychological economy of their proponents, and how they suggest a new self-conception which makes explicit what they only implicitly contained. It is only by providing an alternative or a new conception of themselves that these actors can overcome their situation” (Fay 1975: 99). Habermas (1984) furthers this understanding when he proposes the promotion of an “ideal speech situation” where people can communicate with one another and participate equally in public debates about political and social life. At the core of Habermasian critical theory is the idea that people need to communicate with and understand the other, to make themselves understood on the basis of reasons that could be assented to or argued against by reference to other reasons, with the possibility of reaching consensus. Habermas refers to this as the “hermeneutics of suspicion”. It is this Habermasian form of “critical hermeneutics” which I intend to utilise when arguing for democratic citizenship in my analysis of SGB practices. This conception which presupposes a rational way of understanding human actions, analyses different cultures, and then makes critical judgments about them, seems the ideal form of inquiry for this dissertation, in particular regarding an interpretation of governors' views.

At this stage I feel that it becomes necessary to defend the notion that I move from one paradigm to another as if this is common in research. In my readings of these particular two paradigms the impression is created that the two methodologies are not neatly separated or distinctively compartmentalised. I believe that the borders of these paradigms are rather elastic and therefore pliable. It is my contention that the two frameworks of thinking under discussion, are consequently not mutually exclusive. In my discussion I have attempted to show that there seems to be a natural progression from the one to the other. Le Grange (2001: 73) supports this type of reasoning when he argues for an ever changing and dynamic view of conceptual frameworks, by

stating that: “a specific framework should not be used to parochially locate our work”. This view may conceive a perception that a particular study or research should not necessarily be confined to one specific framework. I have earlier also argued for an interpretation of *hermeneutics* in an interpretive paradigmatic sense (Danner’s *hermeneutic understanding*) as well as in a critical framework sense (Habermasian *critical hermeneutics*). Kincheloe and McLaren reinforce this understanding when they claim that:

Critical hermeneutics is more comfortable with interpretive approaches that assume that the meaning of human experience can never be fully disclosed – neither to the researcher nor even to the human who experienced it ... Critical hermeneutics grounds a critical research that attempts to connect the everyday troubles individuals face to public issues of power, justice, and democracy. In its ability to render the personal political, critical hermeneutics provides a methodology for arousing a critical consciousness through the analysis of the generative themes of the present era (2000: 289).

Here the bridge between hermeneutics in an interpretive as well as critical sense is provided, thus leading to the conception that paradigms at certain instances can rationally overlap and are thus not in all instances mutually exclusive. This dissertation utilises this “bridge” to cross the (potential critics perceived) theoretical divide between the two stated paradigms, meaning that my dissertation is located within two different methodologies. In the context of this study I initially commence my inquiry within an interpretive paradigm, but later on adopt a more critical theoretical approach compatible with my area of investigation. The reason being that my research starts out to investigate, understand and explain events, then moves towards enacting transformative change by empowering school governors, thus leading hopefully, to their emancipation. As I have stated earlier in this discussion, the two methodologies are not necessarily conflicting precisely because the critical paradigm grows out of interpretivism. My reason for discussing both and supplying the link between the two is simply to prevent a potential critic from

finding fault in my jumping paradigms. I now proceed with a discussion of the research method.

### **1.3.3. RESEARCH METHODS**

Now that I have elucidated on the two distinctly related (the one grows from the other) research methodologies I shall utilise in this dissertation, I need to explore the notion of method. I shall particularly refer to conceptual analysis, case studies, and deconstruction for I shall to a large extent rely on these methods. I need to state at the outset that the conceptual analysis and case study methods have the potential to trap the researcher in the positivist mode. Positivists at best only describe the social world by claiming that all events we want to explain are “facts of the world” (meaning they are all of the same logical type). For positivists there are no rational arguments relating to notions such as honesty or freedom. Such values are subjective and not “scientifically” verifiable, because for positivists there is only one proper form of explanation. For them the object of inquiry is to find “scientific” statements and then set out to falsify them. I have argued for working in the interpretive and critical paradigms and would consequently want to avoid falling into a positivist mode. I shall, therefore, qualify the framework in which I determine to utilise case studies and conceptual analysis, and in the process expose the possibility of employing them within an interpretive/critical paradigmatic sense. However, before I proceed I need to locate this in order to make clear where these methods have their origin. I first proceed with a discussion of the philosophy of education debate.

#### **1.3.3.1. A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION DEBATE**

Philosophy of education has been on the receiving end of many criticisms during the past decade. One of the most striking of these is the interpretation that it makes little contribution to the formation of educational policy or the improvement of educational practice. Notwithstanding these criticisms, arguments produced by educational philosophers are utilised to justify educational policy and in other instances educational practices. However, the

criticism that education philosophy has become ineffective cannot, and should not, be ignored. One needs to ascertain what the reasoning is behind such accusations. Carr posits two reasons for this when he argues that those in authority who are responsible for educational policy rarely base their decisions on sound rational arguments. Carr argues that policies are formulated and decisions are made on the basis of political expediency, vested interests and established power (2004: 56). If this is so then the upshot is that rational principles such as impartiality, truth, respect for evidence, a sense of justice and so on, are either being overlooked or alternatively being corrupted. Pring articulates the same understandings when he posits that there are many claims that educational research does not provide the answers which governments ask to decide between alternative policies; or research does not help educational practice (teaching methods); or research funding is money not well spent (2000: 1).

When engaging with this debate I find that educational philosophers examine issues in accordance with rational inquiry while politicians, policy makers and other educational professionals implement educational decisions which generally lack intellectual rigour. An example is the current system of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Educational professionals (in the employ of the Department of Education) including teachers, rarely interrogate the rationale behind OBE or the influence and impact of this system on teaching practice. What I do find is that teachers in particular complain, but at the same time do everything in their power to blindly implement the principles of OBE. I, therefore, contend that there seems to be a glaring difference in approach to education between educational philosophers on the one hand, and the diverse group of politicians, teachers and other educational professionals (curriculum advisers, education managers and inspectors) on the other. How does one respond to this? As I have stated earlier, there is a claim that educational philosophy does not present practical answers to current educational problems. Politicians and particularly policy makers want evidence-based proof with clear guidance to questions of an educational nature with reference to educational problems. Technology and its influence on modern society have influenced our daily existence to such an extent that

we expect instant answers/cures for any and all problems. If I have a headache I don't want to debate its origins, all I want is relief or cure. To this end I swallow a tablet, which solves my problem. Hammersley cautions against this attitude when he argues that:

There is a danger in looking for too direct a relation between research conclusions and specific rules for successful practice. Human beings (and the social life in which they interact) are not the sort of things where there can be simple causal relationships between specific interventions and subsequent behaviours. The impact of research may be indirect, a gradual shifting of public and professional consciousness in the light of growing evidence, rather than a direct relation of conclusions to practical decisions (in Pring 2000: 5).

It is this type of response with its propensity for instant cures which gave rise to the notion of evidence based practices in education. The notion of evidence based practice has its origin in the medical field and has subsequently spread its tentacles to other disciplines, including social work, resource management and ultimately education. Because evidence based practice has the potential to incorporate effective intervention it became the mode of operation in medicine. The argument is that it could yield the same results for education thus solving problems with ready-made evidence based answers. Evidence based practice thus asks of educational philosophers to provide information and evidence in order to enact effective interventions. Research, in other words, has to determine what Biesta refers to as "what works". When philosophers have determined "what works", this may then be implemented as a treatment (intervention) in order to "solve the problem" (2004: 3). Biesta posits that this reasoning is perhaps valid to the field of medicine. However, he argues that a learner is quite different from a patient; being a learner is not an illness, just as teaching is not a cure (2004: 4). It is consequently a question of how educational philosophy approaches the questions of education. How does philosophy of education transcend the divide between theory and practice; the question that Dewey called "dualism", that being between "thinking and doing" (1916: 94)?

To answer this question, it is imperative to firstly determine what makes an activity distinctly educational. In other words what does the concept education mean, or alternatively the term has to be clarified. Pring posits that, “clarifying a term is a controversial matter – especially terms like education which might be described as essentially contestable, meaning that the word can rarely be defined in a way that attracts universal agreement” (2000: 9). One of the major reasons for its contestability is the notion that the concept “education” implies a set of values and that there is disagreement over what those values are or should be (Pring 2000: 11). The point is that before one may seek solutions for educational problems one needs to have a grasp of what education means, thus clarifying the concept education should be the first step. The purpose of this dissertation is not to determine what education is. However, I make the point in order to show that conceptual analysis finds space within the framework of educational philosophy.

Having stated that this dissertation does not focus on an analysis of what education means, I want to refer to Dewey regarding what education is. For Dewey education on the one hand is concerned with the development of distinctively human capacities of knowing, understanding, judging and behaving intelligently. Education is therefore concerned with the life of the mind, and such a life can atrophy if not carefully nurtured. Education consequently nurtures the mental capacities through which learners come to know, understand, judge, reflect and behave intelligently. On the other hand, the job of the teacher is to facilitate that development through putting the learner in contact with further experience or with what others have said (in literature) as they make sense of similar experiences. The teacher, therefore, ensures that there is a public growth of understanding (as embedded in society) as well as a personal one (the growth of the learner self). Education according to Dewey lies in the interaction between the growth of “public understandings” and “personal (learner) understandings”. Pring reinforces such an interpretation and argues that a proper description of education cannot avoid reference to the “mental state” of the learner. He further argues that present thoughts shape future reactions; future understandings to some degree are adaptations or reconstructions of previous ones (2000: 32).



In terms of such a conception of education, the scientific/technicist model for interpretation of education is not the most appropriate, because there seems to be a major difference between inquiries appropriate to understanding physical reality, as opposed to an inquiry for understanding the mental life of people. Regarding such an argument, Biesta's contention that the learner is not a 'patient' (seeking evidence based cures), makes sense. In this regard I contend that effective intervention based on evidence of "what works" should not be driving education, for "what works" might not be desirable. In relation to conceptual analysis, terms such as "effective schooling" or "effective teachers" overlook the question relating to "effective for what"? Conceptual analysis thus plays a fundamental role in researching issues of educational concern, unravelling the meaning of concepts and its potential influence on practices.

Having located conceptual analysis within a framework of educational philosophy, I now proceed with this principle as a method utilised in my dissertation.

The technique of conceptual analysis rests on a particular assumption about the nature of language and meaning. The primary purpose for analysing a term or concept is to show its multiple uses and meanings (Burbules & Warnick 2004: 4). In the words of Hirst and Peters, to have an understanding of a concept, "covers both the experience of grasping a principle and the ability to discriminate and use words correctly (1998: 30). In making sense of this reading of a concept, I am made to understand that in conceptual analysis one should endeavour to determine how people (language group or community) actually "use" a particular term and giving meaning to such a term within a specific context (grasping the principle). Apparent misunderstandings or disagreements are often attributable to people using the "same" terms or concepts in tacitly different ways; by becoming clearer about these varied meanings, it becomes possible to focus better on what is actually in dispute (Burbules & Warnick 2004: 4). To grasp a principle means to have an understanding of what makes a concept what it is, with reference to its constitutive meaning or rule (Taylor 1985: 137). In other words, what

“meaning” is given to a specific concept within a particular community (the manner in which the language group grasps the principle)? To have a concept could consequently imply that one should be able to relate the term to “other words” and recognise the cases in which the term is applied. Hirst and Peters further argue that, “what we do is to examine the use of words in order to see what principle governs their use. If we can make these explicit we have uncovered the concept” (1998: 30). The word “murder”, for example, is constituted by some “general principle”. Let me tease out this term in order to give some insight into this notion of a general principle, and at the same time make clear what is meant by the “use of a concept”.

The use of the word “murder” has an historical as well as a social context. The word “murder”, therefore, has a particular history which is associated with killing. Put differently, it ultimately results in death. In other words murder is historically linked to death. However, in a social context such a death is different from what one may refer to as a natural death (because of illness, the failure of major internal organs such as the heart or kidneys, or old age). Murder refers to an illegally/unnaturally-induced death. This description or analysis lays bear the “meaning” given to murder within a “language community”, also referred to as common experiential meanings. By experiential I mean all within such a community has the same mutual understanding (experience) developed over time (history) that murder is “externally induced” death. If all within a language community comes to more or less the same conclusion as to what murder generally means, then it connotes a mutual understanding of the concept “murder”. In other words the “general principle” has been identified. Now to understand what murder is, one has to have some understanding of the related concepts such as “natural, unnatural, killing, death, illness, externally induced, and so on. The people who use it, and are exposed by its use in relation to other concepts therefore determine the meaning of a concept. So then, what makes murder, murder? From the above analysis it should be clear that whilst a concept has a particular historical context, one does not have to know the history of murder to know what murder is. Hirst and Peters argue that the meanings of “murder” could be determined by its guiding principles (which differs from its external

acts such as stabbing, shooting, poisoning), which makes murder what it is. So, murder is murder not because of its external acts, but rather because the language community understands it to involve killing; and, therefore, an unnaturally induced outcome/death. Hirst and Peters further argues that concepts are linked indissolubly with the social life or group, and it would be impossible for an individual to have a purely private concept of, say, murder (1998: 32).

This ability to relate words to each other would also go along with the ability to recognise cases to which the word applies (1998: 28). This relates to ascertaining the scope of the concept. To emphasise this understanding, Du Toit argues that conceptual analysis can help us to arrive at a clear description, demarcation, or definition of a concept's scope of application. He argues that the scope of a concept, the things to which we usually consider that concept to apply, is also the meaning of that concept (in Rossouw 2003: 24). In such a depiction the terms "concept" and "word" seem to be interchangeable. However, one must not equate analysing a concept with defining a word in the sense of attempting to provide some verbally synonymous phrase for the word in question. It is my understanding that philosophical analysis is ultimately concerned with the clear and coherent articulation of ideas rather than with definition of words. This understanding of a "coherent articulation of ideas" can be linked to the understanding of the "scope of a concept". However, not everyone (within the language community) understands a particular term/concept in exactly the same way and consequently not everyone uses the term/concept in the same manner. Does this mean that concepts have no right or wrong interpretations; that meaning varies according to perspective and that to try to conceptually analyse terms would, therefore, be pointless? The answer is no, for if it was so then communication based on language would in itself be impractical. If our scope of application for concepts did not at the very least, broadly correspond then the degree of communication and mutual understanding might become almost inconceivable. Du Toit corroborates such an interpretation when he argues that:

... when we conduct conceptual analysis we look at the boundaries within which a term usually, typically, or comfortably belongs, and judge from there what the relationship between this term and another is or should be. In this way we investigate the boundaries between terms and try to reveal them clearly for ourselves. In conceptual analysis we are thus interested in the *actual and potential use* of words or concepts, as well as the *criteria* or *principles* which determine or underlie the accepted use of a word (in Rossouw 2003: 25).

I interpret “boundaries” in this sense to mean, the outer parameter within which all related words that could conceivably give meaning to the term to be conceptually analysed, may fall. Thus all other terms that have some relation to the given term (such as murder) fall within the boundaries of that term thus giving a more in depth and coherent meaning to that term. All the related words would then give meaning to the term under analysis, reinforcing the “scope of a concept” version. Hirst and Peters refer to this interpretation as having “a sufficient condition for the possession of a concept” (1998: 28).

It is consequently reasonable to conclude that when we analyse a concept, we are in reality examining the use of words in order to see what principle or principles govern their use, meaning that we make them explicit thus uncovering the concept. Two issues come to the fore in this statement namely “grasping a principle” and “discriminate and use words correctly”. To grasp a principle is to have an understanding of what makes a concept what it is, meaning its constitutive interpretation or rules/*related words* (Taylor 1985: 137). A concept, according to this reasoning, has a “general principle”. To shed some further light on this understanding of a concept I again draw on the example of “murder”.

The word “murder”, as I have revealed, is constituted by some “general principle” that it must be a (*unnatural*) social activity which is engaged in by people (meaning animals or species other than humans cannot commit murder) and which is shaped by material (with reference to a murder weapon) and intellectual conditions in which we live. Such an understanding is different

from one that explains “murder” in terms of a general empirical condition only, such as stabbing or poisoning. A person can stab or poison another person without it leading to the death of that person. Alternatively a person can have an “unnaturally” induced death without being murdered. He might fall off a cliff or be involved in a car accident which culminates in death. This brings to the fore other related words, such as culpable homicide, first or second degree (murder), suicide or accident. In this sense, merely to die an unnatural death is not a sufficient condition for murder. What constitutes murder is not simply that empirical conditions prevail whereby death occurred due to “unnatural” conditions. Rather, what makes for murder is the “general principle” or constitutive rule which guides and shapes rational social engagement on the part of human beings thus involving “unnatural” death in a specific sense, that being externally induced by someone else, but not inclusive of accidental death.

In terms of arguing for this “general principle”, Hirst and Peters describe it as a search for the “logically necessary conditions” for the use of a term. They reason that searching for logically necessary conditions depends on how humans envision activities. Fay refers to this as constitutive rules, while Taylor calls it constitutive meanings. However, MacIntyre (1981: 72) argues the same principle in terms of rational meanings when he calls for reasoned and justifiable arguments. In this sense logically necessary conditions are not only “out there”, to be discovered, on the contrary one may argue to construct one’s own logically necessary conditions or constitutive meanings. In this way one can possibly avoid being lured into positivism, which posits that logically necessary conditions is “out there” and should simply be discovered. Constructing rational or constitutive meanings (as was done with the concept “murder”) moves one beyond positivism and into the realm of an interpretivist mode. We should, therefore, realise that analysing a concept cannot be done adequately (atomistically) by simply examining the use of words in any self-contained way. We have to study carefully their relation to other words and understand the different purposes that lie behind their use (Hirst & Peters 1998: 32). In other words it is an exploration to uncover meaning or understanding within the context that the concept is used. It is in this sense

that I argue for employing conceptual analysis. Put differently, I do not aim to utilise conceptual analysis in an atomistic sense for the reason that I rather attempt to explore meanings/understanding as opposed to simply trying to identify relating concepts.

In this dissertation I shall analysis of the concepts democratic citizenship and school governance, I shall draw on Hirst and Peters' interpretation of conceptual analysis as well as Fay's understanding of constitutive rules. I shall thus (in chapter three) emphasise the concept liberal democracy to ascertain what it means (its constitutive meanings and how governors interpret and/or give rational meanings to the term), and what it means to indulge in a democratic practice. I shall further distinguish between different strands of liberal democracy and analyse the deliberative model. I also analyse what people (different stakeholders within a school community) understand when they refer to "governance" and how such practices may be deemed democratic/less democratic. I shall further draw a link between peoples (community) understanding of citizenship and how it unfolds within a democratic order.

Having provided an account of conceptual analysis and its location within an interpretive paradigm, I subsequently introduce case studies for the reason that I shall analyse at least three case studies on current practices within School Governing Bodies.

### **1.3.3.2. CASE STUDY METHOD**

I should at the outset state that I shall not employ case studies in the manner that I explore. The reason for giving some insight into this method is because I intend to make inferences from the case studies of other researchers. I shall consequently illuminate on case studies which are not necessarily my own. In other words I reflect on the insights of others who have done research on school governance in order to correlate it with my own findings.

Cantrell (1993: 87) claims that methodology guides choices concerning methods. Although interpretive research studies do not rely exclusively on methods that produce qualitative data, they are the methods most commonly used (Patton 1990, Cantrell 1993). In this regard it makes sense to employ the case study method for as Patton and Cantrell posit, it is the most typically used method within an interpretive paradigm. The term “typically” suggests an understanding that it is not the only method available to this type of inquiry. I consequently further explore the case study method to frame its context for this dissertation. In my exploration I shall contest a notion that case studies fall within a positivist paradigm. I shall then argue for moving case studies beyond positivism towards a more interpretive approach.

Merriam (1988: 1) claims that although case study is a familiar term to most people, there is little agreement on what constitutes case study research. Stenhouse (1988: 49) suggests that even though quantitative indices are used (generally descriptive), case study research should be viewed as a response to research done with the psychoanalytical paradigm. He argues as follows:

Case study may be seen as a response to the need for a return to close natural observation, or as a reaction against positivist epistemology implied in the psychostatistical paradigm. Case study methods are often described as naturalistic, qualitative, descriptive, responsive, interpretive, hermeneutic, or idiographic by way of contrast to the abstracted, quantitative, nomothetic approach of psychostatistical methods that strip observation to indices (1988: 49).

Case studies are, therefore, useful to study problems in depth, to understand the stages in processes, or to understand situations in context. It has been argued that case studies have provided the basis for the development of the science of human behaviour. According to Cohen and Manion (1991: 125) case studies are based on observation, the purpose of which is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute a case study unit. They claim that this offers the advantage of being firmly embedded in reality, with attention to the subtleties and complexities including

rich detail. I support this view, and in addition claim that case studies are not linked to any particular type of data or data collection method, for methods include participant observation, various types of interviewing ranging from unstructured to structured, questionnaires and checklists. The use of multiple methods is common. Gilgun (1994) reinforces this and further argues that case studies can serve many purposes, including, but not limited to description, explanation, prediction and hypothesis generation. For example, case studies can describe the subjective meanings an individual attributes, to life events, identify themes in individual lives, and investigate causal relationships between variables. In this regard, Merriam (1988: 11–13) recognises four features of the interpretive case study: *particularistic*, *descriptive*, *heuristic*, and *inductive*. *Particularistic* means that the case study focuses on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon. *Descriptive* means that the final case study report is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. As full a description as possible is given of the incident or entity being investigated. *Heuristic* means that the case study illuminates and extends the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. *Inductive* means that the case study relies on inductive reasoning: data are grounded in the context itself. A distinguishing aspect is the issue of generalisability; as Vulliamy, Lewin and Stevens (1990: 72) argue when they claim that research could use the micro to illustrate the macro. I interpret this to mean that the case study could be used to interpret other cases, which have the same underlying features. Put differently, research which has no apparent meaning beyond its boundaries, has limited appeal, and even less potential for the application of the findings. This does not mean that I endorse the notion of generalisability, for I mostly equate it with empirical studies and positivism. I therefore cautiously argue that in moving from the “micro to the macro”, researchers may use conceptual analysis to interpret the case studies of other researchers in order to underscore the data of studies which are related. In other words, when data from different case studies within the same field of research correlate/compare, one may reasonably draw inferences from these. The upshot of this is that one’s inference is not necessarily the only or true conclusion. The point is that one should be able to rationally explain why one draws such inferences. In my case I shall use the case



studies of others who have done research on school governance practices (specifically related to its support for democracy) in order to underscore my own findings. For this reason I give some insight into descriptive research.

### **1.3.3.3. DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH**

To solve problems about children, school organisation or teaching of a subject, information or facts must be *produced* about what exists. The nature of the prevailing conditions and existing attitudes must often be determined and the activities, objects and persons described (Lovell & Lawson 1970: 29). I draw on this understanding of descriptive research, because it specifically includes the problem of school organisation (school governance), where existing attitudes must be uncovered and explained. This understanding finds space within the interpretivist mode of thinking. Descriptive research does not consist of routine fact gathering (production), it also seeks to determine the degree to which underlying factors (attitudes and perceptions of individuals, socio-economic conditions) exist and estimate their relative importance. This understanding finds resonance in the notion of “language, rules and forms of life” as argued for earlier. Description is consequently not only about data production, but much rather its interpretation, taking into consideration what influences the actors to act the way they do. Lovell and Lawson (1970: 30) argue that research of this nature may not answer basic questions (of a technician/positivist nature), it does not involve the use of experiments; it rather seeks to uncover the nature of factors involved in a given situation. It involves an element of interpretation of the meaning or significance of what is described. They conclude by stating:

Descriptive research describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with conditions that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs and attitudes that are held, processes that are ongoing, and trends that are developing (Lovell & Lawson 1970: 31).

These are precisely the criteria which I shall employ in my quest to unravel the current practices of School Governing Bodies. My emphasis in this

dissertation is, therefore, on insight as well as overview. This relates to the notion that this dissertation aims to explain what is actually happening and then relate it to what ought to be happening. Taking into consideration the foregoing arguments, I choose to use conceptual analysis and the interpretation of case studies as my method within the paradigms for which I argued.

I now briefly discuss how deconstruction prepares us to create space for the inclusion of the “other”. My reasoning stems from the fact that I flirt with this method in chapter five where I try to include the marginalised voices that are seemingly excluded from the deliberative process. Deconstruction’s emphasis on a particular approach of handling the “other” allows for a better chance of including the marginalised voices in the school governance process.

#### **1.3.3.4. DECONSTRUCTION AND THE OTHER**

I should at the outset confess that I turned to Derrida for an understanding of deconstruction. I tried to make sense of Derrida, however, I am still sceptical of whether my interpretation and reading of Derrida is credible to the degree that I can claim justifiable understanding. I am consoled by the claim of Biesta when he posits that writing about Derrida traps you in a “catch 22 position” for the reason that:

Getting Derrida “right”, that is, giving the final representation of the original meaning of his oeuvre, is at the very same time not getting him right (Biesta 2001: 35).

In other words the very impossibility of getting Derrida right seems to open up the possibility of engaging with Derrida and deconstruction. Biesta further argues that it is the assumption that meaning can be grasped in its original moment, that meaning can be represented in the form of some proper, self-identical concept, that Derrida is most determinedly out to challenge (2001: 34). I interpret Biesta to mean that implicitly there is forever a risk of “misunderstanding”, meaning that “misunderstanding” is always a possibility. I

now attempt to give an explanation of how I understand deconstruction and its emphasis on creating space for the “other”.

Deconstruction has often been accused of being a form of critical analysis that aims at tearing apart everything it finds in its way, meaning that it has nihilistic implications. However, at closer scrutiny one finds that deconstruction has distinct ethico-political implications; something that I contend is useful for educational governance for the reason that such governance has a political slant/foundation. Biesta argues that the ethico-political horizon of deconstruction can be described as a concern for the “other”. Deconstruction’s affirmation is not merely an affirmation of what already exists and, for that reason, can be known and identified, but rather an affirmation of what is “wholly other” (2001: 33). Derrida himself posits that: “Rather than being destructive, negative, or *an enclosure in nothingness*, deconstruction is *an openness towards the other*” (1984: 124). He further posits that:

Once you relate to the other as the other, then something incalculable comes on the scene, something which cannot be reduced to the law or to the history of legal structures. This is what gives deconstruction its movement (1997: 17-18).

I interpret this to mean that you should relate to the Other with respect, the type of respect that you feel you deserve. This does not relate to legislated rules or policies. It goes beyond what is documented and rather relates to the interaction with others on the level that one expects for oneself. In other words if you relate to others as you would wish others should relate to you, then you operate on instinct rather than (un)-documented rules/laws. It relates to the age-old saying of “do unto others as you wish others would do unto you”. The upshot of such reasoning is that it is improbable that you would want others to treat you with disrespect or to harm you. The rationale is that psychologically the human species has a tendency to move away from harm/punishment and towards pleasure/good. If this claim is plausible, then it stands to reason that humans would expect for themselves what is good. In much the same manner

deconstruction argues that one operate on the same principle when dealing with the Other.

Furthermore, this otherness is not necessarily known, meaning that if the other is known, then it brings to a close the idea of being “other”. One is therefore Other for as long as there remain a difference from oneself. Put differently, otherness shall remain for the reason that humans are dynamic, constantly changing their thinking and their behaviour patterns. For example, given the same set of circumstances one cannot predict that two individuals would react the same. In fact the same individual might react differently under the same set of circumstances at different occasions. The point is that to know the other is always in the making, always a challenge that is never complete. Derrida argues that “it is an affirmation of an other that is always to come, as an event which *as event, exceeds calculation, rules, programmes, anticipations and so forth*” (1992: 27). Deconstruction is, therefore, more than just being open towards the “other”; it is rather an openness towards the unforeseeable construction/development of the other. Caputo suggests that deconstruction can best be thought of as inventionalism (1997: 42). It is this “inventionalism” that makes the “experiencing” (as opposed to knowing) of the other possible. Derrida argues that such invention “has to declare itself to be the invention of that which did not appear possible; otherwise it only makes explicit a programme of possibilities within the economy of the same” (1989: 60). One may thus reasonably argue that deconstruction is the pursuit of the impossible, meaning the possibility of its development and continued existence lies in the realisation that it is sustained by its impossibility. Caputo reinforces this view when he posits that instead of deconstruction being “wiped out by its impossibility, it is actually nourished by it” (1997: 32).

This “impossibility“ is directly related to Derrida’s interpretation of understanding and misunderstanding. He argues that there cannot be certainty or “complete” understanding when one tries to make sense of human action. Implicitly there is always a chance of misunderstanding. Put differently, misunderstanding is part of understanding. To clarify this point I turn to Derrida who posits that “the structural possibility of misunderstanding must be

taken into account when describing so-called normality and also that this possibility can neither be excluded nor opposed” (1988: 157). Following this argument I deduce that there cannot be pure understanding but also that there cannot be pure misunderstanding. Biesta argues that misunderstanding is the essential and necessary risk of all understanding (2001: 36). He further claims that there is only one way of avoiding this risk, and that is not to engage in the act of interpretation. I have earlier argued for interpretation as a means of conducting my research, meaning that I am compelled to take this “risk”. However, I am comforted by the idea that there seems to be no other alternative, meaning that not taking the “risk” shall transform into stagnation, thus making nonsense of my earlier claim that life is dynamic.

Deconstruction is aimed at uncovering our preconceived understanding of identity as self-sufficient presence, in order to expose us to the challenge of hitherto concealed, excluded, and suppressed otherness; an otherness which has been ignored in order to preserve the very illusion of identity as self-sufficient presence. In other words deconstruction is aimed at revealing the otherness which is excluded and suppressed in order to maintain the myth of a pure and uncontaminated original presence. Put differently, “otherness” is actually constitutive of that which presents itself as pure, self-sufficient and self-present (Biesta 2001: 44). Furthermore, at stake in deconstruction is an attempt to bring into view the “impossibility to totalise, the impossibility to articulate a self-sufficient, self-present centre from which everything can be mastered and controlled. In doing this, the possibility of exclusion is exposed, giving deconstruction its source to do justice to what is excluded. Justice, according to Derrida, is always directed towards those who are excluded, alternatively towards the other. He argues that:

If justice is a concern for the other as other, for the otherness of the other, for an otherness that, by definition, we can neither foresee nor totalise, if justice, in short, always addresses itself to the singularity of the other, we are obliged – in the name of justice – to keep the unforeseen possibility of the in-coming of the other, the surprise of the “invention” of the other, open (Derrida 1992: 20).

Justice towards the Other is consequently sustained by its impossibility, however, impossibility in this sense does not refer to that which is not possible, but rather that “which possibility cannot be foreseen” (Derrida 1992: 16). The upshot is that if impossibility refers to that which is not possible, then it becomes akin to prediction. Put differently, to determine whether something is impossible is to predict that it is not possible. To be able to do this one has to have some measure of what possibility is. Only by having an exact measure of what is possible can one determine whether something is impossible. However, that which might seem to be impossible today might become possible in future. To further explain this point I relate an example. Prior to the space age, walking on the moon was deemed as an impossibility in the sense that it cannot be possible. However, today this is not only possible, but also a reality. It is in this regard that Derrida argues for impossibility as that which cannot “now” be foreseen. However, the possibility always exists that it might come to fruition in future. In relation to the other this means that we confront the other as other with infinite possibilities. In this way the other has the possibility of inclusion, as opposed to being excluded. Justice towards the other, according to this argument, is forever evolving and never complete. We can never decide once and for all what justice is. In this regard Biesta (2001: 48) argues that:

Justice is therefore not a principle or a criterion (as this would mean that we would know right now what justice is), nor an ideal (as this would mean that we would now be able to describe the future situation of justice), nor even a regulative ideal (which would still imply a description of what justice is).

The point is that to do justice to the Other, one has of necessity to include whatever justice might mean, making the task a task of constant growth and evolvment. By doing so the possibility of excluding the Other becomes remote, or alternatively exclusion would transform into injustice. Having given some insight as to how deconstruction aims to create space for the inclusion of “the other”, I now move onto a discussion of the questioning method.

### 1.3.3.5. QUESTIONING

One of the purposes of this dissertation is to question educational policy development, its formulation, and its implementation with specific reference to school governance. The point is to find what normative implications these policies entail, and to suggest alternative implementation practices. Burbules posits that a good deal of work in philosophy of education is less concerned with discourses, principles, and systems, and more with fairly specific policies and practices that define educational business. The reason for questioning specific policies and practices may be to find whether they support or violate principles of justice, fairness, or equality or whether they may violate certain rights (Burbules & Warnick 2004: 10). I use this method in this regard, and to further challenge “the political motivations and agendas that have given rise to many calls” for inclusion in the school governance process (Burbules & Warnick 2004: 11). To further clarify my reasoning for employing this method I quote Burbules and Warnick who posit that:

In carrying out *questioning*, philosophers will inevitably bring in substantive positions derived from larger philosophical orientations or “isms.” Liberals will tend to unpack these problems in one-way; conservatives or traditionalists another; pragmatists yet another; feminists perhaps still another. ... the differences among these characteristic ways of approaching the study of educational policies and practices also make possible a further kind of investigation, namely, one that juxtaposes these different versions of the phenomena and their characteristic modes of analysis, not with an eye toward picking the “right” one, but as a way of understanding the complexity of the problems and the unique contribution that each “way of seeing” can offer to appreciate the multifacetedness and difficulty of the issues at stake (2004: 11).

It is in this regard that I explore the different interpretations of liberal democracy and how it impacts on school governance policies and practices in disadvantaged schools in South Africa. I should immediately add that I do not

explore all the possible interpretations for this would be almost impossible. The point is that interpretations change as peoples' understanding permits them to reflect, and reinterpret that which previously existed. Questioning and re-evaluating in this sense becomes a dynamic process, constantly open to change.

Exploring the mentioned methods one may reasonably argue that there seems to be a binding thread that connect these methods. This connecting thread is visible in the sense that I argue for the utilisation of these methods. It is my contention that the movement towards creating meaning, and therefore understanding brings these methods together. In other words the methods that I propose are not mutually exclusive but rather that meaning/understanding (for the sake of clarification) forms a link between them. Put differently, conceptual analysis is not necessarily foundationalist but can also compliment deconstruction in a sense that whilst its endeavour is to uncover meaning/understanding, deconstruction seems to take the further step, suggesting that it goes beyond meaning. Deconstruction aims to identify the internal contradictions or ambiguities in the uses of the concept. In this way deconstruction also clarify meaning and therefore understanding within a particular context in which the concept is used. It is for this reason that I argue for a complimentary relationship between conceptual analysis, deconstruction and questioning.

#### **1.4. SUMMARY**

In this chapter I briefly outlined the situation that prevailed prior to the realisation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). In this regard I made reference to the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and highlighted its insistence on democratic practices. I then proceeded to elucidate on the position that "citizens" occupy in this democratic framework by referring to Aspin who argues that citizens of a democracy do not simply arrive at political maturity being ready and able to run its institutions (1995: 56). Democratic practices are thus not innate and materialise naturally. Then I gave some insight into my reasons for embarking on this research, stressing that I felt the



direct strains and anxieties of new education policies. I further argued for my suspicion of less democratic practices with reference to the divide between policy formulation and its implementation. My next step was to pose my research question and briefly argue for bridging this divide via a critical discourse and working towards a notion of deliberation and democratic citizenship. I followed this by claiming that a means of bridging this divide, thus leading to more democratic practices, which are attuned to the South African Schools Act and The Bill of Rights, is to employ an understanding that, if school governance is framed according to democratic citizenship (incorporating deliberation), it has the potential to be critical, that is emancipatory and transformative, i.e. securing more democratic practices. This is also my main claim. Furthermore I have explored the distinction between method and methodology, emphasising those that I shall employ in this dissertation.

## **1.5. PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

In chapter two I shall provide an overview of the history of education and its influence on the genesis of school governance in South Africa. I endeavour to start this overview in 1976 when the first major challenges regarding education in particular had to be confronted, with particular reference to those agencies which I believe influenced the thinking of the apartheid rulers of South Africa. I shall traverse this course by continually linking the significant historical development with the impact or potential influence that it might have on the road to democratic school governance in South Africa.

Chapter three firstly links the historical perspective to current discourse in educational governance. It proceeds to explore the influence of globalisation on South African politics in general and education policy (with specific reference to school governance) in particular, emphasising the role of decentralisation. I then explore some constitutive features of liberal democracy, emphasising the conception of representation. I argue that such representation has the potential to undermine and exclude the marginalised groups (particularly parents and learners) who serve on the school governing

body. I then proceed to produce empirical evidence/case studies relating to actual school governing body practices in disadvantaged communities in order to expose the inconsistencies it presents for representative democracy as currently interpreted in school governance practices. The objective is to uncover whether SGB practices further or retards democracy as referred to in the South African Schools Act.

In chapter four I shall focus on two strands of liberal democracy. I argue for preferring a communitarian strand as opposed to a libertarian strand. I then attempt to link a deliberative conception of democracy to citizenship thus producing an argument for democratic citizenship. My aim is to provide a defence for a stronger form of democracy in order to minimise the limitations of libertarianism, which I argue tends to support a weaker form of democracy. I further explore citizenship and argue that deliberation potentially creates more space for inclusion thus reinforcing my argument towards a stronger democracy. I shall argue that to be more attuned to the Bill of Rights and the South African Schools Act regarding democratic practices, a realisation of a notion of democratic citizenship is essential. I further argue that a more tenable route to acquire democratic transformation within school governance is when the notion of a “virtuous citizen” is employed. I further argue that deliberation afford citizens with the opportunity to reconsider and reflect on their preferences as well as the views of others, leading to a more critical analysis of “the common good”. Such deliberative citizens, I argue, have the potential to create for themselves the space and opportunity for empowerment thus furthering their emancipatory prospects.

In chapter five I argue for the implications of a deliberative model of democracy on citizenship and school governance practices. However, I first relate this to the practices as I alluded to in chapter three and argue for the necessary conditions that I deem needs to be adhered to in order for school governance to occupy its rightful space in South Africa’s young democracy. By identifying the weaknesses in school governor practices I expose how such practices might be at variance with the notion of deliberative democracy and the type of citizenship as argued for in chapter four. I then proceed to

argue that reconstructing school governance in relation to the notion of deliberation, and consequently democratic citizenship, has the means of potentially steering towards more democratic practices, which are attuned to the South African Schools Act and the Bill of Rights. This I claim reinforces my notion of a stronger, more sustainable school governing body regime in disadvantaged schools in South Africa. I then conclude by making a few autobiographical leaps through this dissertation, uncovering its weaknesses and arguing for space for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **HISTORICAL ANALYSIS INTO (BLACK) EDUCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

In chapter one I alluded to the long history of struggle waged towards ensuring participation in education and attaining democratic school governance in this country. In this chapter I shall give an historical analysis of the development of particularly black education with the view of linking its advance to the growth of school governance in South Africa. Taylor argues that, “any discussion on governance in education, which includes school governance, must acknowledge at the outset that education in general and schools in particular have been sites of struggle between competing interests and ideologies” (1998: 65). I contend that the context of the struggle for participation in the sphere of education and the thrust for democratic school governance (an issue I shall explore in chapter 3) was moulded in the frame of black education in this country. It is with this understanding that I analyse the historical development of particularly black education in South Africa.

In 1994 the ANC articulated the following vision for the governance of the future (the period beyond 1994) education and training system:

Governance at all levels of the integrated national system of education and training will maximise democratic participation of stakeholders, including the broader community, and will be oriented towards equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and the sharing of responsibility (ANC, 1994: 22).

The rationale was to transform an education system characterised by inequalities according to race, class and geographic location with specific reference to the divide between rural and urban areas. I trace the rationale

behind this transformation in order to give an insight into how school governance developed to become what it is today. Furthermore there was firstly an assumption (with reference to the ANC's 1994 vision) that education will enhance and sustain national development, and secondly, that a decentralised management system would ensure delivery at all levels of the education system (McLennan in Mhone & Edigheji 2003: 182). The notion of decentralisation has a direct bearing on school governance and, therefore, I shall address this issue and its concomitant influence on equity and redress later on in this chapter. Before I proceed with my historical analysis I need to briefly present my understanding of cooperative governance, because it has an impact on decentralisation.

A major challenge that the democratic government faced was to redress the apartheid injustices. This meant that the relations between government and the broader South African society had to change in order to involve all the social actors, irrespective of race, ethnicity, and cultural or religious persuasion. Consequently there have been legislative and institutional reforms, favouring cooperative governance. This is in contrast with the autocratic and unilateral governance style of the apartheid era. Cooperative governance refers to a reciprocal relationship between the state and civil society to formulate and implement public policy. Edigheji argues that cooperative governance can take two forms: “either that interest groups are directly represented in negotiating forums or that their interests are internalised within regulatory regimes that subject the activities of private agents to self-imposed discipline” (in Mhone & Edigheji 2003: 72). Edigheji also claims that cooperative governance includes “fostering a constructive relationship between civil society, trade unions and the democratic government”. He further argues that:

This would involve the establishment of participatory structures to promote consultation to enable civil society to take part in decision-making and implementation (2003: 70).

It is within such a framework of establishing participatory structures that the new educational governance policies materialised. Rodrik reinforces this view when he posits that: “co-operative governance gives voice to various actors, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of the system” (in Mohne & Edigheji 2003: 72). In relation to SGBs in particular, the interest groups (including learners, teachers, parents and non-teaching staff) are directly represented via elected governors, meaning that the elected governors are part of the decision making process, as well as participating in its implementation. I am, however, more interested in the idea of “promoting consultation”, because it embeds notions of deliberation, contestation and reflection which are constitutive meanings of deliberative democracy (a concept that I explore in chapter 3). I therefore concur with the interpretation of Edigheji and Rodrik when the constitutive meanings (as mentioned) are part of their understanding. Having given a brief glimpse into cooperative governance I shall return to this concept when I address decentralisation later on in this chapter. I shall again refer to this concept in chapter 3 in my discussion on deliberative democracy. I now proceed with the historical analysis.

It should be reasonably acceptable to argue that school governance, and in particular School Governing Bodies (SGBs) as they exist in a democratic South Africa, could not have originated in a vacuum. SGBs, as they exist today, have a context within which they unfolded. It is in this sense that a historical analysis into education could possibly locate the progress of school governance in a particular context. School governance *per se* cannot be divorced from the broader educational development in South Africa. On the contrary its context is inextricably linked to educational development, and to the broader political development of this country. To this extent separate facilities were deemed necessary for the sound educational development of different racial/ethnic groups in South Africa. In order to appreciate why separate facilities and differing degrees of education were provided to South Africans, the concept of “separate development”, more commonly known as apartheid, should be understood. Because this is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I presume this to be a given, save to mention that the four major ethnic/racial groupings who were the recipients of this unequal education

provision were the Blacks (majority), the Coloureds, the Indians and the Whites. Kallaway concludes that:

The consequences of this system (*of apartheid education*) in terms of human suffering and the abrogation of human rights are difficult to overestimate, and it has been recognised as one of the most dramatic cases of institutional education injustice in the history of the twentieth century ... (2002: 2-3).

Since the formation of The Republic of South Africa (1961), the integration/segregation option was a recurring debate throughout the history of this country. One may even reasonably presuppose that the two conflicting forces (those who wanted integration of the races as opposed to segregation) started with the landing of Van Riebeeck (1652), for as Houghton posits: “the official policy and desired aims of all governments at the Cape were concentrating on containing White settlement and keeping the races apart” (1967: 20). One could argue that the concepts of integration and segregation formed the major debate of inter group or inter personal relationships in South Africa. This tension is also embedded in any debate about education in this country. The manner in which individuals or organised groups reacted to this tension, shaped or at least influenced policy in general, and education in particular. This developed into a kind of pendulum movement between “action” and “reaction”. At times the government would act by implementing policy, which would trigger reaction from the masses (majority of the population that I earlier stated is black) that the policy affected. Alternatively, the masses would act in such a way that triggered policy development and implementation to curb or influence the action. In such a scenario the state reacts. It is precisely such an Act by government (initiating policy) regarding the medium of instruction that evoked a reaction from the black (those other than white) school population, which resulted in developments which I claim the state did not foresee and was, therefore, unprepared to manage reasonably.

It is my understanding that a major challenge which can be regarded as a watershed in terms of the provision of schooling in all its facets (financing, infrastructural development and governance), confronted the Nationalist Government in 1976. For this reason I shall give attention to educational discourse in South Africa after this watershed event. To describe what occurred in schools during 1976 as an event is actually erroneous, for it was rather a process than an event, meaning it was not a once-off occurrence. The reason for referring to it as an event is simply to say that it had its origin within a particular Gregorian year (1976). As this narrative unfolds it will become clear that this “event” in reality formed the foundation for subsequent progress on the path to democratic school governance where ordinary citizens could participate in, and influence decisions regarding school governance in this country. I shall, however, not limit my discussion to developments after 1976, but shall also continually make reference to issues that predated the 1976 Soweto school uprisings.

When one refers to school governance or any other form of governance for that matter, one shall inevitably refer to the notion of legitimacy. The legitimacy principle in terms of governance is consequently crucial at any level of government. In this regard Muller (1992) argues that when a system falls far short of public expectations it loses its recognition-worthiness; it loses the faith of the citizens in the ability or capacity of the entire system – the administrators, the planners, the politicians, indeed the existing government and the party that serves it as a whole – to serve the common good. As a result it becomes less trustworthy and, therefore, a certain sub-minimum of its legitimacy evaporates, while all further attempts by the existing authorities to crisis-manage or reform the system only make matters worse. Such a system is then said to have a legitimacy crisis, and nothing short of a change of governing authority will reinstate public faith in its governing and delivery capacity. South Africa’s education system is the international exemplar par excellence of a system in such a crisis (in Heese & Badenhorst 1992: 10-11). Such an interpretation of legitimacy and its concomitant consequences affected the responses of the mass democratic movement in South Africa. The call from grassroots was that “the people shall govern”. This became a



rallying as well as mobilising phrase for those who actively sought to end the apartheid regime. This understanding of developments in the political realm in general and in education in particular summarises the conditions which prevailed immediately prior to and which existed for more than a decade in the aftermath of the Soweto school uprisings of 1976. At this juncture it could be argued that the ruling National Party<sup>1</sup> was totally out of sync with the broad democratic movement.

The Nationalist ruling party, though realising a loss of legitimacy, argued that the crisis could be handled on the one hand by repressing through force the aspirations of the democratic forces, while on the other hand resorting to what they claimed to be policy improvements, with specific reference to the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS). The ruling Nationalist government referred to this dual approach as part of their “total strategy”, to confront and deal with what they claimed to be a “total onslaught”. This “total strategy” concept was initiated in 1977 with the view to enable the various population groups of a meaningful input in legislation. “The outcome of this was the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (Act 110 of 1983), which created a Parliament consisting of three chambers” (Behr 1988: 17). This “Tri-Cameral” system later created the space for the “total strategy” in education to be implemented on the recommendations of the De Lange Report.<sup>2</sup> I shall discuss this initiative later on in this chapter.

With reference to the concept of legitimacy, I contend that the decisive rupture of legitimacy was inaugurated with the school student revolts in 1976 and their associated influence on political development. These revolts and boycotts, continuing for more than a decade, were initially reactive (as a consequence of being forced to take lessons in the Afrikaans language), but later on galvanised into methodically planned actions with the distinct intention of not only improving education for the disadvantaged majority, but in effect to

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<sup>1</sup> The National Party (NP) came into government as the ruling party in 1948 and legislated racial segregation known as apartheid.

<sup>2</sup> The Human Science Research Council (HSRC) was commissioned (in June 1980) by the Government to investigate all facets of education in S.A. under the chairmanship of Prof. De Lange who tabled this ‘De Lange Report’ in October 1981.

transform or renew the entire education system. With reference to my earlier argument of action/reaction between the state and the majority of the population, it seems as-if the initial mass response was reactionary. If this assumption is valid, then one may reasonably argue that the state acted while the masses reacted. However, as the developments unfolded the masses started to plan their actions more methodically through organised structures thus transforming their reaction into action. To this action the state then reacted. Whilst the initial idea (from the mass-democratic movement) was to transform education, their efforts soon snowballed into the broader political arena, encompassing the broader struggle against apartheid. This effectively means that the rationale (within the mentioned decade) moved beyond the scope of education and rather encompassed the repressive political realm of its time. Davis reinforces this interpretation when he argues that:

The mass resistance demonstrated in Soweto was not only (*against Afrikaans as a language of instruction*) anti-apartheid but apparently anti-capitalist as well” (in Kallaway 1984: 343, *my italics*).

The impact of the 1976 school uprising thus had a major influence on the educational and political development during the subsequent years. I now turn to this watershed on South Africa’s road to transforming the education landscape (including educational governance).

### **2.2.1. BACKGROUND TO THE 1976 SCHOOL BOYCOTTS**

The period prior to the implementation of the Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953) saw the social order in urban areas under threat. Large numbers of youth were roaming the streets, because the schooling system could not provide for them. They became easy prey for African nationalist political movements. The urgency of the situation dictated governance policies that were driven by a desire for the social control of particularly the black urban youth. Notwithstanding the Verwoerdian apartheid ideology, the National Party permitted expansion in urban housing (under the 99 year lease-hold agreement) and education. This was a deviation from the ideal of the migrant

labour system, which underpinned the notion that the urban settlements in South Africa are the domain of the white ruling class. Soweto (Johannesburg), Kwazakhele (Port Elizabeth), Duncan Village (East London) and Nyanga (Cape Town) thus came into being.

The existing mission school system could not provide for the growing numbers of urban youth on the one hand, and more importantly was unable to exert social control over them. The relaxation of the migrant labour system and the development of urban housing, together with the introduction of Bantu Education, created the mechanism the state needed to control the urban youth. It also generated a semi-skilled workforce for which urban industrialists were clamouring. Even the liberal opposition parties within government supported the idea of the state controlling black education (Hyslop 1999: 54). Hyslop argues that the National Party government used education in its attempt to create a new hegemonic social order. It tried to lure black parents into the school system through the establishment of school boards and committees (1999: 51).

My understanding of this new hegemonic social order was to create a political consciousness that would be in line with the ethnically divided Bantustan system, on which the Verwoerdian “Grand Apartheid” notion was premised. In terms of the Bantu Education Act, school committees would be partially elected by parents, while the majority were to be directly appointed by the Native Affairs Department (NAD). The real power, according to Hyslop (1999: 61), was locked within the school boards whose members were all appointed by the NAD. The school boards had considerable powers, including the hiring and firing of teachers. It provided more conservative members of local communities a degree of control over teachers, which in effect alienated rather than incorporated teachers into the new education system (Hyslop 1999: 82-86). The school boards in effect served to implement the policy of unequal and inferior education for Blacks. The appointed members of the board, whilst being from the community, actually worked against those who propagated the notion of “equal education for all”. The board members actuated their duty by unquestioningly implementing whatever policy came

from the Bantu Education Act. In this regard Hyslop claims that those who propagated equal education for all “saw the school boards as an intrinsic part of Bantu Education’s imposition of a totally separate and inferior education system” (1999: 83). Their style of governance was autocratic, leaving no space for dialogue. “The boards also became the instruments of the state’s purge of politically dissident teachers from the profession ... “ (Hyslop 1999: 86). School governance via the Bantu Education Act was consequently in reality state controlled, with little or no real power to influence decisions by either teachers or parents. Even the elected parents who served on the school committees had slender influence on decisions, precisely because those decisions had to fit into the policy of separate development. The other factor to consider is that even when the elected parents contested issues and offered counter views, they were in the minority, meaning that when the issue was voted upon, they would inevitably lose such a vote. This is by virtue of the fact that the “government appointed representatives” outnumbered the elected representatives. The appointed members were there to specifically counter those whom the state referred to as “agitators”. My interpretation of this is that the NAD wanted parental participation without giving them real control. Even though parent representatives initially participated in this system under the guise that they would have some means of influencing decisions, it soon became clear that they were under a misconception. This governance structure, therefore, became intolerable to local parent communities. However, they were in a position where they either had to accept the system or forego the opportunity for their children to receive a formal education.

Notwithstanding the opposition to this form of education (with reference to the ANC initiated boycotts in April 1955), by the early 1960s the system of Bantu Education had been securely established throughout the country. Hyslop argues that the most important reason for the defeat of the resistance to Bantu Education was the capacity of the state to provide mass schooling. The urban working class parent desperately needed to counter juvenile delinquency that was taking root as a result of the previous school structure not being able to absorb the growing number of urban youth (1999: 78). They were thus prepared to live with this new system of Bantu Education. By 1969

there were 509 school boards and 4108 school committees involving more than 50 000 people (Hyslop 1999: 113).

The historic foundation of Bantu Education is rooted in the findings of the Eiselen Commission which informed policy in 1958 with the Bantu Education Act. This report claimed that the basic foundation of education would be to guarantee the preservation of cultural identity (Behr 1988: 32-37). This understanding of ethnic exclusivity in turn lay behind the Extension of University Act (Acts 40, 43, 47, 49 and 50 of 1969), which formalised the system of not only racially, but also ethnically divided universities (Behr 1988: 194). Thus Fort Hare, Zululand, Western Cape, Durban-Westville and the University of the North became distinctive ethnic/racial institutions. These institutions in turn would produce the teachers who would be responsible for educating the masses at racially exclusive schools. The ideal was to preserve cultural identity as described in the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which provided for transferring control of schools to the Department of Native Affairs, *thus securing a foundation for divide and rule* (Fatton 1986: 16, *my italics*). Although the Act specifies the preservation of cultural identity, the oppressed masses interpreted this as “a racist attempt to educate Africans for subservience” (Fatton 1986: 17). Notwithstanding Fatton’s interpretation, Bantu Education appeared to be working well on the surface six years prior to the Soweto uprisings. However, by 1970 there was again a shortage of space for urban youth, because of a policy to provide secondary schooling within the Bantustans. The development of schools in urban centres had been frozen, making space within urban schools a scarce commodity. This policy of providing secondary schooling within the Bantustan framework was counter-productive for it intensified a rising demand for urban schooling facilities ensuring that the apparent quiescence of students up to 1970 did not last much longer.

In relation to governance, the Nationalist government in South Africa operated in such a manner that state power and its bureaucracies were concentrated in the centre, with those in opposition (the disenfranchised masses) on the periphery. There was forever a tension between centre and periphery with

those in the centre exercising control through psychological and physical repression measures. This tension caused the apartheid authorities towards “wholesale repression of popular oppositional movements where education was harnessed to the application of apartheid policy” (Hyslop 1999: 102). Karlsson argues that those on the periphery have the propensity to revolt and exercise power from below. Such a scenario played itself out in 1976 in the schools and streets of Soweto (in Kallaway 2002: 347). The school boycotts resulted from the educational authorities insistence on a policy of “Afrikaans” as medium of instruction. This then became the catalyst for youths to vacate their classrooms to embark on a journey of what we today refer to as the Soweto schools mass resistance. Afrikaans as a medium of instruction became the symbol of oppressive Bantu education and the response was a massive uprising by learners exercising their power by taking control of the streets of Soweto. However, to conclude that the Afrikaans language was the only reason for the Soweto school boycotts is to have a rather restricted view of the *raison d’être* for the school uprisings. Other variables such as economic development from 1960 onwards and the internal financial structure of the Black Education Department (BED) were major contributory factors to the uprisings.

### **2.2.2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE OF BANTU EDUCATION’S INTERNAL FINANCIAL STRUCTURE**

From 1972 onwards there was a major shift in government policy towards Black education. By this time it was clear that the policy of Bantu Education as it existed at that time did not fulfil in the requirements of producing a docile urban dweller on the one hand and a satisfied industrial elite on the other. In short, the products of Bantu education failed to meet the needs of industry in terms of skilled and semi-skilled labour on the contrary it undermined the possibilities for economic development. At the same time the internal financial structure of the Department of Black Education was deemed not to be viable thus generating an impetus toward restructuring education policy. The financial problems within the Black Education Department (BED) became so acute that the state had to make loans to the BED to prevent it going

bankrupt. The result of these pressures was that from 1972 the state allowed for the expansion of secondary and technical education, *which they had earlier frozen* (Hyslop 1999: 135, *my italics*). By now the government had conceded to the notion of a permanent black urban population in contrast to an earlier belief that blacks are in the urban areas only temporarily. The rationale prior to this concession was that blacks be rooted in urban settlements within their “homelands” as envisioned by the model of “Grand Apartheid”. The pressure from the business community was considerable because it included Afrikaner capitalists who had political clout within the National Party. By late 1971 the basis had been laid for important changes in state labour and education policies (Hyslop 1999: 143-144). The most important was the expansion of black urban schooling and institutions for technical and teacher training. The immediate impact of education policy of 1972 was the rapid expansion of the number of learners in secondary schools who increased from 67 000 in 1965 to 389 000 by 1976 (Hyslop 1999: 151). This resulted in ever increasing learner/teacher ratios, because the building of new classrooms did not keep pace with the number of learners seeking accommodation. In other words, by squeezing larger numbers of older learners into an under-resourced school system, the state generated an environment in which rebellion might grow. According to Hyslop, “the injection of larger numbers of students into an educational system of limited resources led to declining educational standards (1999: 151). This perceived declining standards then further fuelled the call for “equal education”, in fact at this stage the “street-talk” in reference to the type of education that was received was termed “gutter education”.

Part of the reorganisation of education after 1972 was a decision to change the year-structure of black schooling. The structure had previously comprised of an eight-year primary course and a five-year secondary course. The subsequent system was a six-year primary course and a six-year secondary course. This new structure had to be implemented at the start of the 1976 school year. This resulted in both the standard five and standard six learners who passed in 1975 having to be catered for at secondary school level without adequate planning to absorb them. The upshot of this is that the first-

year secondary class would be at least twice the size of the class of the previous year. Hyslop posits that the ill-planned measure of “doubling-up” resulted in chaotic overcrowding on overstrained facilities, causing absolute confusion (1999: 152). The strain on a poorly administered and ill equipped education service caused further disaffection among teachers and sparked a greater level of resentment among learners. This reorganisation of education and the implementation of its policies had to be driven by particularly the school boards. I have earlier alluded to the suggestion that these boards were essentially created to implement policy at local (school) level. This materialised in relation to “the year structure” reorganisation in schools. I have also alluded to the management style of these boards. Notwithstanding the dissatisfaction and resentment this policy caused, the school boards’ (and consequently government) representatives dictatorially administered this policy in schools. To further enhance this issue I quote Hyslop at length when he posits:

Paradoxically, it was the youth’s common experience of a poor quality of mass schooling system that created a common sense of identity and grievance. As one teacher memorably puts it: “Bantu education made us black.” The common experiences of youth provided the basis for a new outlook (based on) the experience of a segregated and inferior school system. The political calm of the 60s ended with the emergence in 1969 of the university-based South African Students Organisation (SASO). It spearheaded a new political current - Black Consciousness. Black Consciousness ... called for the assertion of a black cultural identity, psychological liberation from notions of inferiority, and the unity of all blacks including “Coloureds” and “Indians” (1999: 153-154).

It should be clear that these issues (to which I earlier referred as variables) had a direct impact on developments leading towards the 1976 Soweto uprisings. This, together with a shift towards “Black Consciousness”, transformed urban political attitudes, which in turn undermined the conservative influence of those serving on school committees and the school governing boards. In contrast with their earlier practices, school board



members in particular became more sympathetic towards the cause of those who were struggling against what was perceived to be detrimental to education. In reality school boards and committees gradually became part of the growing protest against education policies after 1972. The changed social and political environment created an urban student movement for which the government did not bargain. The system of Bantu education was supposed to ensure that the generations schooled by this system would accept racial and ethnic exclusivity. One year prior to the 1976 Soweto school boycotts, it seemed as if the system of enforcing ethnicity and racial exclusivity was counter productive. Testimony to this are the developments within schools during 1975 when there were sporadic boycotts in township schools, such as at Morris Isaacson School (in Soweto) Thembalabantu High (in Zwelitsha) and Nathaniel Nyaluzu High School (in Grahamstown) to name three (Hyslop 1999: 157). The situation within black education had thus become a fertile foundation on which the 1976 uprisings would occur. I now return to the issue of Afrikaans as medium of instruction, because it is my view that the developments surrounding this medium of instruction gave direction to a clamour for a more inclusive form of governance. It is this 'inclusive' rationale that directed the emergence of democratic SGBs in South Africa.

### **2.2.3. THE AFRIKAANS LANGUAGE ISSUE**

The language policy directly relates to governance in the sense that such policy would ultimately be implemented via the school boards and the school committees. The Black Education Department assumed that this would occur, because at that stage there was no reason to doubt the performance of individuals who served on school boards. However, the apartheid authorities did not keep pace with developments within the "townships". This I glean from the way in which the Black Education Department managed and responded to the developments in black education.

The militancy among learners since 1972 was more explicit in its actions. This "new-style" confrontational approach had its origins within the manner in which the Nationalist government responded to the needs of particularly black

secondary school learners in urban South Africa. This militancy gradually built from 1972 onwards, snowballing, until it dramatically erupted in mass revolts during and subsequent to 1976. The language policy (with reference to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction) did not suddenly surface in 1976. On the contrary it has its roots in the intolerable “fifty-fifty” rule dating back to the early 1950s. The fifty-fifty rule emphasised that at secondary school level, half of the exam subjects should be taught in English and the other half in Afrikaans. However, this policy was not strictly enforced and schools were given permission by the Black Education Department (BED) to depart from this rule. A majority of secondary schools were given permission to bypass this rule for the reason that their teachers lacked the linguistic abilities or that there was a shortage of text books in the prescribed language. Given that the BED was under financial strain it lacked the financial resources to overcome the textbook shortage. Notwithstanding this situation, it is my understanding that the real battleground for the promotion of Afrikaans as a language of instruction lay within the heart of the ruling Nationalist Party.

By 1973 there was political infighting leading to a struggle for positions between “left” and “rightwing” Afrikaners within government. The left or “verligte” group under the stewardship of Gerrit Viljoen (who became the leader of the Broederbond in 1972) was engaged in political battle with the right or “verkrampste” group led by Andries Treurnicht (who lost the leadership of the Broederbond in 1972). This struggle culminated in the group of Gerrit Viljoen gaining ascendancy within the National Party. Treurnicht was unsuccessful in his attempt to regain his leadership position within the Broederbond in 1974 and subsequently led a strong conservative group within the National Party. The Prime Minister, in an attempt to contain the dissent within his party, started to tilt towards the conservative group of Andries Treurnicht. Hyslop argues that it is within such a context that the “rightwing” members within the educational apparatus utilised the Afrikaans language as an issue of symbolic political importance. “The lack of assertiveness ... on the use of Afrikaans was seen as ... a pattern of weak commitment to traditional National Party values” (1999: 159). Hyslop further reports that:

This feeling emerged most clearly at the 1975 conference of the “Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings” (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Societies). The conference passed a motion calling on the government to promote Afrikaans in all possible ways to achieve its “rightful position” in schools for blacks and Asians. Proposing the motion, Professor J.H. Senekal said: ... For the continued existence of Afrikaans it was important that it should become “a language of use of the black man” (1999: 159).

To give credence to this call to “Afrikaans”, Bantu Education Department Circular No. 6 of 1974 re-asserted the need for the notorious “fifty-fifty” rule, which again came into force via Regional Circular 2 of 1974 forcing the teaching of maths and social studies in Afrikaans (Hyslop 1999: 160). The new drive to enforce a policy of Afrikaans instruction was unpopular among teachers and learners alike. Therefore, it failed to enhance the ideological drive for Afrikaner nationalism and further alienated the already militant black secondary school learners. Even the previously dishonourable school boards resisted this policy, leading to them being threatened with disciplinary action by the Department. Hyslop reports that, “In Atteridgeville, the chair of the school board was sacked for his opposition to the Afrikaans policy. Several school boards in Soweto persisted in instructing their teachers to use English as the sole medium of instruction” (1999: 161-162). The Department’s response was decisive in the sense that teachers who refused to cooperate would have their salaries stopped by the Department, effectively transforming into they being fired. It should, however, be clear that the previous rift between the school boards and the general school community was bridged to a considerable degree. The opposition to the policy of Afrikaans seems to have been internal (with reference to the stand of most school boards) as well as external (with regard to the black school population).

Notwithstanding these warnings the State was adamant in implementing this policy. The replacement of political leadership during this potentially volatile period could be interpreted as making a practical contribution towards reaching this goal. In 1976 the leader of the conservative group, Andries

Treurnicht replaced Punt Janson as Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Development. This was a clear signal from the Prime Minister with regard to the position the Afrikaans language should occupy in secondary schools. It should be obvious that Treurnicht had made his stand for the conservatives in Parliament and his new position gave him the necessary leverage to fulfil his “Afrikaner” loyalty. Following the previous arguments, one may reasonably infer that it was his unshakeable commitment to the language policy and his relentless drive not to compromise on the issue that ultimately triggered the Soweto student uprisings.

During the month of May 1976, five Soweto schools formally applied for an exemption from the “language rule”. However, on 11 June Treurnicht announced that the applications were rejected. Another consideration to inform developments during this period is the activities of the Black Peoples’ Convention (BPC), incorporating the South African Students’ Association (SASO) and the South African Students’ Movement (SASM). As the intensity of the language conflict accelerated, the security police increasingly became involved. The situation became volatile at the start of the mid-year examinations when learners at many schools in Soweto refused to write. This produced a call for collective action to the extent that SASM (the secondary school arm of SASO) convened meetings from which emerged the Soweto Student Representative Council. This organisation arranged for mass student protest against the Afrikaans policy on June 16 1976. The response of the security police generated the impetus for further protests.

During one of their marches to the offices of the education authorities, a confrontation ensued between the protesting learners and the police which resulted in a street massacre. The photograph of a dying Hector Peterson being carried away in the throes of anguish after being shot by the police made international headlines. This effectively positioned the South African education system in the world’s spotlight, etching into the minds of all South Africans this Hector Peterson picture of June 16 1976. Cashing in on this symbol, the anti-apartheid forces assured that they transformed this into a national symbol depicting the brutality and disconcerting attitude of the

apartheid state's repression. For the first time in the history of formal education in South Africa the unarmed youth took it upon themselves to confront the police, who without any prior training to combat such actions, resorted to shooting and killing school children on the streets of Soweto.

The state's security forces effectively took control of those schools identified as fuelling the mood of militancy. One such school is in Zwelitsha (a township in King Williams Town – Eastern Cape), where police cancelled examinations and guarded exam venues to ensure that orders are obeyed, meaning that exams could not continue (Barnes & Haya in Kallaway 2002: 149). The school uprisings became the catalyst for further protests where school children made the streets the battleground to confront, not only the education issue, but also the forces of apartheid in general. They confronted the security forces, endured torture, detention without trial and even death in their effort to overcome their status as non-citizens. I should mention that it is my understanding that although the catalyst for the uprising was the Afrikaans language, it quickly transformed into a broader struggle against apartheid oppression. I therefore argue that while the contestation had its roots in the arena of education, it moved from this arena into the broader framework of a struggle against apartheid. The other argument relating to these uprisings is founded upon the ability of students to organise and plan their actions, which I argue had its origins within a particular context. This leads to an understanding that different ideas, opinions and strategies had to be entertained. Organisation and planning invariably had to take into account differing student voices. Such an understanding leads me to deduce that within such conversation/deliberation, persuasion and contestation invariably impacted upon determining the appropriate form of protest thus giving shape to a future deliberative form of educational governance.

The response of both the security forces and of the ruling Nationalist Party had many consequences, which included youths fleeing the country to take up arms under the banner of "Umkhonto we Sizwe" (the military wing of the ANC); while others left the country to further their education in exile. Another consequence of the school boycotts was that public schools became targets

for arson because it represented the sites of the repressive Nationalist government. Because the uprising could not be restricted to Soweto (it spread to South Africa's southernmost tip, the Western Cape), learners took it upon themselves to assert their authority in defiance of the apartheid authorities. The upshot was that school children started to organise themselves, forming committees which represented schools within a particular district. My understanding of "asserting their authority" and "organising themselves", relates to their ability to accomplish some reasoned form of outcome. In terms of school governance one may reasonably deduce that different views had to be entertained and contested, leading to an understanding that it required an inclusive participatory process. Within such a participatory process dissenting voices would invariably be heard, suggesting a form of deliberation (identifying the more persuasive argument) with the aim of reaching understanding or consensus as to the appropriate cause of action. To me this suggests an advocacy for a future democratic form of representative governance, a type of governance for which the disenfranchised masses would later call. Along the lines of such principles, marches and protests would be organised involving all the schools within that district. The seeds were laid for a different form of school governance outside of the framework of state control. It is in such a context that the Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs) had its origins. PTSAs thus originated from a different mindset, as opposed to how state governance was driven. Firstly the manner in which these bodies were constituted again gives rise to the notion of inclusivity in the sense that it involved most of the major stakeholders. The glaring difference is the inclusion of students effectively creating space for a voice that previously had scant recognition. Secondly, members who served on this body (PTSA) were not appointed, but rather elected within their particular forum, meaning that parents elected their representatives while students elected theirs. Voices from differing stakeholders could now be heard within a forum, which I would argue was specifically created to counter the form of governance that the state instituted. The idea that major stakeholders (parents, teachers and students) had a voice within a structured forum where they could air their views and produce reasoned arguments to further their cause towards more democratic practices leads me to an

interpretation that this “body” (PTSAs) invoked the type of governance features which was commensurate with more democratic practices, an ideal that the future school governing body system envisaged. I shall now address the broader context within which these PTSAs developed.

To understand the foundation of governance outside the framework of state control one needs to go back to at least the 1960s, with the genesis of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The ideological content of the BCM was vital in providing a new political awareness among students. This awareness galvanised thinking and also contributed towards a movement outside the formal education structures, where planning occurred to counter state education policy initiatives.

### **2.3.1. PEOPLE’S EDUCATION AND THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT**

Although the major struggles against apartheid had its foundation in local conditions, much of it can be traced to the trends in an international struggle for democracy. One such influence from beyond the borders of South Africa is the impact of literature. During the 1960s the anti-imperialist thoughts of Paulo Freire in his significant work, “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, impacted upon and further shaped student, teacher and community consciousness against apartheid education. He argued that the student and/or the oppressed could not liberate themselves without a thorough understanding of power relations and their concomitant domination through conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion. Freire’s view of education as cultural action for freedom had a significant influence on the nature of the educational struggle and the broader liberation movement in South Africa since the late 1960s. Nekhwevha posits that South African activists from both the Black Consciousness Movement and the People’s Education Movement used the Freirean pedagogy for the politicisation of the oppressed (in Kallaway 2002: 136). I agree with such an interpretation, because a feature of the campaigns against apartheid education was characterised by a language of protest fused with Freire’s conception of humanism. An example that immediately springs to

mind is demands for “education for liberation” or “people’s education for people’s power”. The National Party Government, realising the influence of the Freire literature, banned the book in the 1970s but failed to prevent its circulation among Black Consciousness Movement activists in higher education institutions (for blacks), such as the University of the Western Cape and Fort Hare University. One may consequently reasonably argue that this literature amongst others, made a significant impression on a key activist named Steven Biko.

### **2.3.2. BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT**

Bantu Steven Biko, born in Ginsberg (a small town in the Eastern Cape), is generally known as the father of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. As mentioned earlier, Paulo Freire’s thoughts influenced the thinking of Biko. To clarify this statement I turn to Biko who wrote:

Conscientisation is a process whereby individuals or groups living within a given social and political setting are made aware of their situation. The operative attitude here is not so much awareness of the physical sense of their situation, but much more their ability to assess and improve their own influence over themselves and their environment ... thus then “conscientisation” implies a desire to engage people in an emancipatory process in an attempt to free them from a situation of bondage (in Woods 1979: 145).

The key concept according to Biko is that of conscientisation, or alternatively making people aware of their own capacity to rescue themselves from a repressive, almost bondage situation. This internal strength that people possess should be accentuated in order that they may emancipate themselves. This was the critical framework within which the Black Consciousness Movement had its origins. It is on this basis that I argue that Paulo Freire influenced the thinking of Black Consciousness activists, for Freire argued for the same type of consciousness, which should lead to emancipation.



The violent destruction of the Defiance Campaign that culminated in the Rivonia Trial effectively robbed the oppressed masses of their leadership. This, together with the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), left oppressed South Africans without a viable means of protest and internal opposition. Fattouh argues that, “the sudden decapitation of the internal revolutionary leadership whose *raison d’être* was to direct armed resistance created an inevitable political vacuum and engendered a profound sense of defeat in the African population” (1986: 31). He further posits that “it was also part of a larger malady of fear, demoralisation and submissiveness” which undermined the struggle for equality (1986: 64). It is in such a context of despair that the Black Consciousness Movement materialised. To get further insight into what Black Consciousness involved I turn to Biko when he answers the question as to what is meant by Black Consciousness:

I mean the cultural and political revival of an oppressed people. This must be related to emancipation of the entire continent of Africa. Africa has experienced the death of white invincibility. Before that we were conscious of mainly two classes of people, the white conquerors and black conquered. The blacks in Africa know now that the whites will not be conquerors forever. I must emphasise the cultural depth of Black Consciousness. The recognition of the death of white invincibility forces blacks to ask the question: Who am I? Who are we? And the fundamental answer we give is this: “People are people”! So, Black Consciousness says: “Forget about colour”! But the reality we faced ten to fifteen years ago did not allow us to articulate this (Biko in Woods 1979: 145-146)

Drawing from Biko’s response the underlying rationale seems to be emancipation, again drawing a link to the critical pedagogy of Freire’s call for “cultural freedom”. It is not unexpected that African students who were arguably the only black social group to have escaped the mood of despair planted the first seeds for Black Consciousness. The Movement embraced not only Africans, but also all those groups who suffered from apartheid

exploitation. The concept “black” meant virtually all who suffered non-citizenship (excluded from political franchise) and were exploited and oppressed by the apartheid regime. With such an interpretation Blacks and those of Indian descent (Asians) and Coloureds (people of mixed racial descent) became fully integrated under the banner of the Black Consciousness Movement. The term “black” was, however, not attributed to all blacks. On the contrary, the Movement reserved the term “non-white” to define those Africans, Asians and Coloureds who collaborated with the white authorities. Fatton posits that the Movement “condemned the African bureaucratic elite of the Bantustans for its incorporation into and acceptance of the political structures of apartheid” (1986: 32). One may reasonably infer that Black Consciousness did not merely emphasise race as a decisive factor in the struggle against white domination, but also stressed the interracial linkages preserving and enhancing the racist reality (1986: 32). Fatton further argues that to be “black” in the Movement's sense implied a determined antagonism to apartheid and the political will to eradicate it (1986: 32). He further posits that “being black was not determined by colour alone; it was determined by the daily experience of enduring oppression as a class of exploited people” (1986: 58). As such, the emancipation of Africans involved the emancipation of the oppressed as a whole.

The blow of the “Rivonia Trial” had a severe impact on the psyche of Africans reinforcing the condition of an acute sense of inferiority amongst blacks. The condition of blacks under apartheid at that time was symbolic of almost everything negative. Thus “black” came to denote being sinful, barbaric, backward, inconsiderate, unreliable, irresponsible and ignorant. In such a scenario many “non-whites” strived to espouse the norms and values of the white oppressor, believing that being civilised meant slavishly imitating the white condition, thus rejecting their blackness. The hegemony of the white ruling class which instilled into the black mind a sense of inadequacy and inferiority had to be contested, and in its place a new black identity had to be constructed. The notion of Black Consciousness was initially the vehicle of a black philosophy of pride and self-affirmation in opposing the white ascendancy of apartheid on a cultural plane and asserting the intrinsic worth

of black people (Fetton 1986: 31-56). The development of Black Consciousness can, therefore, be interpreted as a counter-consciousness emphasising the racial myth of white supremacy and subsequent black inferiority. Inculcating a notion of equality of humans notwithstanding their colour transforms the subhuman culture, which one may argue existed amongst blacks after the “Rivonia Trial”, into a new moral and ethical vision of the equality of all human subjects.

The Black Consciousness Movement had as one of its aims to convince the subordinate masses of South Africa that they have the capacity to undermine the power of the ruling class and as a consequence determine their own destiny as conscious human agents. Thus Black Consciousness was premised on a black philosophy of pride and self-affirmation opposing the negative stereotyping (by white racists who argued for white supremacy), and championing the intrinsic worth of black people. Fetton (1986: 58) reinforces this interpretation when he argues that Black Consciousness was essentially a “process of intellectual renewal and creativity” in much the same way as educational governance required a form of dexterity and creativity. The effects of such an understanding of the equality of humans reinforced the struggle against apartheid in the aftermath of the Rivonia trial. The notion of African Communalism was emphasised stressing the ideal of “self-help” and encouraging identification with those less fortunate than “one’s-self”. One may reasonably suggest that it involved a call for going “back to our roots”, meaning the re-emergence of unique African values as opposed to slavishly incorporating the values of the dominant class or ideology. African Communalism or Communitarity in this sense includes values, such as interdependence, rendering mutual aid, collective action and an obligation on the individual to think and act in the interests of the group/community (Gyekye 1997: 252). Following such a line of reasoning, I argue that it is such values that could conceivably have framed the thoughts of how elected representatives on PTSAs envisaged their form of interaction and thus of governance. Thinking and acting in the interest of the broader community provided a framework that could conceivably inform future governance practices. Kunnie reinforces Gyekye’s view when he argues that these values

embedded in the conception of African communality are the same principles which drove the Black Consciousness Movement towards organisational commitment and independent thinking (2000: 215). It is at such a level of implementing communal values that slogans of an educational nature became the hallmark of driving the struggle against unequal education. The call for “each one teach one” or “an injury to one is an injury to all” immediately comes to mind. Again the ideal of acting in the interest of the collective (inclusivity) becomes visible. It is consequently not implausible to argue that features of communality could possibly have shaped a more democratic form of educational governance.

As stated earlier, Biko carried this Black Consciousness philosophy to the underprivileged masses in a quest to bring the pride back to being black, alternatively being African. In December of 1968 black students formed the South African Students Organisation (SASO) with Steve Biko as its first president. The hallmark of his contribution was his work with dedicated colleagues to ensure that his ideals were practiced via a set of “action-oriented community-based programmes” to drive some of the first community based NGOs in South Africa (Barnes & Haya in Kallaway 2002: 146). The reasoning was that since oppression was the outcome of conscious human action, its demise should result from counter human action. On a practical level related to “action oriented community-based programmes”, one project, operating from Biko’s house, was a bursary fund named the “Ginsberg Educational Fund” that received funding from international church structures linked to the Black Consciousness Movement. Deserving students were carefully selected, always considering political involvement and their ability to “spread the Gospel”, with reference to championing the cause of Biko’s Black Consciousness Movement. For these students, educational opportunity was intimately linked to political activity, thus strengthening the ideals of the Black Consciousness Movement (Barnes & Haya in Kallaway 2002: 147). Most of the students were politicised through the South African Students Organisation and those coming from Ginsberg were respected, and their advice sought, because of their personal association with Biko. These students, however,

paid the price for their activism, particularly during and after the 1976 Soweto school uprisings.

On 19 October 1977, the Internal Security Act caused the banning of the South African Student Organisation (SASO), the Black People's Convention and all other Black Consciousness Movement organisations. This occurred a month prior to the killing of Biko while in police custody. One may reasonably suggest that from the advent of this Movement (filling the vacuum created after the Rivonia trial) resistance to apartheid oppression became more organised and more threatening. The students who graduated from "bush colleges" (a term reserved for ethnically exclusive institutions of higher learning) mostly qualified as teachers and caused a revolutionary awakening among their learners. These students invariably had to engage in critical debate during their undergraduate years at these "bush colleges", thus galvanising their practices in relation to how they conceive of reaching outcomes. I would deduce from this a particular way of approaching and informing their learners about the struggle. It is rather unlikely that they did not make unobtrusive demands in a subtle way regarding a form of democratic governance. I emphasise this point because such an approach could be linked to the Habermasian notion of communicative action. This, together with the experience of the 1976 Soweto student uprising, gave impetus to the cause for liberation. By now the cry was "liberation before education". The state resorted, as always, to repressive means via overt force to overcome the "revolutionary culture" and maintain the status quo. On the other hand teachers and parents collaborated to overcome what they referred to as a counter educational culture. It was, however, clear that the vigour of resistance could no longer be quelled by the cultural hegemony of white supremacy.

The notion of black consciousness, I argue, is the foundation of this break from slavishly imitating white cultural norms at the expense of what I refer to as natural human values. Black consciousness shattered the ruling party's exaggerated notion that black is unattractive, dishonest, repulsive, unscrupulous or any other derogatory name used to describe a subjugated

group of people at the southernmost tip of the African continent. This is not to say that all blacks were proud to be black (in the Movement's sense), on the contrary there were those from amongst them who collaborated with the State's security forces in order to undermine the movement towards liberation. This, however, was not strong enough to undermine a reinvigorated belief among the majority of the blacks that they have it within themselves, not only to overcome oppression, but also to replace it with another more acceptable emancipatory ideology.

A potential critic may argue that I romanticise and overestimate the influence of Black Consciousness as a revolutionary framework in the South African reality. I contest such a claim by turning to Fatton who argues that, "the making of a revolution requires not only organisation but also a process of ideological diffusion whereby the hegemony of the dominant class is disarticulated and ultimately displaced by a new philosophy of emancipation" (1986: 125). My interpretation of the work of activists under the banner of Black Consciousness effected such a disarticulation and displaced the dominant ideology with another based on the belief in equality between races. It confounded the myth of white being superior to black on the basis of biologically determinant criteria and rooted in the minds of the black majority the notion of a non-bifurcationist view of race.

I have further argued that the concept of Black Consciousness had its roots in the ethnically divided universities from where it was nurtured and transported to other educational institutions including schools. Whilst the concept had as its frame to influence the ideals of the majority of blacks (including workers), its educational roots are of significance because its premise was to educate the masses. One may reasonably argue that this notion of educating the masses, as a counter to Bantu education, translates into the origin and development of the notion of "people's education" in a South African context. Therefore, I turn to a discussion of people's education with the idea of determining its impact on education in general and the development of education (governance) policy in particular.

### **2.3.3. A NOTION OF PEOPLE'S EDUCATION**

One manifestation of resistance to apartheid was the appeal by various organisations for a “people’s education” which would contribute to political and educational liberation. The liberatory aim of people’s education was embedded in the specific socio-political context of apartheid capitalism. In much the same way as Black Consciousness relied on reinvigorating the consciousness of the oppressed, people’s education utilises the same strategy as part of a liberatory education. Vio Grossi purports that “this requires the oppressed to be mobilised and conscientised to become aware of their oppression” (1984: 307). Such conscientisation attempts to bring about popular participation in the educational processes of society, “so that people become aware of their potential to participate” (McKay & Romm 1992: 25).

The concept “people’s education” is rooted in, and inextricably linked to emancipation and the freeing of individuals from a system of oppression and bondage. On another level, it usually denotes the need for both a new system of education and socio-political change creating an understanding that it forms a precursor to liberation. This is in line with what I earlier argued for in terms of the “legitimacy principle”. In this regard McKay and Romm posit that, “People’s education envisages a connection between education and the political struggle for liberation in society” (1992: 1). Conceptually it incorporates the understanding that education will have popular input and be made available to everyone. By popular input I refer to the masses that should be in a position to influence the direction of educational change precisely because it shall directly impact on them. In such a sense the notion contributes towards an understanding that people in general should participate in order to determine their own education and thus their own future. This call for “people’s education” came from outside the formal education and political structures of South Africa. Its proponents, working within the “non-formal” sector aimed to provide a link between education and liberation.

In promoting “people’s education” it seems prudent that the concept should be defined. However, the difficulties involved in defining the concept are actually one of the concept’s strengths (McKay & Romm 1992: 3). Vio Grossi argues that people’s education defies being conceptualised as either a complete methodology or a theory. He posits that:

It is still in the process of definition, and is more a social and political fact ... than a coherent method. This limitation may be one of its most remarkable strengths, since people’s education emphasised the value of processes rather than results. One of the most important lessons that we Latin Americans have learnt from years of struggle is the difficulty of finding final solutions apart from those which emerge from day-to-day people’s practice (1984: 304).

I concur with this view because it keeps the notion open for debate, making it a dynamic principle which evolves as practices influence it. It consequently allows the dominated, oppressed and exploited sectors of the population to tackle the causes of their problems, instead of reinforcing the status quo. In much the same manner one might argue that such reasoning impacted upon “the peoples’ ” notion of how to incorporate such practices into their form of educational governance. Such a perspective on people’s education lends itself towards struggling to overcome the problematic social practices which impact on the daily existence of people. As a process, which is continually “in the making”, people’s education signifies a struggle to preserve the discursive character of social reality, so that any posited “new order” never becomes sacred, as Freire puts it (Freire 1985: 106). In terms of this understanding, “process” becomes the operational word, meaning that the outcome is secondary. Regarding governance, one may then deduce that it should operate along the same principles, meaning the process of democratic practice (including critical debate, producing rational and persuasive arguments through collective/inclusive deliberation) becomes essential. In other words the outcome should not be primary, meaning that the process of deliberation should precede the outcome. Making deliberation primary



translates into the outcome becoming dynamic for the reason that views and argumentation are always open to reflection, contestation and critical inquiry.

#### **2.3.4. “PEOPLE’S EDUCATION” - THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

In South Africa, the movement for people’s education occurred within the “non-state sector”, meaning it became part of the popular movement which resisted the compartmentalised form of education which the Nationalist Party instituted under the guise of “separate development”. It espoused political and educational aims contrary to those generated by the apartheid regime and in opposition to white domination. My interpretation of people’s education in the South African context is to “educate for democracy”. In this regard a correlation occurs between education on the one hand, and the political system on the other. McKay and Romm purport much the same understanding when they argue that the link between both the educational and the political aims are “necessary if one is to educate for democracy in a context where there is a high degree of illiteracy, a lack of free and compulsory education for the black population, a lack of facilities, and a system of education which failed to educate for democratic participation” (1992: 20).

“People’s Education for People’s Power”, became a major slogan and strategy of popular political movements in South Africa in the 1980s and was often perceived as an entirely new development. But in a strictly historical sense “People’s Education” is not a new concept. During the 1955 to 1956 boycotts, the African National Congress (ANC) advanced the slogan seemingly in the same sense in which it was to be used in the 1980s. They advanced an understanding that it should be a “democratic-liberatory education” (Hyslop 1999: 71). During the 1955-1956 boycotts, this slogan was transformed into practice under the system of “cultural clubs”, driven by the African Education Movement (AEM). However, it could not be sustained because of a lack of resources and the Bantu Education Act prevented these cultural clubs from presenting themselves as schools or from teaching formal courses. Notwithstanding this, these clubs of People’s Education survived

until the late 1950s. As a national movement one may safely claim that these clubs were unsuccessful simply because it reached a very small portion of the learner population. However, in terms of its operational content, these clubs were instrumental in organising a network of relationships based on reasoned argumentation and rational debate. Such relationships were forged to create an alternative to the status quo thus the reference to “democratic-liberatory education. This transforms into an understanding that the organising principles (including a network of relationships based on rational conversation, reasoned debate and a drive towards including previously marginalised voices) of these clubs were informed to produce democratically governed institutions. If such an interpretation is plausible then one may reasonably presume that it could conceivably have influenced the organising principles and structures of governing bodies, as we know it today.

The concept of “People’s Education” was to seriously resurface during the aftermath the 1976 school revolts. At that time the government did everything in its power (within the framework of institutionalised apartheid) to manage and quell the nation-wide upsurge against apartheid in general and against unequal education in particular. It followed a dual approach of repression on the one hand, and shifting policy on the other, to the extent that Afrikaans as a compulsory language of instruction was dropped. Hyslop makes the claim that the state was reeling in the period following the 1976 uprising. He further posits that “this had as much to do with the upsurge of popular resistance as with the internal power squabbles within the National Party ruling elite” (1999: 168). The aim of state repression (until the end of 1977) was to stop student protests via expulsions, school closures, arrests of students and finally by banning eighteen Black Consciousness groups including SASM and SASO (Davis in Kallaway 1984: 351). Furthermore, school boards and certain individuals who served on school committees (those who were appointed) were manipulated and at times coerced (by the Bantu Education Department’s authorities) to expedite student suppression by “informing” on who the student leadership was. Inherent in the functioning of school boards was, therefore, collaboration with the State to exclude the voices of the majority stakeholders (those being the students and the parents), thus

vindicating the call for democratic governance. In its quest to “normalise” the situation, the word “Bantu” was removed from the naming of the education department, which now became the Department of Education and Training. This shift was a strategy to give the impression that change has been effected, with the expectation that schooling would “normalise”.

Under constant pressure to reform, something had to be done educationally in order to overcome the image of South Africa in the international arena as a society that could respond to genuine educational grievances only by indiscriminately killing its school children. Together with the internal crisis, this led the government to introduce the “Education and Training Act” (Act 90 of 1979) which repealed all existing legislation relating to black education promulgated between 1953 and 1978 (Behr 1984: 200). One can thus safely argue that this Act was as a direct consequence of student action in 1976. However, Davis (in Kallaway 1984: 349, my italics) responds by claiming that, “the intention of *the Act* has been not to abolish massive discrimination in education but to obscure its operation by giving new policies a more class-differentiated twist”. I have earlier stated that learner resistance was not only premised on the educational regime in South Africa, but also against capitalist exploitation. Kallaway is even more explicit when he claims that:

... education should and must promote democracy, equality and individual development – and on the assumption that progressives agree that none of these goals can be achieved within the context of racial discrimination (1997: 22).

The “Education and Training Act” therefore did not fool the learners (identifying the “class” structure) who continued with their resistance to segregated education. This resistance snowballed during 1980 and 1985 to the extent that the rallying phrases became “liberation before education” and “liberation now, education later”. Student militancy and an increased level of support for the ANC within schools and universities were unmistakable signs that the struggle would continue. The cry around the country among the youth as well as adult population was “Aluta Continua” (the struggle continues).

During this same period, black student organisations such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO) gained prominence and were deemed to be more belligerent than the banned SASO and SASM (Davis in Kallaway 1984: 365). At this stage the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) came into being, with a mandate to curb the students from alienating their communities and addressing the boycott crisis. Also, during the month of June 1980, “in response to demands for a judicial enquiry, the government requested the Human Science Research Commission (HSRC) to conduct a scientific investigation into all aspects of education (including all population groups) provision in South Africa” (Taylor 1998: 66).

The committee under the chairmanship of Professor J.P. de Lange tabled the “De Lange Report” in October 1981. In terms of apartheid Nationalist ideology this report had major historical value. To support this claim I turn to Taylor who argues that:

The historic importance of the De Lange report was that it was the first thorough and large-scale document attempting to bring the entire education system of the country into one integrated policy framework (1998: 67).

Notwithstanding the Report’s recommendation of a single education ministry and free and compulsory education, the report still recommended different education departments for the different racial groups. The Report was bound by the new Constitution Act of 1983 (Act 10 of 1983), which defined education as a so-called “own affair” (part IV, section 14[1]) in consonance with the Tricameral governance structure. Government, as recommended by the Report, rejected even the call for a “single ministry of education”. The government insisted that education had to “allow for the full scope of self-determination for each population group ... as an own affair” (Behr 1988: 58). According to this Tricameral arrangement blacks were excluded and were only catered for in 1986 when the Department of Education and Training

(DET) was established. The report consequently recommended educational operation within an apartheid framework.

In terms of school governance, the Report recommended a three-tier system with parent involvement on the “third level” where powers should be vested in school governing bodies. Such school governing bodies would interpret the needs and wishes of parents regarding education and mediate between them and the professional staff of the school. Control and management at local level should provide for mechanisms that would ensure “the greatest possible degree of autonomy” for individual schools, and “freedom of parental choice” in subject selection (Behr 1988: 55). The report refers at length to the principle of “free association” with the view of protecting the favourable position that the white population maintained. While the report made reference to school governing bodies it was silent as to how such bodies would be comprised, what their particular function should be and to whom they would be accountable. It is, therefore, difficult to draw conclusions in relation to the current system of school governance from this report. It is this vagueness on educational governance which gave rise to the criticisms by the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in its National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) Report. It is glaringly visible, however, that such governance structures (with its parent involvement) as recommended by the De Lange report should operate within racially divided schools located within racially divided neighbourhoods or “group areas”. The use of the term “governing bodies” was, however, significant, for it is the first time that this term was used within the formal state education structure (regarding black education). It was a significant move away from school boards and school committees.

The De Lange recommendations ultimately failed to convince students to forego their march towards a non-racial and equal education system. The Nationalist government, in its quest to alter policy with the rationale of quelling the unrest, was in effect unsuccessful. By the end of 1985 students were calling for 1986 to be “The Year of No Schooling” (Hyslop 1999: 172). My response to such calls is that by 1985 black schooling as a system of state schooling had for all intents and purposes disintegrated. It was the NECC with

its strategy of “people’s education” that rescued the student movement from destroying itself, for by then student militancy fragmented rather than cemented their local communities.

In October 1985 the Soweto Civic Association convened a mass meeting of parents to address the school crisis from which resulted the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee. While this committee improved community-student relations, its impact was minimal in terms of the national student march to “Liberation before Education” (Hyslop 1999: 174). A national education crisis conference was called which resulted in the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) consisting of a network of Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs). This alternative educational authority challenged state control of education, while students went back to school “on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1986 rather than the official opening date of 8 January” (Hyslop 1999: 174). This was the first major move by the NECC to inform the formal education authorities that they had the necessary power to exhibit some form of control over mass public schooling. It is my contention that a central intention of the NECC was to get community control over schools from which it would be able to pursue its wider political objectives, hence its call to government to hand over control and management of schools to the community. During February 1986 the NECC called for negotiations with the government, which resulted in preliminary talks with the Deputy Minister, Sam de Beer. However, the preliminary talks did not have the desired effect with the result that negotiations were refused, and wide scale arrests of NECC officials together with a state of emergency were declared in June of that year (Hyslop 1999: 175).

#### **2.4.1. THE PERIOD (TEN YEARS) PRIOR TO DEMOCRACY; MOVING TOWARDS DECENTRALISATION AND COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE**

The late 1980s heralded a period when it “became increasingly clear that ... the days of the apartheid regime were numbered (Jansen 2001b: 13-14). It is my view that the event that best defines the irreversible moment in the

movement towards the termination of apartheid was the announcement by the then President, FW de Klerk on 2 February 1990 of Mandela's release. With the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of all political organisations, South Africa entered a new era, including the realm of education. This period witnessed a flurry of political education activity from both sides of the political spectrum. The Nationalist government made a last ditch attempt to modify education policy as the country increasingly moved towards popular rule. The ruling National Party conceded that racial differentiation in education was no longer acceptable resulting in a process of deracialising education. The product of such thinking was the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS of 1992) whose vision for restructuring education was based upon decentralisation, cost-effectiveness and efficiency (Weber 2002: 621-622). I shall address the notions of decentralisation, effectiveness and efficiency in chapter three. Following the route of efficiency and effectiveness, the ERS overlooked other major concerns such as the redress of past inequalities, confronting issues regarding non-racialism and non-sexism as well as consulting with the representatives of the broad democratic movement (which could be construed as a lack of democratic participation). The ERS further advocated a new education governance system that provides for a central education authority and regionally based departments, including:

- a three tiered education system with devolution of power to institutional level based on the principle of the more parents pay for schooling, the greater should be the control they exercise in the school; and
- the sharing of educational responsibilities among political and education authorities at different levels: parent communities, the organised teaching profession and other stakeholders, to ensure effective education for all (Karlsson, Pampallis & Sithole 1996: 32).

The promotion of a unitary education system (not based on race) represented a significant change from the apartheid model of education. Also included was

the idea that governing bodies shall control the admission policy of their school. The ERS in effect called for a movement towards decentralisation with reference to the “devolution of power to institutional level” and “the sharing of educational responsibilities with parents”. Mogale argues that “this form of decentralisation is designed to facilitate and open up ... opportunities for citizen participation, by placing more power and resources at a closer and more easily influenced level of government” (2003: 217). It is my understanding that the ERS’s call for decentralisation was an attempt to pre-empt educational developments in order to influence future policy. Its claim to deracialise education was in effect a strategic move on the part of the Nationalist government. It is my interpretation that linking the degree of parent participation to the amount that parents were willing to pay, indirectly disqualified the majority of South Africans simply because they occupied the lower ranks of the economic spectrum of this country. It was therefore a means of assuring that White parents participate in the decision-making process while at the same time it effectively disqualified the majority who formed part of the Black “economically disadvantaged” population. Furthermore, one may reasonably argue that placing admission control of learners in the hands of parents was deliberate in the sense that it incorporates the question of “standards” while at the same time it theoretically protects “diversity”. What I am saying is that the ERS realised that their policies might lead to a lowering of the standard of education in White schools. To counter such a realisation parents at those schools should have the power to “exclude” those whom they believe might potentially be responsible for lowering standards. So, while the ERS seems to be a movement towards cooperative governance signalling a willingness to come to terms with an ideal of non-racialism it in effect reinforced the status quo. This is done in the sense that it would not reflect colour but much rather the socio-economic conditions which apartheid so effectively shaped (by forced removals, instituting the group areas and job reservation acts). Carrim refers to the three models of schools introduced by the then minister of “white” education, Piet Clase (Models A, B and C) to argue that “the opening of white schools was done in ways to ensure white privilege and security” (1998: 312).



Although those people of colour who were previously debarred from “white” schools could now enter it, there were specific conditions. These included:

1. all schools needed to ensure that 51% of the school’s population remained white;
2. the cultural ethos of such schools remained intact;
3. the state and/or school were not obligated to provide any financial aid to any “black” incoming student (Carrim 1998: 312).

Weber goes as far as claiming that the ERS’s “philosophy was consistent with the 1981 De Lange Commission of Inquiry into education (2002: 618). School governance according to the ERS also involved paying for the maintenance of school grounds and financing services such as electricity (Weber 2002: 623). The financial issue seems to increasingly filter through (an issue that I shall address in chapter three).

Another watershed development came in February 1992 when the education Minister gave practical effect to a key ERS principle by announcing that all white state schools would become state-aided (Model C) schools, opening the “white school doors” to all communities (irrespective of race, ethnicity or religious conviction). On the one hand, increasing school fees would limit the number of Blacks while on the other travelling expenses (from black settlements which resulted from the group areas act) would further curtail the number of blacks capable of accessing such schools. Jansen argues that, “the ERS was expressly criticised on the one hand for working within the apartheid paradigm, and on the other for not addressing ‘fundamental’ problems with the education system. For example, by emphasising vocational training rather than academic education ... vocational training for blacks and academic education for whites. This was a racial theme established long before the apartheid education laws of the 1950s” (2001b: 19). Notwithstanding these reforms, one may reasonably argue that by 1990 education policy was still heavily centralised. The apartheid state maintained bureaucratic control that was centralised, racially exclusive and politically authoritarian.

During the same period (1991) the NECC (now the National Education Co-ordinating Committee) became the initial vehicle through which the ANC steered development of education policy. The NECC (a broad alliance of student, teacher and labour organisations) including the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) commissioned the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) to develop education policy options for the broad democratic movement (Jansen 2001: 17). The NEPI section on educational governance was a critical response to *the de Lange report* and the government's ERS document specifically for its vagueness about school governance (Steyn & Waghid 2000: 69). The NEPI reports researched and examined school-based governance. Unlike the ERS, a strong central state was seen as acting in respect of equalisation, and the redress of historical disadvantage. According to NEPI, "statutory provisions and a charter of education rights would institutionalise governance structures (1992: 38 – 44). The main contributions of NEPI were:

- Establishing a values framework within which a post-apartheid education policy could be conceived, i.e. the pillars of non-racialism, non-sexism, equity, democracy and redress;
- Engaging academics from universities in policy development, thereby effectively displacing the earlier tradition of policy criticism which characterised progressive academic work in education;
- Signalling the parameters within which a more refined education policy could be developed in the future; and
- Creating a frame of reference within which oppositional or rival policies would invariably develop their own policy positions (Jansen 2001b: 18).

The ANC also produced a discussion document on education policy in June 1991, in which it expressed the view that, in accordance with democratic principles, all people should be consulted so that all interested parties can participate in the development of a new post-apartheid policy. Of particular

importance are the proposal of local governance of schools, and the recommendation that learners be included in the school management system (Steyn & Waghid 2000: 69). The Education and Training Framework discussion document (January 1994) proposed among other things that; “institutional governance within the school system has been one of the weakest and least coherent aspects of education” (ANC 1995: 24). The period prior to the democratic elections are replete with policies that indicate a movement away from institutionalised segregation. The above discussion highlights this. Not only from the side of government but also from extra-parliamentary organisations. Although schools were still segregated and the majority of parents were still excluded from school decision making processes during the pre-democratic era, there have been a number of initiatives from both sides of the political spectrum to move in the direction of the democratisation of the education system.

#### **2.4.2. THE EARLY DEMOCRATIC PERIOD**

When the new era of democracy dawned on South Africa, the catch phrase was “transformation”. I interpret this term as changing from one system or form to another. However, such change would be fundamentally for the better. Viewed from such a perspective, transformation is not its own end but rather its aim is an improved, more just and more equitable society. Transformation is consequently firstly a critical reflection on the past, with the idea to respond in such a way that the future you envisage is under the influence of constant rethinking. In this regard transformation becomes a dynamic process of continual re-evaluation en- route to building the future that everyone feels proud of and comfortable with. To support this view I quote Carrim in his argument on the South African education situation:

The system of apartheid seriously affected the nature of education provision and order in South Africa. It ensured that South Africans were schooled in segregated environments. This means that every level of schooling was cast in a racial mould ... Transforming education in South Africa, therefore, entails erecting changes on all ... levels. This

requires no less than an overhaul of the past educational order, a redefinition of the culture prevalent in schools throughout the country and a shift in mentality, from being racist and authoritarian to being non-racial, democratic and enabling (1998: 301).

In reading Carrim I realise that this seems to be a tall order. I am particularly concerned with the necessary “shift in mentality” that transformation demands. It is along this line of reasoning that I determine that transformation should be under continual revision, put differently, it should by its very nature create a society within a climate of critical and interpretative responsibility which enables people to develop confidence in the formation of conclusions. Fostering such a climate is the means to ensuring that liberation entails the active participation of people in the process of decision-making within societies/communities institutions. This is what I mean when I make the claim that “transformation” should be a dynamic process. The central issue is, therefore, not “what” system evolves, but “how” the system comes into existence, transforming into the crucial link between knowledge and power. Accordingly, the notion of transformation takes on a meaning that addresses itself to the struggle for human emancipation. Transformation is thus a model of focussing on how to involve people (knowledge) in participating in democratic discourse (power) about social reality. McKay and Romm (1992: 60) concur with this view when they argue that, “this penetrates to the very *root of the struggle*: the struggle to invoke people’s ability to appropriate knowledge about reality. Without this one cannot speak of democracy, because democracy in terms of this model implies the *empowerment of people to participate in the very definition of what reality is*”.

Returning to the early democratic period of education policy formulation, the first Minister of Education, Sibusu Bengu, initiated the most important policy framework in 1995, focussing on the work of the Hunter Committee (also referred to as the Hunter Commission of Inquiry). Part of its framework was to unify the education system of South Africa. Nineteen education departments based on race and ethnicity had restricted space within the democratic ethos of the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights. New norms needed to

be established to bring coherence into the system of education. New legislation was critical to transform not only the racially divided system but also the governance of schools. This was imperative in the light of the goals of equity and democracy as established by the first White Paper on education. It is to this end that the Hunter Committee was instituted.

The Hunter Committee report provided for the organisation, governance and funding of education. This led to the production of the South African Schools Bill (April 1996), which later became the South African Schools Act (November 1996). This Act is based on cooperative school governance and calls for school governing bodies to become a major player in schools. All stakeholders are part of this governance structure, however, parents should be in the majority because they are deemed to have the most interest in their children's education. This would, for the first time, bring about democratically representative governance at all schools in South Africa. Although the Act emphasised the notion of community participation, it also supports the task of equity and redress (I shall return to these issues in chapter three). Some of the major functions of a school governing body include:

- The development and adoption of a constitution;
- adopting a mission statement based on shared beliefs and values;
- the adoption of a code of conduct for learners and to;
- help the teaching staff (including the principal) perform their professional functions;
- determine the school's admission policy, subject to the law;
- determine the times of a school day consistent with the conditions of employment of the staff;
- administer and control the schools property, buildings and grounds and;
- determine, in collaboration with the broader school community the amount of compulsory school fees and draft an annual budget (Department of Education 1997: 31).

From the outset it was clear that school governance was a politically volatile issue and that the prime function of policies was to ensure that hegemonic consensus could be engendered (Carrim & Sayed 1997: 92). In relation to this Jansen posits that “the result is that policy makers have worked more diligently on appearing to improve schooling than on actually doing so” (2001: 51). So, notwithstanding the democratically developed South African Schools Act, by late 1999 the Minister of Education acknowledged that there remains a crisis in education. At this stage the gap between policy development and policy implementation seems to impact negatively on the transformation process particularly in relation to education. This then resulted in “Tirisano” or a “Call to Action”, meaning, a race for policy implementation (Jansen 2001a: 51). This phase on the road to education transformation is still unfolding.

It is, consequently, my considered view that since the early 1990s, the road to securing a new education system for South Africa has been a terrain of fierce and protracted struggle. This struggle will eventually impact on the manner in which schools are governed given the fact that the individual governing bodies must ultimately implement these contested policies.

## **2.5. SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have expounded on the situation that prevailed while South Africa was governed by apartheid rule. I emphasised the impact of this form of undemocratic governance on the majority of the population in general and on education in particular. I further explored the pendulum movement between action and reaction in relation to policy development. I then argued that the domain of education was utilised to create a foundation from which was launched a broader struggle for democracy. After this I moved on to expound on the reasons that drove the 1976 Soweto School Uprisings and its concomitant influence on education, including its governance.

The quest for democracy after the Rivonia Trial, I claimed was executed under the banner of “People’s Education”. I then moved to the notion of Black Consciousness to demonstrate that this concept framed the thinking that

changed the mindset of the masses to the extent that it gave direction to this struggle. Finally I traced the steps in policy development on both sides of the political spectrum and highlighted their influence and ultimate achievement of democratic governance, including school governance in South Africa. I framed this within the context of cooperation and decentralisation. As I moved along I continually made reference to the impact that this historical development had on educational governance. I referred to the Black Consciousness Movement and its quest to conscientise the masses regarding their right to freedom along the lines of inclusion and equality. I moved on to explain how the notion of People's Education framed the mindset of the masses in relation to the organising principles of democratic governance with reference to rational argumentation and reasoned debate. Furthermore I made a connection between the de Lange report, the ERS and the NEPI reports highlighting the movement towards decentralisation, co-operative governance based on stakeholder participation and the inclusion of them irrespective of race or ethnicity. I linked these ideals (of inclusion, rational debate, co-operation and deliberation) with the development of democratic school governance in this country and argue that such a conceptualisation of governance could possibly lead to "stronger" democratic governance. I concluded this chapter by arguing that this new form of democratic school governance is still unfolding within a domain of contestation.

In the next chapter I shall interpret constitutive features of liberal democracy, particularly the concept of representation for the reason that it is my understanding that the liberal ideals of democracy is key to the development of the South African Schools Act (SASA) and in particular school governance policies. Imbedded in the notion of liberal democracy is the interaction between the central state and the community, which is underscored by the principle of decentralisation. However, I shall argue that such decentralisation is not founded on the call for democratic school governance as argued for in chapter two. On the contrary the notion of globalisation, which I argue potentially leads to "weak" democratic governance structures/practices also impacted on school governance policy. It is my understanding that globalisation cannot be ignored when one attempts to understand and

interpret school governance or any other form of governance for that matter. It is my interpretation that globalisation is embedded in the liberal conception of democracy, which I argue leads to what may be referred to as “weak democracy”. Put differently, it is underpinned by notions of managerialism incorporating decentralisation, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, corporatisation and so forth. I shall refer to some of these notions in chapter three when I explore the effect of globalisation on school governance in South Africa. Therefore, I investigate how traces of globalisation impacted upon the thinking of particularly policy makers in their quest to provide a policy framework for democratic school governance in this country. I then proceed to explore the constitutive meanings of liberal democracy emphasising representation, participation, freedom, tolerance and accountability.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **A LIBERAL CONCEPTION OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY, GLOBALISATION AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBs) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I start by linking globalisation to the historical perspective of the previous chapter. I then proceed to explain how the notion of globalisation came into play in South African politics, particularly relating to educational governance. I argue that these traces of globalisation are embedded in a conception of liberal democracy. I therefore explore some constitutive features of liberal democracy with particular emphasis on representation. I argue that such representation has the tendency to undermine and exclude the marginalised groups (learners and parents) who serve on the governing body. I then produce empirical evidence/case studies to underscore my claim that representation, as it occurs within the realm of SGBs, potentially exclude the marginalised. I now proceed to make the link between the historical perspectives and how it potentially shaped current trends in school governance, particularly relating to policy.

We cannot interpret and understand our present without knowing our past. History has the uncanny ability to inform about the past (as explained in chapter two) but at the same time does not give us answers for the present. At best it is left to the individual/society to interpret and derive lessons from the past in order to inform (which might explain) the present and even potentially influence the future. History consequently helps to inform us in order that we may better determine our present and plan our future. It is in this regard that the previous chapter analysed the historical development of education and how it could potentially have shaped governance policies and practices. Linked to this development towards democratic rule in South Africa (as explained in chapter two) is a tendency among its citizens to see this country as unique in the sense that they were responsible for what is referred

to as the South African “political miracle”. Habib and Kotzé posits that for a very long time “there was South Africa, then the rest of Africa and, finally the rest of the world”. Such a mentality was reinforced by our isolation during the apartheid era. On the political front there was “a euphoria” to sustain a belief that we could do “our own thing” regardless of prevailing trends in the rest of the world (in Mohne & Edigheji 2003: 252-253), with reference to globalisation.

The response of the new ANC government to globalisation was to develop the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), informed by Keynesian<sup>3</sup> assumptions and policy prescriptions which moved against the tide of developments in the rest of the world. For a while it seemed as if “we were different” and that the ANC had earned the right to address our problems, inherited from apartheid, in our own way, despite the pressures from local and particularly international business (Habib & Kotzé in Edigheji & Mohne 2003: 253). However, this trend to go it alone was only “allowed” to run for two years, for by 1996 pressures from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and multinational corporations were increasingly impacting on the course of policy, culminating in the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy. According to Habib and Kotzé this signalled that we could not sustain our “going it alone”, that we were not unique and that we were party to global forces, particularly concerning policy development (in Mohne & Edigheji 2003: 255-256). It is significant that policy developments were increasingly being framed by the notion of globalisation.

I made reference to the ERS of the Nationalist apartheid government and the NEPI reports by the broad democratic movement (in chapter two) and also alluded to the idea that the issues of decentralisation, efficiency, effectiveness and finance seemed to constantly filter through. These concepts are also of particular importance in shaping the future democratic educational governance model in South Africa. The proposal that decentralisation in particular should inform future policy was not taken in isolation, for it

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<sup>3</sup> Policy based on strong social development including poverty relieve, access to clean piped water, electricity, health facilities and a social grant to ensure socio-economic justice.

resonated well with the agenda of the South African business sector (Weber 2002: 621). Furthermore decentralisation was at this stage a buzzword in terms of educational, political and social developments outside the borders of this country. Weber claims that South Africa's clamour for decentralisation (both from the Nationalist government as well as the broader democratic movement) as a vision for future democratic governance structures was consistent with "roughly contemporaneous reforms in England and Wales, Australia, New Zealand, Holland, the United States, Brazil, Chile and elsewhere" (Weber 2002: 621). Considering such a claim, I contend that decentralisation's impact on policy development was, therefore, not restricted to policy formulation in South Africa alone. On the contrary it seems to have an international underpinning. This worldwide phenomenon, according to McLennan, is motivated in part by a political rationale to improve democratic participation, but also as an attempt to share the growing costs of education provision. "However, it is also linked to a managerialist trend to make education services more responsive and accountable to the communities they serve" (in Mhone & Edigheji 2003: 186). In relation to the ERS, as well as the NEPI proposals regarding transformation/decentralisation of education governance, one finds a strong resonance with the principles that informed government policy in the Australian state of Victoria during 1992–1996. Pascoe and Pascoe list some of these principles when they claim that there is:

- a preference for market mechanisms in the provision of public services;
- a focus on clear accountability for results for public agencies;
- the empowering of consumers/*stakeholders* of public services;
- the minimising of government bureaucracy for consumers and
- a professional and business-like management of public agencies (Pascoe & Pascoe 1998: iv).

In making sense of these principles (from beyond our borders) I form the view that it, in the very least, had a bearing on education policy development in

South Africa. In this regard Weber claims that there is an international context: “as in many other countries, decentralisation, ‘rolling back the state’, privatisation, increased racial and class disparity and greater parental governance responsibilities, have been persistent themes and overall outcomes of the new *education* legislation” of *South Africa* (2002: 618). Although educational governance and the transformation process (policy development) is a national issue, it seems to be intertwined with international developments. My reasoning therefore is that international developments had a bearing on education policy development and the transformation process in South Africa. I shall argue that such international developments under the banner of globalisation informed policy on the one hand and guided governance practices along weak democratic lines on the other. To support my reasoning for such an argument I turn to Young who posits that, “... all countries regardless of their history or stage of development have to confront similar forces of globalisation and their impact on national economies” (in Young & Kraak 2001: 19). In other words globalisation’s influence on the economy would invariably impact upon the type and amount of resources that would be available for education. I now turn to a discussion of globalisation.

### **3.2.1. GLOBALISATION AND SCHOOL GOVERNANCE POLICY**

Economists, sociologists, political theorists and politicians all over the world have noted that the world has undergone significant change since particularly the 1970s. Most, if not all, claim that the significance of such changes is equivalent to the industrial revolution. The crux of these changes involves the formation of an international market economy ruled by multi-national corporations (Isaacs 1997: 10). The international economic crisis of the 1970s with its concomitant erosion of welfare policies framed or at least influenced the neo-liberal agenda which drives globalisation. The major proponents of such market oriented views (Friedman and Hayek – two economic Nobel Laureates) argue that market capitalism has the potential to rescue poor communities/countries from their plight. Influenced by my research, I therefore, argue that globalisation has its roots in capitalism which boomed after the Industrial Revolution and the Second World War. Both of these

events secured stronger economic ties between countries. In much the same vein others argue that the developments within the world economy during the 1970s represent a turning point, shifting capitalism to its next phase. This new phase or process is called globalisation. Nyamnjoh posits that while international flows of capital, consumer goods, people, and products of culture and knowledge could be traced back to when humankind first attempted the domestication of time and space, it is generally agreed that the rapid advances in communication and information technologies of the last 20 years have had the greatest impact on the process (in Hoogvelt 1997: 20). Will Hutton in conversation with Anthony Giddens posits that this change “is different in the sense that change is all-encompassing and carries a new inevitability; its momentum is a superior power to any other, even that of the state” (in Hutton & Giddens 2001: 2). I deduce from his view that the effect of globalisation seems to be wide-ranging and all-embracing to the extent that it infiltrates every aspect of human life. It seemingly invades our political, social, economic and cultural interactions in such a way that people all over the world will in some way be affected by it. Hutton further reinforces this view when he claims that globalisation is so powerful because of the sense that there is no escape, meaning one is confronted with its influence irrespective of one's geographic location. In this regard it evokes responses across a spectrum from those who on the one hand defend it (like Giddens) as the answer to the problems of the world, meaning it cannot be stopped or even retarded by virtue of its inevitability; to those (like Hawken and Vivienne Forrester) who contest it, and predict that it would lead to mayhem and social dislocation (Hutton & Giddens 2001: 2).

But how can globalisation be defined; put differently, what do we mean by globalisation? Giddens posits that globalisation is “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away, and vice versa” (1990: 63-68). He further claims that: “globalisation refers to transformations happening on the level of everyday life” (Hutton & Giddens 2001: 2). This interpretation of globalisation reinforces my earlier argument that education policy development in South Africa had an international context, meaning it

was shaped by “events occurring miles away”. What is more enlightening to me is the claim that “transformations happen on the level of everyday life”. This creates the space for the day to day functioning of school governing bodies within a framework of global influences. Nzimande (in the foreword of Kallaway *et al.* 1997) claims that globalisation is the transformation of the world into a single market that is controlled by multi-national companies, traditionally emanating from the developed countries of the north. In his interpretation it seems as if globalisation has its origins within developed economies from where it possibly influenced less developed countries. If one considers that South Africa is a developing economy, and Nzimande’s words hold true, then one may argue that education governance policy was shaped by the developed economies in collaboration with what he refers to as multi-national companies. I shall address this issue later on when I refer to the role of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It is my perception that a conspicuous change in relation to education came in the movement from a Keynesian mode of governance that emphasised employment security, state welfare provisions including health and education towards a more globalised mode where multi-national corporations through their economic clout could influence policies within the boundaries of nation states. In this regard Lingard posits that: “the globalisation of the economy has reduced the apparent policy tools of national governments, destabilised the postwar (*Keynesian emphasis*) policy settlement, and witnessed the restructuring of the mechanisms for delivery of a different range of policies. Such a different range of policies included the “reduction in corporate tax levels and a meaner and leaner welfare system” (in Burbules & Torres 2000: 83-84). What this means is that policy (including education policy) should be geared towards the production of clearly stipulated outcomes at the lowest possible cost. This is in line with a neo-liberal interpretation which utilises globalisation as a mechanism to execute its objectives by emphasising the privatisation and marketisation of state enterprises based upon minimum expenditure to gain maximum profits.

Under pressure from the International Monetary fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), developing economies (such as South Africa) had to ensure a reduction in state public expenditure on particularly welfare, health and education. The motivation for complying with reforming education policies was the pledge by these organisations of financial aid. Giving practical expression to this pressure, education transformation in South Africa included the retrenchment of thousands of educators under the guise of redeployment. Class sizes increased with higher teacher/learner ratios becoming prescribed by legislation. This was done under the mantle of “efficiency” and “cost effectiveness” and the claim that it would enable a movement towards equity and redress. The retrenchment packages of “redundant” teachers were subsequently partially funded by First World economies. Such evidence underscores the view that traces of globalisation influenced education policy, by succumbing to a call for a reduction in state funding on the one hand and implementing “sound economic principles” in the “management “ of education on the other. This brings me to the role of globalisation on school governance policy in particular.

### **3.2.2. TRANSFORMING PROPOSALS INTO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT**

In this section I shall review the basic provisions of the South African Schools Act (SASA) in relation to the market as driven by globalisation in order to further illustrate how the neo-liberal agenda shaped education policy in South Africa. Prior to the development of the SASA (later referred to as the Act) the ANC government instituted the Hunter Commission of Inquiry to investigate, inform and make recommendations to government on the “organisation, governance and funding” of schools. In keeping with the “Hunter Report” recommendations, two categories of schools were recognised, and these are public schools and independent schools. All public schools, according to the Act, shall institute and be governed by school governing bodies. This constitutes a major shift from past policy where governance of schools was

heavily centralised and vested in the state. It represents a shift in power from the central state to the community surrounding a particular school, meaning to a level where the power of governance had not previously existed. In essence the Act gave expression to the demand for democratic participation in education, which travelled a long and arduous road (as elucidated in chapter 2). Central to these struggles were that school based decision making should include all those with a vested interest in schooling. So when the Act legitimised school governing bodies and included all legitimate role-players, one may be forgiven to presuppose that the democratic ideal (which the previously marginalised masses clamoured for) in relation to school governance had been achieved. However, it is my view that with closer scrutiny one realises that school governance included more than what the previously disenfranchised masses bargained for. With this devolution of power came responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, which I argue would impact on poor communities' ability to gain access to education thus reinforcing my argument towards weak democracy.

The SASA rejected the three models<sup>4</sup> of school finance proposed by the Hunter Commission who favoured an interim arrangement leading to a situation where payment of school fees would be optional. Instead, the SASA instituted the recommendations of two "private consultants" (Colclough & Crouch) made during the policy formulation process (Pampallis in Weber 2002: 629). According to this law parents were obliged to pay school fees (as determined by the general council of the school governing body). Decentralising the power to determine fees would reinforce collective decision-making and, so Shaeffer argues, would create a sense of community ownership of schooling thus leading to local communities becoming more willing to share the costs of education delivery (in Mhone & Edigheji 2003: 186). This determination of paying fees can be linked to the reality that market forces would in future determine the cost of schooling, transforming schooling

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<sup>4</sup> The minimalist-gradualist approach which would allow most existing governing bodies to continue to function including ex-Model C schools. The equitable school-based formula which is similar to the previous approach but argues for equal per capita expenditure and prohibits schools from raising additional funds. The partnership approach includes an equal per capita expenditure, but the state's



into becoming a commodity that has to be purchased. Sayed posits that this educational marketplace does not operate on the classic model of supply and demand. He claims that:

User fees reflect the deregulation of educational provision and ensure that the quality of a good education is correlative of the price that is paid. The worth of the educational product is thus secured in the exchange of its value (1997: 359).

Realising that marketisation could seriously affect the education possibilities of poor communities in South Africa, the SASA included a sub-clause giving the Minister of Education the power to set “equitable criteria allowing parents who are unable to pay school fees to be granted degrees of exemption or in certain cases total exemption”. Notwithstanding such an inclusion, it is pertinent in this regard that the rationale of economic austerity under the influence of a market driven economy comes into play, reinforcing my argument for traces of globalisation in education policy. I also argue that the sub-clause regarding “exemption of fees” is to counter an interpretation of a weaker democracy for the reason that it reinforces exclusion. So, in order to include all stakeholders the “criteria” was devised. I conclude that charging school fees would allow the state to save on one aspect of school funding with the view to utilise such savings for redressing past inequities; a position that was stated prior to “redeployment”. This would be in line with what the NEPI proposals in relation to equity and redress called for. Sayed, however, posits that “there is no indication in the SASA or any other government policy text that savings effected from user fees will be used for redress and equity concerns” (1999: 146). The point is that the contestation (between the ERS of the former regime and the NEPI reports of the mass democratic movement) to determine policy content seems to lean towards the proposals of the ERS that emphasised cost effectiveness and efficiency (both managerialist notions of globalisation).

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commitment to operating costs is reduced depending on parental contribution (Department of Education, 1995b).

The ERS understood the education problems of that time (*during legislated apartheid*) in politically-neutral, technical, and managerial and business terms (Weber 2002: 622). According to Collins and Gillespie this becomes problematic because “such an approach insists on being value-free and objective”. Furthermore, such an approach “is based on a Human Capital thesis and relies mainly on manpower planning and an instrumentalist view of education” (1993: 36). With such an approach key issues including the redress of past inequalities, the redistribution of resources and dealing with poverty (all issues that NEPI raised), are ignored. My sentiments are consequently with the reasoning of Collins and Gillespie for the reason that I understand the “instrumentalist view” in this sense to mean that good schools (incorporating the sound collection and management of school fees – both functions of SGBs) would be those schools that are profitably managed in accordance with market principles thus not being dissimilar to corporate managerialism. In short, education for national development, effective and efficient management, accountability, shared responsibility and equity underpinned the approach to education governance in South Africa. These notions are in line with the “instrumentalist” ideal, emphasising the “external good” of education. Waghid posits that such an approach “is to justify education (governance) according to empirically verifiable extrinsic reasons ... that ignore the reasons constitutive to education” (2002: 11). This is problematic because it relies on “results” and does not consider its participants, with reference to the previously mentioned “marginalised masses”. Peters cautions against such an approach when he posits that:

This of course, is not an entirely irrelevant or immoral way of looking at a practice. But if it predominates a widespread and insidious type of corruption ensues. For the point of view of the participants in a practice becomes of decreasing importance. They are regarded basically as vehicles for the promotion of public benefit (in Hirst & White 1998:213).

I raise the issue and particularly emphasise its possibility to corruption and the decreasing emphasis on the “humans” involved. The point is that globalisation and the instrumentalist approach has the tendency to undermine the human

element under the guise of efficiency and effectiveness. Issues relating directly to the human element, such as the redressing of past inequalities, the redistribution of resources and dealing with poverty, get lost in the maze of technical, managerial and sound business principles, based on the argument that in this way society would ultimately benefit. This approach I claim reinforces weak democracy for the reason that instead of “inclusion” (a principle that “decentralisation” strives for) the outcome is “exclusion”.

The South African Schools Act thus reflected a worldwide trend to transfer powers to communities on the assumption that it would enhance democracy and deliver the stated aims, at the lowest possible cost to the state. A combination of globalisation, and a particular historical context, seems to have strained policy development and, therefore, governance and transformation within schools. Such strains reinforce a claim for weak democracy.

With reference to this historical context, 46 years of apartheid left the majority of South Africans to live below the “poverty line”, insufficiently educated, inadequately housed (if at all) with little or no access to electricity and clean piped water and also deprived of uncomplicated access to health facilities. Addressing such socio-economic inconsistencies would seem to be the natural response of a government serious about socio-economic justice, that came to power on a broad base of popular support that embodied the hopes and expectations of the millions of poor citizens of this country (Habib & Kotzé in Mohne & Edigheji 2003: 253). The resulting Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was premised on state led development incorporating an attack on poverty alleviation with massive state initiated employment projects, as well as broadening welfare provisions including health and education. However, as earlier stated, this project which could potentially have intensified the ability of millions of South Africans to become “free” from the shackles of poverty thus reinforcing a strong democracy, was shelved for the GEAR policy with its resultant weak democratic consequences. Habib & Padayachee posits that GEAR has had a devastating effect on the lives of millions of poor and low-income families. They further claim that:

The ANC's implementation of neo-liberal economic policies has meant disaster for the vast majority of South Africa's poor. Increasing unemployment and economic inequalities associated with neo-liberal policies have also pushed even more of South Africa's population into the poverty trap (in Mohne & Edigheji 2003: 257).

The international connection in the form of neo-liberal ideology in macro-economic policy and education governance, which I attempted to expose, culminated in what Weber refers to as "more a continuation with the *apartheid* past than a break with it" (2002: 635. My italics). While the SASA is intent on giving parents powers previously denied them, those powers came with constraining responsibilities, which I argue further marginalises the millions of poor in this country. It is these millions whose children would have to access the schooling system where more financial responsibilities would come to bear. Furthermore, it is also these poor who would have the responsibility of driving school governance policies transforming it into practice. My concern is that it seems that such an expectation is unrealistic under the present conditions. It is, therefore, my understanding that unless governance is framed within a context of democratic citizenship it would seemingly be trapped in a frame of weak democratic practices. Put differently, cultivating a particular type of citizen has the potential to make them more critical and thus imbue them with the potential to identify their restricted ability to participate in democratic structures. Such a realisation has the potential to lead them onto a path of reflecting and reconstructing the "democratic" landscape in order that they may reasonably participate on a more equal basis. Democratic citizenship, therefore, has the potential to lead to stronger democracy. I shall address this issue in more detail in chapter four. I now move to an exposition of my understanding of what incorporates a conception of representative democracy.

### **3.2.3.1. A CONCEPTION OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

A classical conception of liberal democracy may be summarised in the view espoused by Jagger (1983: 40) when he claims that:

The liberal assumption (is) that human individuals are essentially solitary, with needs and interests that are separate from if not in opposition to those of other individuals. This assumption is the starting point of liberal theory. It generates what liberals take to be the fundamental question of political philosophy: what are the circumstances in which essentially solitary individuals might agree to come together in civil society, what would justify them in doing so and how might conflict be prevented when they do so?

Jagger's interpretation that individuals are "essentially solitary" and separate from other individuals, confirms classical (seventeenth century) liberalism's insistence with a "non-associated individual" who disregards the societal impact. My interpretation goes beyond this view and would rather incorporate an understanding of a "socially positioned individual". By this I mean the individual cannot be divorced from the society within which he interacts and socialises. To clarify my stance I turn to Waghid who posits that: "If one accepts that individuals' goals and interests are products of social interactions such as political decision making, then the classical view that individuals are pre-social seems to be misconceived" (2003a: 35). In this sense, individuals who participate in school governance are influenced by and influence others who serve in the same context. Put differently, it is unlikely that actions within a confined space (such as a SGB) can be solely individual, without other individuals (within the same space) not having a bearing on the actions of the individual. The individual in the SGB system is thus socially positioned and consequently cannot escape the social interaction and its resulting influences. It is within such a frame of social interaction that I situate my understanding of representative democracy as a strand of liberalism.

In a democracy there are many opposing views as to the path that should politically be embarked upon thus reflecting the different interests and beliefs of the broad society (political community). Regarding democracy as a representative system I turn to Macpherson who distinguishes between three models of representative forms of decision-making, which include Western-liberal democracy, non-liberal Communist democracy and non-liberal, non-

Communist democracy. However, I refer to the one that has a direct bearing on this dissertation, meaning Western liberal democracy, where Macpherson posits that:

Western liberal democracy was brought into being to serve the need of a competitive market society – a product of successfully developing capitalist market societies. Liberal representative democracy created by capitalism relocates power and domination from the state to civil society, to private property and the compulsions of the market. It is a kind of liberal democracy that accentuates the predominance of individual rights over collective rights, power of the people over any other regulatory institution and equal rights for all citizens (1966: 35).

In this view liberal democracy accentuates individual rights over collective rights as well as the devolution of power from central government to “the people”. I have earlier argued that it is within such a conception of democracy that school governing policies were galvanised. According to Miller, in his exposition on deliberative democracy and social choice, the problem is to find the structure that best meets the requirements of equality and efficiency, meaning how to reach a fair and efficient compromise given the many conflicting preferences expressed by the political community (Miller 2000: 9). In the liberal conception of democracy each individual’s preference should be granted equal weight. The aim of democracy from a liberal perspective is thus to combine individual preferences into a collective choice in as fair and efficient a way as possible (Miller 2000: 9). This should, however, be accomplished within the rationale of the liberal ideal which emphasises the role/preference of the individual. The idea is consequently to aggregate the individual views in such a way that all are comfortable with the final outcome. This collective view is then presented via a representative who speaks on behalf of “the people”. Stromberg posits that, “ ... democracy insists that every citizen must be directly involved as an active participant in decisions affecting the community, otherwise it isn’t democracy, but a travesty of it” (1996: 169). I agree with Stromberg in relation to his call for involvement and participating in the decision making process, however, his insistence on the involvement of

every citizen is problematic. The term citizen may refer to those who have the right to vote. In a representative system this does not translate into those who may not vote becoming non-citizens. On the contrary they still enjoy representation and may influence decisions under specific circumstances, such as an SGB. In this regard, an understanding of what constitutes a citizen is required (an issue that I address in chapter four). The understanding of liberal representative democracy as interpreted by Macpherson, Miller and Stromberg invokes concepts such as participation, freedom, tolerance and accountability, which are all constitutive features of representative democracy. Before I explore these concepts, I explain how the SASA reflects the representative model.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) favours the representative model of democracy, incorporating all “stakeholders” in the education process. The major stakeholders, according to SASA, are the learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and other “co-opted” community based individuals together with the school principal. The learner representative needs to be officially enrolled at the school at a level not lower than grade eight, and has to be an elected member of the school’s Representative Council of Learners (RCL). The teacher/educator representative should be officially employed by the Education Department and be a registered member of the South African Council of Educators (SACE). The teacher representative must also be elected from within the educator corpse of the school. The non-teaching staff representative (not an educator) has to be employed as a member of staff whose duties involve issues other than teaching. This representative also needs to be elected, but only non-educators who are officially employed at the school may participate in the election of this representative. The parents whose children are officially registered at the school elect the parent representatives. A parent can also be a guardian or any person who fulfils the role of ensuring a learner’s education. The elected members of the governing body may co-opt two members from the surrounding school community, but such members do not have voting powers. The principal gains space on the governing body by virtue of his position, meaning that the principal is not elected. The parent representatives have to outnumber the other

representatives by one (excluding the co-opted members). In other words if the governing body should have 12 members, then the parent grouping must be 7. One may reasonably dispute the composition of the governing body that predetermines a majority for parents and an appointed principal on democratic principles, but this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I raise the point simply because there seems to be a bias towards the parents as a representative group, meaning that they are favoured in cases where decisions can only be instituted via voting. This, the other representative groups may argue, is less democratic, or alternatively the governance structure undermines the democratic process.

It should by now be reasonably clear that the liberal conception of democracy favours representation. Representative democracy generally means that collective deliberations concerning the whole community are taken by people elected for this purpose and not directly by the members of that community. I now proceed to explore two forms of representation that have a direct bearing on SGBs. I include the conception of accountability in this discussion, after which I shall explore the constitutive features of participation, freedom and tolerance that I mentioned earlier.

### **3.2.3.2. REPRESENTATION WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

I introduce the notion of representation by turning to Hobbes who posits that a representative is an individual who acts in the name of another, meaning that he/she has been given the authority/power to act by that other, so that whatever the representative does is considered the act of the represented (Hobbes in Pitkin 1969: 8). This view holds that representation is authority. Put differently, it is the right given to the representative to make commitments and to incur consequences for another. However, Hobbes does not refer to consulting those who are being represented about their ideals, or about protecting their interests or of being responsible to them. For this reason political theorists claim that, "Hobbes missed the very essence of representation because representation is when a representative is responsible to those for whom he acts. Conceding to Hobbes' interpretation



would mean that representation has nothing to do with democracy, public interest or self-government. On the contrary Rousseau claims the practice (of representation) to be a form of 'tyranny' if it does not guarantee that the "representative's will coincides with the will of the represented" (in Pitkin 1969: 9). Now conforming to such a lofty ideal (as suggested by Rousseau) is impractical since in order for representation to claim some form of legitimacy, one needs to look at discovering when individuals feel that they are being represented.

Put differently, what may reasonably count as evidence for representation? In this regard representation is an activity which entails responsiveness to the represented, attending to their aims and ideals. In short accountability becomes the essence of representation, meaning that the representative acts in the interest of his/her constituency. In other words the representative is more cautious when acting on behalf of others, considering their interests above his/her own. In such an understanding of representation the representative is seen as the subordinate, while those being represented is dominant. Pitkin posits that "we are expected to act as if we would eventually have to account for our actions. Thus we ought to have reasons for what we do, and be prepared to justify our actions to those we act for ..." (1967: 119). It is such an understanding of representation that interests me, for it is my understanding that representative accountability underscores the type of representation within SGBs. The notion that "representation is a relationship that involves trust and obligation" on the part of the representative as well as the represented is critical (Pitkin 1967: 128). The activity of representation as played out in school governance relates to what the representative does and how he/she determined that what he/she did was in the interest of those whom he/she represents. This goes to the heart of how the electorate is being represented, bringing into play the mandate-independence controversy. Put differently, should the representative on the SGB be bound by mandates or should he/she be free to act as seems best to him/her in pursuit of the electorate's welfare? In this regard Bobbio argues for two types of representation. I refer to his theory to clarify this point (Bobbio 1987: 47):

How does A represent B? A can represent B either in the role of a delegate or in the role of a “fiduciary”. If it is a delegate, A is purely and simply a spokesperson, an ambassador, an emissary, a messenger of those he represents, and thus the scope of the mandate is extremely restricted and revocable *ad nutum*. If on the other hand, A is in the position of fiduciary, this confers the power to act with a certain independence in the name of and on behalf of those represented.

With regard to school governance, a conception of “pure” mandation curtails compromise which is essential, given that different stakeholders (parents, teachers and learners) are being represented. Representation as a “delegate” who is bound to a mandate undermines democracy because the outcome (mandate) precedes whatever discussion may arise. Put differently, notwithstanding convincing arguments against the mandate, the representative is bound to that mandate, thus rendering discussion obsolete. I am thus more attracted to Bobbio’s “fiduciary” where the representative has “a certain” independence. My understanding of “certain” in this respect leads to a more moderate position where the representative may exercise some discretion, but his/her actual judgement should be such that it does not incur irreconcilable conflict with those represented. Implicit in this understanding is that the representative is still answerable to his/her constituency, again bringing into play the notion of accountability. Pitkin (1967: 224) reinforces this view when he claims that: “The representative system must look after the interest and be responsive to public opinion, except insofar as non-responsiveness can be justified in terms of the public interest”. Within the context of school governance this creates a space for deliberation and compromise, which I argue, are prerequisites for addressing conflict. It is my view that the composition of SGBs seems to be a recipe for conflict because each representative is bound to “deliver” to his/her stakeholder group. For democracy such conflict is not necessarily bad, for it incorporates the notions of deliberation, compromise, understanding and consensus. I shall address the link between power and representation when I account for actual school governing body practices. I now explore the concepts that I referred to earlier in this chapter.

- **Participation**

A representative democracy cannot exist without participation. The manner in which participation manifests itself has a direct bearing on school governance and the practice of democracy. Two requirements are of paramount importance in the participatory system of governance. On the one hand, in a representative democracy, all members will not take part (participate) in the finale decision-making process. The ideal is that all members be allowed to debate and submit their concerns directly (participate) to the representative who shall be party to the development of a decision. On the other hand, a participatory democracy is also a form of direct democracy. This stems from the principle that individual members have the right to air their views on the debated issue before a decision is implemented. In this regard Pateman posits that: "Participatory democracy ... is built around the assertion that individuals and their institutions (SGBs) cannot be considered in isolation from one another ..." (1970: 41). She argues that the development of democratic attitudes and qualities in the individual depends on "maximum participation" in all spheres of society because, the development of democratic attitudes and qualities, "takes place through the process of participation itself" (Pateman 1970: 42). I emphasise the idea of "all spheres of society" for it brings to the fore an understanding that participation is a movement towards the protection of, and respect for individuals outside of the SGB structure, meaning those individuals who rely on a representative to further their cause. The right of participation, therefore, affords community members the opportunity to influence outcomes in a forum (the SGB) where they are not physically present to do so. Participation subsequently makes it possible for the broader school community to impact on decisions which affect their lives, albeit via representation. Pateman further claims that each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of a decision (1970: 7). The inference here is the invocation to rational debate prior to determining a particular decision, which permits the understanding that participation may be linked to notions of freedom, tolerance, responsibility and accountability; all features of representative democracy as earlier stated. It is consequently clear that within the context of school governance,

participation as a constitutive feature of representation is paramount. Put differently, without participation representation cannot fulfil in the ideal of democracy.

- **Freedom**

Before I explore the notion of freedom I need to first locate myself in terms of debates surrounding this concept, meaning that liberal theorists are not all agreed on what freedom entails or should entail. There is a tendency among liberals to deny that freedom is a “fundamental good”. They argue that one should distinguish between “specific freedoms” and “overall freedom”. In this sense specific freedom refers to having the freedom to do (act) something specific, like to stand or to speak or to practice your trade. Overall freedom is the amount of freedom one has in either absolute or relative terms, meaning it is an aggregation/combination of one’s specific freedoms. Dworkin (a “specific freedom” promoter) argues that liberty cannot be some sort of commodity (a fundamental good), “as if we could say that one restriction of freedom were more undesirable than another on the grounds that in the first case the amount of that commodity taken away ... is, for some reason, either greater in amount or greater in its import than the second” (1979: 172). The inference here is towards a measurement: “For liberty is not something which can be taken to be even roughly measurable” (Dworkin 1985: 189). Oppenheim endorses this view and claims that for this reason (immeasurability) freedoms cannot be aggregated, meaning there is no such thing as “overall freedom”. He further posits that freedom is a relational concept. Put differently, it expresses a relation between an “agent” who is free to perform a specific “action”. To imagine that various specific freedom relations can somehow be combined into overall measures of freedom is to treat liberty like a commodity” (Oppenheim in Carter 1999: 19). However, Benn and Peters state that: “liberty is not a commodity to be weighed and measured. I am free to do x, y and z, but not p, q, and r – but there is no substance called freedom of which I can therefore possess more or less (in Carter 1999: 19). To further clarify this view I turn to Kristjánsson who agrees that freedom is a “relation,” and not a commodity or property. He posits that: “freedom is not something that one

happens to possess or stumble across like a chest of gold, it is a relation between agents” (1996: 11). The point is that these theorists argue that there is no such “thing” as “freedom as such” (overall freedom) because the term freedom describes a relation between agents and should not be taken to refer to a “thing”. If this argument for “specific freedoms” as opposed to “overall freedom” holds true, then the obvious question would be: what specific freedoms? The obvious answer might be those ideals which are constitutive of liberalism, meaning in Dworkin’s terms, treating people/individuals with equal concern and respect. According to Carter this translates into concentrating on giving people the “right” liberties (1999: 20). Rawls endorses this view when he posits that no priority is assigned to liberty as such, as if something called “liberty” has a pre-eminent value and is the main if not the sole end of political and social justice (1970: 302).

Kymlicka also agrees that overall freedom (freedom as such) is not one of the foundational values of liberalism. The emphasis is, therefore, on giving individuals the freedom to do “specific things” (specific freedoms) that should be justified by reference to values other than freedom. Kymlicka explains that:

We don’t answer (the) question (of how valuable specific freedoms are) by determining which liberties contain more or less of a single commodity called “freedom”. ... For the reason it is important to be free in a particular situation is not the amount of freedom it provides, but the importance of the various interests it serves. ... The idea of freedom as such (*overall freedom*), and lesser or greater amounts of it, does no work in political argument (1990: 145-151).

The overall claim by these theorists is consequently that firstly, there is no such thing as “overall freedom”, secondly, that if there is it cannot be measured and thirdly that there is no point in measuring “overall freedom” (Carter 1999: 21). Following from this, if someone claims that he/she have freedom, the logical response should be, “freedom to do what?” and “freedom with respect to whom?” because freedom on its own does not refer to anything.

For the purpose of this dissertation I shall employ the concept freedom in the “specific freedom” sense. This, however, is not to say that one should dispense with the notion of “overall freedom”, for Carter in his work on “*A Measure of Freedom*” convincingly argues that “overall freedom” (freedom as such) can and should be measured if libertarians want to do justice to the concept of freedom.

I have shown that “freedom” is a contested term, meaning that to formulate a definition becomes problematic. Having located myself in relation to the debate, I now explore the concept freedom without seeking to define it.

Our normal expectation of a person is that he is a chooser. Being a chooser is a standard expected of everyone – which is related to norms of rationality. Thus the individual, being aware of rules which structure his social life, subject such rules to reflection and criticism to form a code of conduct (Peters in Doyle 1975: 123-124). From this one may deduce a freedom of choice that each rational individual may exhibit. The democratic form of governance is taken as the condition for human freedom, where freedom is conceived in terms of the liberty of individuals to do as they choose without external constraints (Gould 1990: 31-32). Put differently, freedom is the absence of certain preventing conditions on agents’ possible actions. Interpreting this understanding of freedom, democracy is a system of rule where freedom is at its utmost and constraints (to ensure social order) are by mutual consent. Peters reinforces this view when he argues that, “freedom does not mean the acceptance of constraints. It is just a general empirical fact that the acceptance of some form of constraint by all is necessary for the avoidance of more grievous forms of constraint by some others” (in Doyle 1975: 121). From this follows some sort of relationship between “freedom” and “constraint” (preventing conditions). Regarding this tension Birch posits:

The inherent importance of liberty to human beings arises from the fact that they are essentially choosing creatures, constantly taking decisions about how they want to act. The limitations on freedom arise

from the fact that human beings are also social creatures, constrained in their choices by all kinds of social pressures (1993: 96).

In terms of my earlier argument, it is these social pressures that inform the notion of “specific freedoms”, for the reason that the social order shall collectively determine what shall involve (according to Dworkin) the “right” liberties. Benn and Peters also suggest that, “in general, when we say a person is free, we mean that, if a person wants to do something, he will not be impeded by some kind of constraint or limitation” (in Gould 1990: 35). I use the terms liberty and freedom interchangeably creating the impression that they are synonymous. Arend (in Birch 1993: 95), however, suggests that, “in a political context the terms are commonly used in slightly different ways, with liberty more likely to be used when the writer means the absence of restraint and freedom more likely to be used when the writer means the opportunity to engage in some activity, such as political participation”. Berlin utilises the same terms, meaning freedom when he refers to the concept of positive liberty, and liberty when he refers to the negative concept of liberty. What is evident is the distinct difference between Berlin’s positive and negative liberty. Birch (1993: 96) elaborates on this interpretation and claims that: “On the one hand liberty has been defined as freedom for the individual to do whatever he or she wants to do; in short, that liberty is the absence of restraint. This is the negative concept of liberty. On the other hand, liberty has been asserted to be freedom to do things that are worth doing, to engage in self-development, to have a share in the government of one’s society. This is positive liberty. I should emphasise that my attraction is to the positive conception of liberty for the reason that it endorses the idea of self-development.

In relation to “self-development” Gould explains that the concept of freedom should be understood more broadly than the absence of external constraints. She argues that “not only for the absence of external constraint, but also for the availability of social and material conditions necessary for the achievement of purposes or plans” (1990: 32). She claims that the traditional view of freedom (negative freedom) fails to address two key features:

1. It ignores the contemporary requirement, or alternatively the “enabling conditions” that the means necessary for the realisation of a choice should be available. In other words the material and social means for realising purposes are essential to freedom.
2. It omits from consideration the development of a person over time, meaning the individuals ability to realise long-term plans.

Basically, she argues for “negative freedom” which is not identical to the ability to make a choice, for someone could make a choice without having the ability to carry out that action. The “action” depends on the availability of the “enabling conditions”. Put differently, one may be free from external constraint (by others) and yet not be free to realise one’s purpose, because the necessary or enabling conditions or the means to activate that choice is not available (Gould 1990: 31-38). While it might seem as if this is a contestation of Berlin’s notion of “negative freedom” I should emphasise that even Berlin recognised that liberty may be ineffective without the presence “of the conditions to realise it”. In this sense he refers to poverty or the lack of education as potential elements that might render liberty useless (Gould 1990: 39). Birch refers to this type of freedom as an “abstract freedom”, meaning that freedom can only be real when one has the capacity to act on one’s choices. Furthermore, Gould (1990: 41) explains that part of these enabling conditions should be “social conditions that include cooperative forms of social interaction, reciprocal recognition of each other’s free agency, and access to training, education, and various social institutions”. The conception of freedom as self-development is critical when related to school governance’ because the role-players (parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching staff) have acquired the authority (via the South African Schools Act) to make decisions in an area that is fairly new and at times unfamiliar to them. To presuppose that being elected to serve on a school governing body automatically transforms one into becoming a practicing democrat is to believe that democratic practices are inherent to humans. The idea of self-development as constitutive to freedom is essential in order to promote the type of democracy for which I am arguing. This self-development is, however, not constitutive of representative democracy in a liberal sense.



The other interpretation that has a direct bearing on school governance is the notion of cooperative forms of interaction, reciprocal recognition of each other's free agency and access to training. Comprehending freedom as "cooperative forms of social interaction" points to what I perceive to be power relations, which invokes the ideal of tolerance (particularly for opposing interpretations and points of view) as well as transparency (giving full reign to one's thoughts without fear of retribution). Governors who serve their particular constituencies (different stakeholder groups) would invariably be in contestation with each other and should, therefore, have the capacity to invoke a conception of tolerance, failing which could potentially cause animosity and even the malfunctioning of the SGB. With regard to linking freedom to "free agency", I deduce a movement towards autonomy, meaning each individual governor may choose to reach his/her own conclusions (in relation to my earlier argument on representation). I have raised earlier on the "freedom" to choose (as constitutive to democracy), but Peters posits that such choice is "related to norms of rationality" (in Doyle 1975: 123). He proposes three criteria for autonomy, including authenticity, rational reflection and strength of will. Authenticity refers to the individual making rules for him/herself, thus adopting a way of life that is distinct from one being dictated to by others. Rational reflection is when the individual is aware of rules and conventions as alterable, continually subject to change. These changes are effected critically and impacts on his/her construction of "a way of life". Strength of will refers to the ability of the individual to stick to principles which was acquired through rational reflection (in Doyle 1975: 123-125).

I am consequently proposing a freedom that includes both the "negative" as well as "positive" conceptions of freedom, where the positive include "freedom as capacity" and negative freedom as the "exercise of that capacity" (Gould 1990: 45). It is when the necessary conditions prevail to act on one's choices that self-development occurs thus underscoring the individual's freedom. Such an understanding of freedom, I argue, is critical to ensure that SGBs function democratically. Conversely, a lesser interpretation or a disregard for

freedom in the sense that I argue for would lead to weak democratic practices.

- **Tolerance**

Liberal values, particularly the freedom to exercise one's own lifestyle notwithstanding how strange it might be (as long as it does not interfere with the lifestyle of others), are undermined without tolerance. Tolerance is, therefore, essential for democracy for without tolerance the "foundations of democracy cannot be strengthened and respect for human rights cannot be maintained" (Kennedy in Mendus 1999: 107).

Tolerance implies a commitment to particular convictions and deeply held views that stems from a value system that the individual holds dear. It is in this regard that Carey makes a link between the notion of tolerance and pain. He posits that if no "pain" is involved, meaning that if one does not hold an opinion on the specific issue (conviction), the feeling may be referred to as indifference. He argues that people with no convictions are not tolerant if they allow others their way. They are simply "indifferent or apathetic" and indifference is not tolerance for the reason that the individual does not feel "pain" (in Mendus 1999: 46). The upshot of this is that when one entertains convictions that underscore one's value system, and others violate those convictions, this results in pain, meaning one has to reconcile one's convictions with those who do not hold it dearly. This is the difficult process of tolerance, as opposed to the easier alternative referred to as indifference. Tolerance requires us to accept people and permit their practices even when we strongly disapprove of them. It involves an attitude that is intermediate between wholehearted acceptance and unrestrained opposition (Scanlon 2003: 187). Carey responds to the understanding of "unrestrained opposition" by claiming that "tolerant people do not attempt to impose their opinions by external pressure or enforce them by any means except thoughtful persuasion" (in Mendus 1999: 46). This understanding of tolerance does not satisfy me in terms of school governance, because it relates specifically to

“beliefs or opinions” and does not include what may be referred to as the unique South African context.

Within school governing bodies we find people from different religious, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Institutionalised apartheid fed a diet of emphasising difference to the extent that people harboured antagonistic and hostile feelings for each other, not only because of differing beliefs, but also essentially for what or who they are. Put differently, people are antagonistic or hostile simply because of the colour of one's skin, or one's mode of dress, or one's socio-economic position, which distinguishes an individual as different from other groups. In South Africa this is a reality even after ten years of democracy, meaning that enmity and intolerance results from issues beyond the control of the individual. It should be clear that one does not have the ability to determine one's skin colour or ethnic origin. I am therefore arguing for two different levels of tolerance, with the first referring to beliefs, doctrines and opinions, and the second “for what people are” (their physical outward manifestation, including ethnicity and race). Ignatieff reinforces such an interpretation when he refers to Locke's notion of “irrationality” (those forms of intolerance directed at what people are), claiming that: “individuals are blamed and condemned for being something which is not in their power to alter”. He refers to the South African apartheid system as an “intolerance expressed in terms of an extreme moral and cultural relativism” (in Mendus 1999: 85). This type of intolerance creates the perception that one group is superior to the other, and in the South African case this reinforces difference. A case in point is the tension between Zulus and Xhosas in KwaZulu-Natal. The point is that within school governing bodies these differences plays itself out thus strengthening my argument for tolerance at two levels. The question, which arises, is why and how does one deal with intolerance? Where intolerance has the potential to cause instability and strife to the extent that it threatens the day-to-day existence of communities, then a mechanism should be sought to minimise the differences to a degree where daily life can at the very least be functional. Scanlon responds to such an idea by claiming that there “would be cases in which persisting conflict and disagreement are to be expected and are ... quite compatible with full respect

for those with whom we disagree. But while respect for each other does not require us to abandon our disagreement, it does place limits on how this conflict can be pursued” (2003: 188). Inherent in Scanlon’s call to “respect” I deduce a call to accepting others (those whom we differ with) as our equal. This type of equality allows all members of society to be entitled to define what the society is and equally participate in determining what it will become (Scanlon 2003: 190). If and when we have acquired the capacity to subscribe to such practices of “equality,” then we have reached the level of tolerance required for a plural society.

However, Ignatieff proposes that the remedy for intolerance is to move away from “adventitious collective identities like race, colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation. These are minor differences, and if we hope to have a tolerant society we must place faith in the possibility of individuals freeing themselves ... from the deadly dynamic of its narcissism” (in Mendus 1999: 5). His call for “faith in the individual” seems rather idealistic for it presupposes that the individual has the inherent will to effect change, conversely that societal influences has a minimal bearing on individual practices. I am consequently not convinced that this will lead us away from intolerance. My attraction is more towards Neuberger and Kennedy who argue the opposite in the sense that the affirmation of group identity (as opposed to Ignatieff’s denial) has a better chance of leading towards a more tolerant society. They posit that collective identities are an irreducible part of individual identity and that it is only when group membership is acknowledged and accepted politically that we will be able to move towards a truly tolerant society (in Mendus 1999: 110 & 126). This conception of toleration is more in line with the South African government’s call for “unity in diversity”. In this sense diversity is the dynamic force which enhances growth and development in terms of our being a “moral society”. It creates the space for differences to be “outlived” and opportunities to share those differences with others. Put differently, it promotes the circumstances for an appreciation of diversity in all its forms. Within such a conception of tolerance the South African “plurality” can exist and its movement towards “building a nation” becomes more plausible. Kennedy is emphatic in her stance claiming that:

Rather than using the language of exclusion, they should be creating the conditions that allow all groups within society to feel a sense of common purpose and mutual respect (in Mendus 1999: 110-111)

This sense of “common purpose and mutual respect” should, however, not be seen as a recipe for peace. On the contrary within a plurality (as is a SGB) disagreements are bound to arise about how values might be shared or understood. The point is that to deny those with whom one disagrees, the chance to persuade the others in the group (SGB) to adopt one's understanding would then be regarded as intolerance. From this stems the idea that tolerance is a social practice that can only be sustained when a culture exists where human identity is seen as individual as well as civic. Before I give examples of actual school governing body practices, I shall frame the concept of tolerance in line with Nussbaum's understanding of compassion. My reason for incorporating the virtue of compassion is that a potential critic might argue that my interpretation of tolerance borders on what may be referred to as “feeling sorry for”. My understanding of tolerance, guided by Nussbaum refutes the interpretation of tolerance as “sympathy or pity”.

I have earlier argued that within school governing bodies (SGBs) we find people from different religious, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. I further claimed that more than forty years of apartheid emphasised such differences causing people to harbour antagonistic and hostile feelings for each other, not only because of their differing beliefs, but also essentially for what or who they are. I argue that deliberation, as a necessary condition for democratic citizenship, should include the virtue of compassion.

Nussbaum refer to compassion as the recognition and emotional judgement that there are dangerous and unpleasant things that happen to others through no fault of their own, and that we might experience the same problem at some stage (2001: 405). Waghid posits that compassion and respect for human dignity are virtues not necessarily associated with deliberative argumentation and rational persuasion. One can rationally and persuasively articulate an

argument with the aim of building relations of trust among participants, but this does not mean that one is actually compassionate towards others (2003a: 67). The compassionate person is more concerned with those who suffer and are oppressed thus inhibiting his/her self-interests. It is for this reason that I deduce that Nussbaum raises the issue of the contribution that compassion can make in guiding deliberation amongst citizens. Her main argument is that compassion ought to be the emotion that should most frequently be cultivated when citizens embark upon rational deliberation and just action in public as well as in private life (Nussbaum 2001: 299). In other words deliberative citizens (a concept that explore in the next chapter) should possess the ability to treat others not only justly, but also humanely.

South Africa's diverse education context enhances the possibility that matters of public concern (violence, unemployment, alcoholism, drug-abuse, poverty and so on) would inevitably have to be confronted, leading to judgements having to be made. However, such judgements should be made from different perspectives, depending on how the particular issue impacts on the individual's life. It is for this reason that I argue that compassion become part of the deliberative process because it "not only prompts in people the awareness of the misfortune or suffering of others, but also pushes the boundaries of the self outward by focussing on others' suffering which might occur through no fault of their own" (Waghid 2003a: 68). Nussbaum understands compassion in the sense that the undeserved suffering of people is not trivial and she argues for a belief that the possibility exists for the person who witnesses the emotion to feel the same as the sufferer. In the first sense the undeserved injustice should not only be recognised, but also addressed, meaning that the person's plight should somehow be alleviated. Many disadvantaged communities are not to blame for their inability to govern and take ownership of schools. Decades of apartheid diminished their chances for a good education resulting in them operating on the lower levels of the economy, if at all. The upshot is diminished skills and poverty. In such circumstances deliberation should not take the form of judging their shortcomings but rather to identify means of empowering them, meaning what could be done to ensure that they acquire such skills. But the deliberation

process regard all those party to the process, as equal and ill-equipped governors should, therefore, not receive preferential treatment. It is precisely because of such criticism that I suggest that one should recognise the undeserved suffering that the disadvantaged had to endure through no fault of their own. Deliberation, incorporating the virtue of compassion, lends itself to better opportunities to address the shortcomings of persons within the community.

In the second sense Nussbaum suggests that to be able to feel the suffering of others one has to put oneself in their shoes. She posits that, "in order for compassion to be present, the person must consider the suffering of another as a significant part of his/her own scheme of goals and ends. She must take that person's ill as affecting her own flourishing. In effect, she must make herself vulnerable in the person of another" (Nussbaum 2001: 319). Interpreting Nussbaum I deduce that only if one has an understanding and appreciation for the suffering of others would one be capable of dealing with them compassionately, meaning that it has the potential to drive one to alleviate such suffering. Put differently, it means that the alleviation of the other's undeserved suffering would effectively put one in a position to further your own aims. Therefore, I argue that for conversations addressing issues of human injustice to thrive, the moral virtue of compassion should underscore the deliberative process. Framing tolerance in terms of Martha Nussbaum's understanding of compassion liberates it from merely being interpreted as pity or a sense of "feeling sorry for".

Having explored some of the constitutive features of representative democracy, I now give examples of actual SGB practices in order to show that representation as I argued for is being undermined in SGB practices. I argue that representative democracy has the potential to undermine and exclude the marginalised groups (learners and even parents). Representation as it plays itself out on SGBs seems to reinforce a type of non-accountability with its suppression or reduced emphasis on deliberation. This inevitably leads to weak forms of democracy. The actual practices draw on research in different

provinces of South Africa. The data is included together with some analysis, which also includes insights from other relevant literature.

### **3.3.1. INSTANCES OF SGB PRACTICES**

In this section I shall refer to actual SGB practices in relation to representative democracy. The idea is to determine whether such practices reinforce or weaken the constitutive features as explored earlier. The rationale is that if on the one hand evidence illustrates a restricting space for representation, then it underscores weak democratic practices. On the other hand if practices enhance the explored features, they potentially deepen the democratic practice, and thus the likelihood for strong democracy. At this point I need to clarify the term “practice” as used in the above sense. A practice has different features; these features/meanings make the practice what it is. Following such an understanding I determine that “features” contradicting the features for which I have argued may lead to distorted practices. However, as I have earlier argued, representative democracy has the tendency to exclude the marginalised voices thus undermining their potential to influence decisions. The evidence that I present spans the period from 2000 to 2004 and comes from a diverse group of researchers who presented papers at conferences or published articles on SGBs in particular. I also include my own data regarding school governance in disadvantaged schools. I need to reiterate that the following are illuminative case studies that reflect the work of others who have done research on school governance. I reflect on their work and draw inferences from it (as I explained in chapter one).

### **3.3.2. PRACTICES IN RELATION TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

- **Case study 1**

Adams and Waghid constructed the following data in disadvantaged schools in the Grassy Park region (Western Cape Province). I quote extensively from their report as it appears in the *South African Journal of Education* (2005):



The study revealed that there is a break in communication between elected members/representatives (of the SGB) and the constituency it represents. This inevitably leads to decisions being taken without a mandate. This initially should not cause major problems as long as the representative is answerable to his/her electorate. The study however reveals that governors do not seem to be answerable to their constituencies. (2005: 30).

Such a break in communication has serious consequences for the electorate because it means that they are not informed as to the manner in which they are being represented. They do not have an idea of whether their aims and ideals are being represented. In short they do not know whether they are in fact being represented at all. In such a case representation loses its accountability foundation thus restricting one of the ideals of representation. Distorting representation in this manner reinforces my argument towards a weaker form of democracy. Adams and Waghid further posit that:

Most of the respondents alluded to the problem of conducting meetings. Four of the chairpersons explained that parents are scared to attend meetings because of gangster activity in the region. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Smith (principals at two of the schools) argue that, "it is dangerous to attend meetings after dark, because you might become a victim of assault or robbery". Mr. Anderson laments that, "even the meeting to determine school fees was poorly attended. I had three attempts in conducting this meeting before I had a quorum. Our parent representatives concluded that the parent community is not interested in school governance" (2005: 30).

Interpreting this evidence in relation to representation I argue that governance practices under such conditions leads to an absence of - or at the very least, misrepresentation. This I deduce from the necessary conditions for reasonable representation not even existing. It is for this reason that Mr. Anderson claims that only at his third attempt could he secure a quorum. How could one expect to represent others when trying to do so actually become

life-threatening? The representative in this case is not free to fulfil his/her role as a representative because he/she “might become a victim of assault or robbery” thus distorting the feature of freedom which I argued is a constitutive feature of democracy. In this regard two of the constitutive features that I argued for are diluted thus reinforcing my argument towards a weaker form of democracy. The attitude of those representatives who seem to have the ability to attend meetings without feeling threatened is also worrying. Surely those parents among the electorate who feel threatened have legitimate reason to operate on a safety first level; acting otherwise would be to gamble with one's life. To overlook such difficulties faced by individuals, through no fault of their own, and then to conclude that they are not interested in school governance is to my mind a rather arrogant attitude to adopt. The representative in this instance does not seem to care for the wellbeing of his/her electorate thus putting a question mark next to the ability of such a representative to represent in the interest of his/her constituency. It creates the impression that the representative does not have the interest of his/her stakeholder group at heart thus distorting the meaning of tolerance that I argued for. I shall further address this issue (of intolerance and caring) in chapter four when I argue for deliberation as a means of supporting stronger democratic practices.

Adams and Waghid go on to report that:

At four of the schools they (*the representatives*) argued that, “we have the right to make decisions if the parent community do not respond to notices of meetings to discuss important issues. It is not as if we do not attempt to get a mandate”. When we asked them whether they tried any other means of communicating with the parent community, the overwhelming response was that the “minutes of the meetings are available”. We then put it to them that they earlier reported that most parents couldn't read. Most of the parent representatives responded by claiming, “then they should show more interest in their children and make an effort to find out what is happening with their governing body” (Adams & Waghid 2005: 30).

Again the intolerance of representatives is highlighted restricting the chances of the stakeholder group being fairly represented. Overall this study not only reveals problems with representation but also exposes a “battle” to secure individuals (particularly from the parent community) to serve as representatives on SGBs. This, the authors claim is directly linked to causes such as unemployment, poverty and utilising most of their time in a struggle to make ends meet. One may reasonably argue that such unemployment could possibly be linked to the “fall-out” of globalisation that influenced the movement from Keynesian ideals to more market/capital related ideals, which have the effect of shedding jobs in its race to become more competitive in the global capital market. If such reasoning is plausible (and I tend to believe that it is), one may conclude that representation or the lack thereof (as the evidence point out) is directly linked to my earlier argument in relation to the influence of globalisation. The issue relating to poverty can also be directly linked to the notion of freedom or the lack thereof. I shall return to this conception of freedom when I argue for a more deliberative conception of liberal democracy.

- **Case Study 2**

Karlsson reports on the case studies data that she constructed at schools in Durban (Kwa-Zulu Natal Province). Her inquiry investigated participation levels at SGB meetings. She found that in almost every SGB, principals played a dominant role in meetings and decision-making. This is a significant point because it underscores my own findings in the Western Cape Province. In my interaction at schools in the Lotus River region the majority of parents alluded to the notion that “the principal knows best”.

Karlsson further reports that following the principal; educators were also greater participants in decision-making than members representing non-educator staff, parents and learners. As one respondent stated:

The community regard (teachers) as leaders who are clear about school issues. Despite being the majority ... parents were reticent,

relying on the principal and educators for leadership and guidance in decision-making (Karlsson 2002b: 332).

Her evidence shows that representatives of particular stakeholder groups (parents, learners and non-teaching staff) may not have acquired the necessary skills to participate effectively, or alternatively that the space within which they are supposed to participate is severely restricted by the dominating groups (including the principal and teacher representative). Her evidence further illustrates that the marginalised stakeholder groups (parents, learners and non-teaching staff), although being physically represented had scant voice, supporting the idea that they are still marginalised. This goes to the heart of power relations within the SGB. It seems to me that power is still vested in the principal who not only influence decisions but also actually make them. The evidence is clear in the sense that although SGBs were instituted to enhance democracy, current practices reveal that the voices of the principal and the educators reign supreme thus reinforcing my claim of a weaker type of democracy.

The principal might argue that effective implementation of outcomes carries more weight than how the outcome is realised. Such an argument is in consonance with the neo-liberal claim for effectiveness. This line of reasoning shows that globalisation's influence again filters through. What is also clear from Karlsson's investigation in relation to representation is that one may reasonably argue that the stakeholder groups (with reference to parents, learners and the non-teaching staff) whose voices should be heard via their representatives are being marginalised. These stakeholder groups thus do not have a fair chance of being represented for the reason that their representatives does not seem to have the skills (according to her case study findings) to counter the power of particularly the principle and teacher representatives. She reports that her case study findings (from longitudinal research in 27 schools throughout South Africa) included the following:

Parents' low levels of participation were also attributed to a weak understanding of their role, a capacity deficit in the range of skills

needed to perform all the governance functions, and contextual communication and transport difficulties. Many of these factors are directly related to poverty and the under-development and discrimination accumulated during the apartheid era (Karlsson 2002b: 332).

It is my view that such conditions (weak understanding, poor skills and poverty) marginalises this stakeholder group and leads to restricting the chances of fair representation thus weakening the stakeholder-group's chances of influencing decisions. These findings also correspond with the data of Adams and Waghid. Besides the skills deficit and poverty issues, the power of the principal and teacher representatives also restricts the ability of the marginalised groups' power to be represented. The upshot of this again slant towards weak democratic practices for the reason that all the voices that are supposed to be heard and consequently impact on outcomes are either stifled or at times disregarded. Karlsson in her data refer to this as "marginalised stakeholder representatives having to operate within a restricted space". I read Karlsson to mean that the opportunity for the marginalised governors to have their voices heard is scant. The hegemonic power of the principal and the other dominant stakeholder representatives undermines the possibility of the marginalised to influence decisions. In other words it contradicts the features that I have argued for thus distorting representation and consequently the governance practice.

- **Case Study 3**

Bush and Heystek report on their research findings from six schools in the Pretoria region. Their research shows that most governing bodies are not fulfilling their policy-making role but are relying on the principal to do so (2003: 136). They report that:

The principal of the English-medium city school says that many parents feel "out of depth" on the governing body, while the head teacher of the

dual medium city school in a poor part of Pretoria adds that parent governors show “insufficient interest” in the school (2003: 236).

Two issues in their data relate to the findings of Karlsson as well as that of Adams and Waghid; with reference to “out of depth” and “insufficient interest linked to poverty”. I have earlier argued that a lack of skills as well as poverty impacts on the governor’s ability to represent their stakeholder groupings. This evidence again supports such a view. Bush and Heystek further found that “training or capacity building is essential ... but the Gauteng evidence ... is that parent governors are reluctant to undergo training” (2003:136).

- **Case Study 4**

As part of the “Education Policy Consortium Governance and Equity Project” Mbokazi constructed her data in six schools across three provinces to appraise the participation of parents, learners and educators in decision-making at school level. She reports that: “While it appears that the vast majority of schools have complied with the legal requirements for the election of various stakeholders onto SGBs, concerns were raised over the representivity and participation of school governors” (2004: 4). According to her findings evidence suggest that:

... the voices of the marginalised have continuously gone unheard. The principals’ and educators’ voice remain dominant and privileged over the voices of parents and learners (2004: 4).

She further reports that:

Voices of stakeholders in the SGB were seriously undermined by lack of communication between the representatives in the SGB and their constituents. In all schools very little communication strategies or mechanisms were in place to either take concerns from their constituents or to report back to them. As a result it was not clear whether voices that were heard were voices of individual members of

the SGB or the voices of the stakeholders represented. This practice challenges the extent to which representatives were in fact accountable to the school community ...” (2004: 5).

She also claims that “in all meetings observed, there was no time when the principal’s views were openly challenged and questioned” (Mbokazi 2004: 5). Her findings include the following:

(The) principals voice appears to be the strongest or paramount in KZB (a school in Kwazulu-Natal). In this school, the principal said that parents were illiterate and were not informed about the education system, especially with regard to issues pertaining to governance. He said that they still needed intensive training on their roles and responsibilities in the SGB (2004: 5).

As in the findings of Adams and Waghid, this data again exposes the power of the principal that seemingly overwhelm the voices of other stakeholders. The lack of training as well as communication between representatives and their stakeholder groups challenges the notion of accountability and also restricts the opportunity for stakeholder groups to participate, leading to the idea of a distorted form of representation. In this sense one may conceivably argue that this could be interpreted as sustaining a weak form of democracy.

The empirical evidence confirms that representative democracy has not only the potential but also the tendency to restrict and at times even exclude what I referred to as the marginalised voices. This tendency to curb the voices of the marginalised is not related to disagreement or offering a contesting point of view. On the contrary this tendency is related to restricting the space for contesting views thus curtailing the chances of the marginalised to participate in dialogue in order to influence decisions. It is my understanding that dialogue and the contestation of opposing points of view is necessary to sustain democracy. Representation as practiced within the sphere of school governance emphasises a type of non-accountability by reducing or at times ignoring deliberation. This tendency seems to arise in most disadvantaged

communities, across different provinces. This informs the idea that representation or the lack of it seems to be linked to poverty which undermines the type of freedom that I have been arguing for. This in turn retards the self-development of SGBs, a feature that is constitutive to freedom. The education transformation agenda that included democratically functioning SGBs is to my mind curtailed by a distorted form of representation thus leading to weak democratic practices.

### **3.4. SUMMARY**

In this chapter I expounded on the notion that South Africa was unique in the sense that we constructed the RDP notwithstanding developments in the international arena. I then went on to expose that this claim to uniqueness could not be sustained and that it was overtaken by international procedures particularly that of globalisation. I argued that decentralisation was an international phenomenon that influenced school governance policy. Put differently, decentralisation though having a particular national socio-political context also had to contend with its international context. I argued that this international context via the liberal conception of globalisation impacted upon the themes and overall outcomes of new education legislation in South Africa. Furthermore, I argued that specific proposals of the liberal conception of democracy with particular reference to its market driven agenda found space within the South African Schools Act. The consequence of this is the institution of compulsory payment of school fees thus transforming education into a commodity which clients should purchase. This I argued further marginalised the millions of poor who is forced to access this education system. I then went on to explore how the liberal notion of representation sought to include these marginalised. However, I exposed that instead of including, this form of representation tends to exclude, further reducing the space for the previously marginalised to participate in the structures that should enhance democracy. My next step was to explore particular constitutive features of liberal democracy and argued that interpreting these features in a specific way might lay the foundation for inclusion as opposed to exclusion. However, I concluded that the representative form of democracy as



espoused by the liberal notion of marketisation has the tendency to undermine and exclude the marginalised stakeholders (learners, non-teaching staff and parents). Finally I produced empirical evidence relating to actual school governing body practices in order to expose the inconsistencies it presents to representative democracy.

In the following chapter I shall concentrate on a specific strand of liberal democracy, that being the deliberative strand. It is my understanding that the deliberative ideal has a better chance of enhancing strong democracy. The upshot of this is that the classic liberal ideal with its emphasis on the individual relates to a weaker conception of democracy. I consequently draw attention to a contrast between a classic liberal and deliberative strand of democracy. The reason for this is to inform on my choice of deliberative as opposed to the liberal ideal of democracy. I shall then link this deliberative ideal to the notion of citizenship thus developing an argument for democratic citizenship. It is my view that the deliberative ideals have the inherent potential to make citizens more critical. My aim is to provide a basis for a more sustainable “stronger democracy” via democratic citizenship.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DELIBERATION TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP – MAKING AN ARGUMENT FOR A STRONGER FORM OF DEMOCRACY**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I shall explore two strands of liberal democracy and settle for one of the two, that being the deliberative conception. I further draw attention to my reasoning for preferring the deliberative/communitarian as opposed to the classic liberal/libertarian conception of democracy. I then attempt to link this deliberative model to citizenship thus producing an argument for democratic citizenship. My reasoning is to produce a defence for strong democracy by emphasising deliberation in order to minimise/overcome the limitations of this liberal conception (ie that representation as currently practiced does not fulfil in the requirements for school governance) which I argued is not broad enough (thus reinforcing a notion of weak democracy). I further explore the implications of the deliberative ideal (to show that the marginalised stand a better chance of inclusion) and argue that it can engender a more critical and thus democratic citizen.

Liberalism in South Africa has its roots in what Simhony and Weinstein (2001: 1) refer to as “a family of liberalism”, meaning that liberalism has different strands. These strands may be associated with evolutionary adaptations from classic liberalism to utilitarianism to libertarianism to communitarianism. Waghid posits that: “These strands of liberalism also provide philosophical spectacles through which notions of individualism and community are framed which in turn have important implications for liberal democracy in South Africa” (2003b: 33). My aim is to first explore a strand of liberalism that accentuates excessive individualism thus minimising the various ways in which individuals are situated in different political, cultural and social relationships. However, Mulhall and Swift argue that identifying what liberalism and communitarianism are is not easy for the reason that there is “a great deal of disagreement about what exactly one has to believe in order to

qualify either as a liberal or as a communitarian. The point is that in ordinary usage the term “liberalism” tends to refer to a *package* of beliefs or policies which can be analytically separated from one another ... the fact that the communitarian critique ... is primarily concerned with some of these and not others” (1992: viii). It is not unreasonable to suggest that classical liberalism (as conceived by John Locke and later by Thomas Hobbs and Rousseau) promotes abstract individualism and is sceptical of the good life. Lukes (1973: 73) argues that abstract individualism portray individuals as “given” with interests, wants, purposes and needs, that is, “given” autonomously of a social context, while society and the state are described as sets of actual or possible arrangements which respond more or less adequately to individuals’ requirements. Jagger (1983: 40) is even more explicit when she claims that:

The liberal assumption is that human individuals are essentially solitary, with needs and interests that are separate from if not in opposition to those of other individuals. This assumption is the starting point of liberal theory. It generates what liberals take to be the fundamental questions of political philosophy: what are the circumstances in which essentially solitary individuals might agree to come together in civil society, what would justify them in doing so and how might conflict be prevented when they do so? (1983: 40)

Jagger’s critique that individuals are “essentially solitary” and “separate from” other individuals validate classical liberalism’s affection for “abstract individualism” that tends to disregard the social. In this view individual liberty/freedom is at its utmost, meaning that an individual’s freedom to choose his/her own form of life is paramount. Mill posits that it is the right and prerogative of each individual to interpret for him/herself the meaning and value of their experiences, meaning the right to self-determination regarding major decisions in life. According to Mill the individual right to make such decisions must be “inviolable” (1982: 123). However, in fairness to Mill I must state that he is adamant that his appeal for individual liberty is not to promote selfishness on the contrary he argues for a promotion of a sense of community. In this regard Mill transcends classical liberalism in his movement

towards utilitarianism. One may reasonably argue that Mill paved the way for the new liberal strand of libertarianism. To clarify my point in terms of Mill's support for a sense of community I turn to *On Liberty* where he posits that:

It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine (utilitarianism) to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference, which pretends that human beings have no business with each other's conduct in life, and that they should not concern themselves about the well-doing or well-being of one another ... there is a need of great increase of disinterested exertion to promote the good of others (Mill 1998: 84).

Having said that, the point is that critics of classic liberalism expose the "individualism" of this strand of liberal democracy asserting that the primary motive for the rise of liberal democracies is the individual's desire and struggle for recognition. But this emphasis on individual liberty is precisely the foundation of the new libertarians. I now explore this strand of liberal democracy.

## **4.2. NEW LIBERTARIANISM**

The international economic crisis of the 1970s with its concomitant erosion of welfare state policies gave rise to a different strand of liberalism called libertarianism. The two major proponents of this strand are the economic Nobel Laureates F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman. Libertarians argue against the welfare state and in its place promotes a more "laissez faire" approach. Friedman argues that laissez faire had not been given a fair chance and, therefore, he advocates a society in which the primary mechanism of integration is the market. He proposes that it is through market capitalism that the disadvantaged groupings of society stand a chance of rescuing their position; something, he argues, that the welfare state was incapable of because it reinforced dependency. Friedman posits that:

The widespread use of the market reduces the strain on the social fabric by rendering conformity unnecessary with respect to any

activities it encompasses. The wider the range of activities covered by the market, the fewer are the issues on which explicitly political decisions are required and hence on which it is necessary to achieve agreement. In turn, the fewer the issues on which agreement is necessary, the greater is the likelihood of getting agreement while maintaining free society (1962: 24).

In terms of this understanding the logic of integrating the market would stand in stark contrast to the logic of state intervention. The argument is, therefore, opposed to welfare statism. It is for this reason that libertarians call for a removal of agricultural subsidies and tax on imports as well as a reduction in social security and pensions. In short libertarians argue for minimal state intervention. Brugger (in Wintrop 1983: 39) posits that: "Indeed for Friedman, control over the money supply appears as a key to the solution of most of society's ills". He further argues that in such a democracy the general interest becomes forgotten and may only be rescued by taking the decision making process out of the hands of the state and regulating it through the market (in Wintrop 1983: 40). Hayek supports the views of Friedman but emphasises the right to property or ownership. He posits that:

What our generation has forgotten is that the system of private property is the most important guarantee of freedom, not only for those who own property, but scarcely less for those who do not. It is only because the control of the means of production is divided among people acting independently that nobody has complete power over us, that we as individuals can decide what to do with ourselves (1944: 78).

In my interpretation of the fathers of libertarianism I conclude that they take us back to the classic liberal tradition, however, they seem "to select all that is cruel in the classical liberal tradition whilst ignoring all that is humane" (Brugger in Wintrop 1983: 44). Libertarians justify their restriction of public goods and services on utilitarian grounds whilst ignoring the redistributive implications. It emphasises negative liberty but ignores Mill's call for a sense of community and the increased role of the state. While one may reasonably

argue that modern democracies (in the major industrialised countries of the world) are increasingly moving towards implementing some of the principles that libertarians call for, there is not a single government that completely endorse their views. On the other hand the critique against libertarians are growing particularly from the realms of communitarians.

Fukuyama in his critique argues that individuals exert themselves in pursuit of recognition which involves securing private freedoms indifferent to the “things of the world” – beginning with private property and ending with their own happiness – in the face of limited state intervention (1992: 162-172). For Fukuyama such a libertarian view negatively characterises the individual as “narrowly consumed with his/her own immediate self-preservation and material well-being interested in the community around him/her only to the extent that it fosters a means of achieving his/her private good” (1992: 160). Kymlicka argues that; “the problem with *this strand of liberalism* is not its emphasis on justice, nor its universalism, but rather its individualism” (2002: 212). The point is that transformation in the South African education system with particular reference to school governance cannot rely on an individualistic conception of liberal democracy at the expense of a more communitarian understanding. Democratic school governance affects most South Africans meaning that each person’s individual concern is a matter of common concern. Put differently, educational transformation has implications for most South Africans and decision-making, which is premised on individual gains, has the possibility of reinforcing the status quo thus keeping the marginalised in their precarious position. The aim of democratic governance (in schools) is precisely to address the issues relating to the previously marginalised groups thus instituting notions of equality and equity. The upshot of this is that educational governance has to contend with a pluralist South African society acknowledging religious, cultural, political and socio-economic differences which was shaped by a particular history. To favour an individualistic view of democracy thus has the potential to again exclude the previously excluded. A non-communitarian understanding of self-fulfilment negates the requirement for collective intervention that is necessary to address the historical

imbalances in South African society. It is for this reason that I argue for a more communitarian conception of democracy.

### **4.3. LIBERAL COMMUNITARIANISM**

Communitarianism might be expressed as a theory about how the individual is socially constructed meaning that the “self” cannot be understood apart from the social relations in which it is entrenched (Miller 2000: 99). For communitarians, individuals form social practices and institutions in which they pursue their aims in collaboration with one another. Put differently, humans are by their nature social beings with a need for communication. Such communication invariably involves others within a social context thus leading communitarians to claim that it is within this social context that individuals come into their own. Communitarians stress that community does not merely imply an aggregation of individuals. People constituting a community have common public ends, and not merely congruent private ends. In other words people form a community with the aim of sharing goals and values with other like-minded individuals who envision themselves as part of or members of the group (Waghid 2003b: 57). In contrast, an aggregation consists of individuals who consider of their interests as private, independent and potentially opposed (Buchanan in Waghid 2003b: 57). Although Miller distinguishes between three variants of communitarianism (those being liberal communitarianism, conservative/right communitarianism and left communitarianism), I am attracted to his communitarianism to the left for the reason that it seeks to establish a community on the basis of equality where the community is collectively self-determining rather than subjected to “authority and tradition” (Miller 2000: 105). However, I give a brief interpretation of the other two that I claim I do not necessarily favour for school governance.

Liberal communitarianism claims that people may choose to pursue an autonomous way of life after reflecting on alternative understandings of the good life. Kymlicka (2002: 240) posits that, “ ... if we truly wish to accommodate communitarian conceptions of the self, then we must be willing

to provide some exemption for communitarian groups from the rigorous enforcement of individual liberties". He argues that the availability of various ways of life and the capacity for autonomous choice depend upon a communal background where certain individual rights are restricted. My interpretation is that people/individuals cannot simply engage in social life or political institutions (voting on SGBs), unless there are groups of people in society who engage in such a life/institutions. What liberals in this sense wants is that the individual's right of freedom be subordinated to the group's right to maintain a conception of the good life. For example if the norm in terms of group practices in a school is that girls should not wear scarves in school then Muslim individuals who profess that wearing a scarf is part of their religious mode of dress cannot be accommodated. In this way the group right is superior to the right of the individual. Liberal communitarians want to limit civil liberties of individual members, including the right of individuals to hold different views than those of the group (Waghid 2003b: 52).

Conservative communitarianism argues that we have to feel that we belong together in a common society before we can consolidate the political institutions that will govern us (Miller 2000: 104). In such a conception of communitarianism the emphasis is on the community as a source of authority, meaning that a common culture or religion or language makes it difficult for individuals to leave that community. Conversely those who do not share in the common culture or language would find it difficult to access or fit into that community.

Communitarianism to the left seeks to establish a community on the basis of equality and that the community should be actively and collectively self-determining rather than subjected to "authority and tradition" while at the same time each member of such a community enjoys equality of status (Miller 2000: 105). It is the call for equality of status that interests me with reference to school governance. It leads me to an understanding that learners, parents and even the principal are equal in the sense that they all have the same right to initiate speech and argue their point of view. Put differently they are all equal in the opportunities created to influence decisions. This is not to argue



that they are equal in terms of their abilities, however, members of the SGB “deliberate collectively about their aims and purposes in a self-determining way” (Waghid 2003b: 53). The point is that members of the political community (SGB) are equal and they engage in collective deliberation. Communitarianism includes practices based on “reasoning together with others” via deliberative engagement to reinforce social relationships. For MacIntyre this form of social engagement can be sustained through “reasoning together”, that is, to give to others an intelligible account of one’s reasoning. However, one needs to show “the ability and willingness to evaluate the reasons for actions advanced by others, so that one makes oneself accountable for one’s endorsements of practical conclusions of others as well as for one’s own conclusions” (1999: 105). This means that before decisions are made at SGB level, individual governors have the opportunity to evaluate the reasoned opinions of others which in turn inform and even influence their own conclusions. It is in this sense that MacIntyre argues that the action performed by an individual comprise part of “some whole, so that by their performance the whole is brought into being” (1999: 106). Having given some insight into different strands of liberal democracy as well as determining to favour the communitarian conception, I now return to the problem of representation that I framed in the previous chapter.

#### **4.4.1. A PROBLEM OF AGGREGATION OF PREFERENCES FOR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY**

In chapter three I introduced the notion of aggregation as a means of determining the position to be taken by a representative. I introduced the notion for the reason that individuals within a stakeholder group (be they the teachers, parents, learners or non-teaching staff) have different expectations and preferences. However, the representative may only employ an overall choice, meaning individual preferences give way to an aggregated choice. The problem which arises (as I mentioned in chapter three) is how to determine such an aggregation? I now tease out this dilemma in order to show that a liberal notion of democracy that favours individual interests creates more problems when trying to aggregate preferences than the

communitarian/deliberative ideal. Conversely, the deliberative ideal, whilst also starting from the premise that political preferences will conflict, the emphasis is on how this conflict is resolved. I now employ the notion of “social choice” as explicated by Miller in his work on *“Citizenship and National Identity”* in order to clarify my preference for deliberation.

Social choice theorists concede that preferences may vary according to social influences but for any particular issue or set of issues they are taken as fixed and identifiable. Miller reverses the common opinion of social choice which he claims, compel us to dispose of “populist” models of democracy in which decisions are represented as expressions of “people’s choice” or the “popular will” in support of liberal models in which democratic elections are interpreted merely as a safeguard against the emergence of tyrannical rulers (2000: 11). Instituting this liberal view would mean that democracy is reduced to voters having the right to remove from office those whom they come to dislike without having the opportunity to influence policy. The point is that the office-bearers (who have been removed) might have been true to policy. In other words it is not the office-bearer, but the policy that should come under scrutiny. The upshot of this is that the removal of a representative via “democratic elections” would not have the desired effect for the reason that the problem lies within the policy and not with the particular representative. However, following the argument, it seems as if voters are not afforded the opportunity to participate in determining public policy. The idea that democratic decisions are not a matter of aggregating preferences but of reaching agreed judgements does not follow for the reason that one cannot agree on an outcome/judgement if one has no idea of what influenced the preferences that informed the outcome. Put differently, without having a sound understanding of what influenced the preferences the idea of aggregating them to conclude a particular outcome becomes meaningless. Pro-liberals (including Schumpeter and Dahl but particularly William Riker) respond to this by arguing that it is only to safeguard against the possibility of “tyranny”. It is, however, from the base that aggregating preferences become meaningless that Miller posits that social choice can be reduced to two basic claims:

- That there is no rule for aggregating individual preferences that is obviously fair and rational and thus superior to other possible rules and;
- that virtually every rule is subject to strategic manipulation, so that even if it would produce a plausible outcome for a given set of preferences if everyone voted sincerely, the actual outcome is liable to be distorted by strategic voting (2000: 14).

Following the argument of social choice it seems that this theory “undermines the liberal view of democracy ... regardless of the precise function that is assigned to the act of voting” (Miller 2000: 14). Put differently, individuals who comprise a stakeholder group is not given a fair opportunity to have their voices influence policy. Voting in this sense is to my mind creating an illusion of democracy for it creates the impression that individuals do participate; however, the level of participation precludes influence on policy. In essence it only relates to the person representative who carries the responsibility of representing the stakeholder group. The case study evidence that was produced in chapter three underscores this understanding. It clearly presents the current practices with regard to school governance (in disadvantaged communities) which reveals that marginalised groups have scant opportunity to influence decisions at governance level. The question that remains is how does the deliberative model of democracy avoid the problems of “social choice” that seem to occur with a classical liberal/libertarian ideal of democracy?

#### **4.4.2. RESOLVING THE CONFLICT OF SOCIAL CHOICE BY MEANS OF DELIBERATION**

Before I respond to this question it seems prudent to first briefly analyse what deliberative democracy means. As a starting point I turn to Benhabib who posits that the task of modern democratic societies is to secure three public goods, those being legitimacy, economic welfare and a viable sense of collective identity. When such a democratic society functions well, these

public goods ideally exist in some form of equilibrium (1996: 67-68). The understanding is that legitimacy should result from the “free and unconstrained public deliberation about all matters of common concern” (Benhabib 1996: 68). My interpretation of this is that if the “public” (political community) is not free to actively engage in decision making on the matters that concern them, such decisions does not comply with the legitimacy rule thus rendering the decision illegitimate or weak in a democratic sense. To be considered legitimate, the space for deliberation among members of a particular stakeholder group (like parents, learners or non-teaching staff) prior to them being represented at SGB level should be available. The representative then has a realistic understanding of the preference of his/her constituents not because of their individual needs but for the reason that they produced convincing arguments to support such preferences. Earlier in this chapter I argued that the classical view of liberal democracy that enhances individualism as well as deliberative democracy starts from the premise that political preferences will conflict and that the emphasis should be on how this conflict is resolved. The deliberative ideal suggests that the conflict should be approached through open and uncoerced discussion of the issue at stake with the aim of arriving at an agreed outcome. Benhabib further claims that:

Democracy is best understood as a model for organising the collective and public exercise of power ... on the basis of the principle that decisions affecting the well-being of the collectivity can be viewed as the outcome of a procedure of free and reasoned deliberation among individuals considered as moral and political equals (Benhabib 1996: 68).

I am particularly attracted to her call for “decisions that affect the well-being of a collectivity” for the reason that it compels participants to engage each other and more importantly to supply reasons for their particular point of view. The idea of presenting reasons also includes the understanding that one is obliged to reciprocate, meaning that one is open to the reasoning of others. Such a reciprocal exchange of reasons has the potential to sway participants from their original preference, thus enabling all concerned to take a wider view. In

this way new information is gained for the reason that “no single individual can anticipate and foresee all the variety of perspectives through which matters of ethics and politics would be perceived; and no single individual can possess all the information deemed relevant to a certain decision affecting all” (Benhabib 1996: 71). Deliberation is consequently a procedure that invites critical reflection on one's already held views or opinions with the distinct advantage of providing and accepting rational arguments even while critically reflecting. Put differently, one cannot produce a reasoned counter argument without first digesting the argument of one's co-deliberator and through critical reflection formulate a rational counter argument. Furthermore the deliberative model allows all affected participants an “equal chance to initiate speech” and also suggests that no outcome is “prima facie fixed, meaning that it can be revised and be subjected to re-examination” (Benhabib 1996: 72). Consequently I could, therefore, argue that no agreed-to outcome would forever remain rigid or permanent. On the contrary it should always remain open for reflection, revision or re-examination. It seems clear that the deliberative conception emphasises the way in which a “process” of open discussion, where all points of view is considered to determine a legitimate outcome is instituted, as opposed to a procedure to search for the “correct answer”. In relation to school governance “the well-being of the collective is crucial for the reason that decisions taken at School Governing Body (SGB) level are done by individual representatives who are obliged to serve their respective interest groups. The outcome of decisions impact on the whole school community (and not only on one stakeholder group) and should according to the deliberative view only be considered when all individual representatives are considered as moral and political equals. All stakeholder representatives should be afforded the opportunity to actively participate “freely and through reasoned deliberation”. Through this process the learner representative has the same opportunity to influence decisions as the teacher representative or even the principal for the reason that they are considered “equals”. Engaging such a procedure I argue could lead to stronger democratic practices.

Returning to the original question posed in relation to “social choice”, it now seems clear that the deliberative model clearly rests on a different conception of “human nature in politics” than the classic liberal/libertarian view. This liberal view emphasises the importance of giving due weight to each individual’s distinct preferences whereas the deliberative model relies upon a person’s capacity to be swayed by rational arguments and to lay aside particular interests and opinions in regard to overall fairness and the common interest of the collectivity. School governance is based upon decision-making that impacts upon the collectivity, however, a particular process that informed the outcome binds such decisions. This process makes the outcome more acceptable to all who participated in the deliberation for the reason that the outcome was informed by opposing views and underpinned by rational arguments. The SGB as a whole may then legitimately claim that the outcome itself is rational. With reference to this process Benhabib posits that: “an agreement should follow the general rules and can only be morally binding if such agreement was achieved through the process of deliberation”. The following features inform this process:

- Participation in deliberation is governed by norms of equality and symmetry where all have the same chance to initiate speech acts, to question, and to open debate;
- all have the right to question the assigned topics of conversation; and
- all have the right to initiate reflexive arguments about the very rules of the discourse procedure and the way in which they are applied or carried out (Benhabib 1996: 70).

In school governance terms, conforming to the assigned rules translates into every representative within the SGB operating on the same level as every other. Put differently, they are equal in terms of their ability to influence decisions. It seems clear that in terms of the “social choice theory” the deliberative model of democracy finds more resonance than the liberal view

that favours the individual. To further reinforce my reasoning I turn to Geoffrey Stokes who posits that:

Deliberative democracy is applicable in all sorts of political situations and allows for incremental institutional changes as well as more far-reaching one's. For these reasons, deliberative democracy seems to have a greater potential to respond, not only to the issues associated with democratic disenchantment in liberal democracy, but also to the challenges of identity politics and the new social movements. Despite its shortcomings, there are good grounds for proposing that deliberative democratic theory offers the greater promise of renovating both the practice of democratic citizenship and democratic institutions (in Carter & Stokes 2002: 45-46).

My argument thus far shows that I am swayed towards the deliberative conception of democracy (to drive school governance practices) for the reason that it accommodates the different stakeholder groups more fairly. I have earlier argued for space for the marginalised voices seemingly not afforded by the classic liberal/libertarian view. I consequently agree with Stokes when he claims that despite its shortcomings, the deliberative theory offers greater promise for broadening the practice of democratic institutions such as school governing bodies. I thus rely on the deliberative conception of democracy to inform my movement towards democratic citizenship. To further clarify this point I refer to an earlier argument where I claimed that the liberal ideology of a free market system tends to separate politics from the economy and is based on the liberal view (in the South African context) that Blacks would shortly, with their growing politicisation, demand massive state intervention. Consequently, this liberal influence (separating politics from the economy) resulted in entrenching the exclusion of the majority of the disadvantaged masses and socio-economic inequality (Waghid 2003b: 16). It is the tendency to such exclusion that I refer to as weak democracy; or alternatively a process that potentially secures more inclusion would be framed as a stronger form of democracy. It seems clear that the liberal interpretation that is averse to communitarianism has much more potential to

exclude the marginalised than the deliberative conception, hence my preference for deliberative democracy.

Having explained my reason for instituting a specific conception of liberal democracy, I now proceed to briefly explain what I mean by strong democracy.

#### **4.4.3. STRONG DEMOCRACY**

In the previous chapter I argued how globalisation and the neo-liberal ideal of free markets impact on society (particularly in relation to how it influenced education policy in South Africa), and how this has the potential to lead to what I referred to as weak democracy. I now proceed to chart a possible way out by utilising a particular conception of democratic citizenship. For this purpose I shall in the main rely on Benjamin Barber's understanding of how to strengthen civil society/citizenship and at the same time reinforce the ideal of strong democracy.

South Africa can be said to be characterised by a market-oriented system where economic competition drives most of the daily existence of its population. The switch of government from the ideals of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP – welfare oriented programme) to the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR – market driven programme) policy particularly reinforces this interpretation. The upshot of this is the erosion of traditional work (hand labour as opposed to mechanisation of the labour market), unemployment, poverty, alienation (that becomes the breeding ground for other social ills such as violence, drug-abuse and other criminal activities) and a dependency on relief agencies. I do realise that a potential critic may reasonably argue that much of this may be ascribed to the legacy of apartheid, and am, therefore, not arguing that this is as a result of the GEAR policy. I am suggesting that the GEAR policy reinforced the market principle (at the expense of the RDP's Keynesian agenda) thus institutionalising the ills/fallout of the global market economy. A liberal neocapital agenda seems to drive the South African economy and the



resultant impact on democracy I earlier argued becomes weak. The point is that the space where we (individuals and communities) interact with others on a daily basis has become a space of strife and struggle in order to meet the demands for existence. It has become a space dominated by economic considerations. This is the space of civil society, the domain where we interact freely; “where neither government nor private markets are sovereign” (Barber 1998: 4). It is within this space that the potential for strong democracy may be realised.

I have earlier made reference to an understanding that libertarians favour individual freedom and constantly call for minimal state interference. This however, has the effect of private market-sector domination, putting those most in need most at risk, meaning that the market comes to dominate this space under the pretext that it is better suited to cure the ills (unemployment, poverty etc.) of society. The reality, I earlier argued seems to be the opposite, meaning that instead of creating employment, jobs are shed. Big government on the other hand has always been the ally/protector of the disadvantaged/*those most at risk* (Barber 1998: 5). However, in the case of South Africa the movement is towards privatisation thus thinning government opting for more effectiveness and efficiency. This might be interpreted as “big government” not being effective or efficient enough to deal with the problems that were mentioned above. So if big government is not the answer and neocapitalism results in too many ills then it seems that what is needed is a middle course, a sort of balance between the two. Barber suggests (and I am inclined to side with his view), that civil society occupies a space between the private (supposed area for free association but where commercial markets that are driven by a capitalist mode of economics dominate) and the public (government/politics including voting, paying taxes, receiving services based on the idea of justice such as policing, healthcare, sanitation, water and electricity supply etc.) sector. Civil society is, therefore, not an alternative to the private market (but may be utilised as an antidote to commercial selfishness or market incivility), neither is it an alternative to big government, but rather a “free space in which democratic attitudes are cultivated” (Barber 1998: 6).

Such attitudes inform our interdependence where we accept that we are individuals and that we are partners of communities, meaning that we have individual as well as communitarian needs. It is within this arena that we interact as individuals, as communities, in all our diversity with the distinct aim of creating opportunities within this “free space” making it as reasonably harmonious as possible for all who occupy this space. Put differently the aim of our interaction should be to, at the least, result in a fair degree of contentment for those who prefer to interact in this space. This interdependence reinforces our need to cooperate, to work and live together thus facilitating the requirement to make this space as deliberative as possible. The space of civil society is consequently a space for all notwithstanding our ethnicity, race, culture, economic status, religious orientation and so forth. It is a space where plurality is at its maximum, meaning that the manner in which we occupy that space would determine the level of harmony which should exist in civil society.

Deliberation within civil society creates the opportunity where government can potentially be restricted (of utilising its coercive powers) and where market forces can be tempered to become more humane. The space where civil society interacts is consequently a commercial/economic, as well as a political space. Barber posits that a strong democratic conception of civil society explicitly ties civil society with citizenship, rejecting the contradicting opposition between the “public” and the “private” sectors. He proposes a third arena (other than private or public) as the space for actual social engagement – “a normative ideal for citizens ... that is not as thin as market liberalism” (1998: 34). The dominant characteristic of this civic domain is that it is a public space that is voluntary and non-coercive, as well as private in the sense that individuals freely choose to occupy and participate within this space. This civic space is thus home to many diverse individuals and diverse communities who interact not because they are equally egalitarian/classless, but rather because they are plural. The groups within this space may be sectarian and exclusionary, but together these groups form a whole textured by their variety of difference. Following Barber, it is my view that to create a fair or reasonable amount of contentment such a plurality can only flourish in an atmosphere of

deliberation. As I have argued earlier, deliberative democracy has a much better potential to include than the liberal conception that emphasises individual freedom. It is thus my claim that strong democracy could and should be reinforced by a process of deliberation.

I argue that the limitations related to the liberal conception of representation (that representation does not fulfil in the requirements of school governance for its tendency to exclude), may possibly be bridged by instituting a deliberative conception of democracy. In relation to my earlier argument regarding civil space, school governing bodies (SGBs) and their practices can be interpreted to be private (other than direct government – its functions were decentralised thus becoming part of the work of civil society) as well as public. Government determines the parameters within which private citizens may act, thus making the deliberative process even more crucial. I have hinted that a strong democratic conception of civil society (in the sense that I argued for) is explicitly linked to citizenship. It is my understanding that democratic citizenship incorporating the rules of deliberation affords us the better opportunity to realise the notion of strong democracy. The question that remains is what type of citizen can reinforce the notion of strong democracy? Alternatively, what is expected of the citizen who resides within a democracy where deliberation is its driving force?

#### **4.5.1. A CONCEPTION OF CITIZENSHIP (IN PLURALIST SOCIETIES) – TOWARDS DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP**

The scope of a theory of citizenship is potentially limitless – almost every problem in political philosophy involves relations among citizens or between citizens and the state (Kymlicka & Norman 1994: 353). To avoid being trapped in such a “limitless” debate, I shall rather emphasise two general issues relating to citizenship, those being civic virtues and identity. My use of the concept citizenship is not meant to suggest merely those rights possessed by a passive subject, because he/she resides within a specific territorial jurisdiction. Citizenship also does not mean patriotism and unwavering loyalty to the dictates of a nation state. To me citizenship implies active involvement

in the political and social life of the domain occupied by those who have the right to claim citizenship. “Democratic” is added to “citizenship” to indicate that citizenship is one feature of a democratic system thus illustrating that there are other features that are also associated with democracy (Thompson 1970: 2-3). However, citizenship has become a problem for democracies in the sense that many groups (such as ethnic and racial minorities, gays, the disabled, women, the homeless), having suffered some form of discrimination, are calling for their “citizenship rights”. South Africa’s young democracy is no exception. On the contrary the majority of its peoples feel the right to claim citizenship on the foundation that during the era of apartheid they were merely subjects. The transition from apartheid to democratic rule thus reinforced an understanding that all those born in South Africa shall have the right to citizenship. There is much consensus that a post-apartheid citizenship needs an unwavering endeavour to overcome the racial and ethnic divisions that apartheid institutionalised. In the words of Mkhathshwa: “... a democracy such as ours, which has emerged from the apartheid ashes, should be founded on sound moral values that will inculcate in each of us a sense of national pride, oneness and commitment to the common good” (DoE 2000:2).

But what is citizenship? Claiming that citizenship is a legal status conferred by a State holds true, but it is not enough. It is thus not an issue of determining a simple definition. Conversely the notion of citizenship is a contested notion, meaning that it means different things to different people/groups. T. H. Marshall, in his significant text, *Citizenship and Social Class* (in Kymlicka & Norman 1994: 354) determines that for citizenship’s fullest expression a liberal democratic welfare state is required. Marshall further posits that citizenship is “the body of rights and duties – the status that goes with full membership of a society” (in Steenbergen 1994: 13). He divides citizenship rights into three categories – those being political rights, civil rights and social rights. This understanding of “rights and duties” invokes the idea of provisions and entitlements as the core to defining citizenship. Provisions in this sense refer to broadening the range and variety of choices available, while entitlements refer to the degree to which these choices are accessible. Dahrendorf posits that citizenship should tilt towards the side of “entitlement”.

He argues that prior to the 1980s when the “welfare state” with its emphasis on “entitlements” flourished, the notion of citizenship was fairly dormant. However, as the welfare state came under increasing pressure from market capital, the entitlements diminished and provisions (a greater variety of choices that became less accessible, as it was transformed into commodities that should be paid for) were in demand (in Steenbergen 1994: 12). It is at this stage (1980s) that the notion of citizenship became an issue for renewed debate, a debate that is still raging, albeit in the context of globalisation and a movement towards a “global citizen”. One may reasonably deduce that the debate was renewed because the “entitlements” started to evaporate under the onslaught of market capitalism. Put differently, had the entitlements so generously catered for by the “welfare state” remained, the notion of citizenship would arguably have remained dormant. It is following such a line of reasoning that I deduce that Dahrendorf calls for citizenship to fall within the realms of “entitlements” rather than provisions. This is also in line with Marshall’s reasoning that in a “welfare state” the fullest expression of citizenship would be realised.

Besides rights and obligations, there remain different conceptions of citizenship – some understanding this primarily in terms of a liberal notion of civic rights (individual and private freedom), while others prefer a more communitarian interpretation with reference to entailing responsibilities to promote the common good through participation in community life. Marshall’s liberal conception sees citizenship as a set of rights (including civil rights, political rights and social rights) enjoyed equally by every member of society based on the idea of social justice. However, his conception of citizenship did not keep track with the onslaught of market capitalism, neither with the development of modern pluralist societies and hence his idea of social justice becomes problematic. Whereas Marshall argued that social rights enabled the marginalised/disadvantaged to better exercise their civil and political rights, the New Right (Libertarians during the Thatcher/Reagan era) argues that the welfare state has promoted a culture of dependency. They called for reforms to extend the scope of markets and a cut in welfare benefits. In short they argue that to become responsible citizens, the disadvantaged had to focus on

earning a living thus becoming self-reliant. However, Kymlicka and Norman (1994: 357) argues that cutting welfare benefits, far from getting the disadvantaged back on their feet, has inflated the underclass; class inequalities expanded and the working poor and unemployed have been disenfranchised (unable to participate in the economy of the New Right). So, there seems to be a tension between citizenship based on social principles and citizenship based on market principles. Kymlicka and Norman suggest that an “adequate conception of citizenship seems to require a balance between rights and responsibilities” which incorporates the notion of virtues (1994: 360).

Rawls (another liberal theorist) addresses the problem of pluralism and posits that “the diversity of comprehensive religious, philosophical and moral doctrines found in modern democratic societies is not a mere historical condition that may soon pass away; it is a permanent feature of the public culture of democracy” (1993: 216-217). It is my interpretation that South Africa is such a pluralist society, but more importantly a society struggling to come to terms with its past and trying to build a nation/national identity (I return to the issue of national identity later on in this chapter). This in itself puts a strain on citizenship in the sense that “what is a good citizen” becomes contested. In other words “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its ‘basic structure’ but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens” (Kymlicka & Norman 1994: 352). Put differently, the norms and values that citizens should incorporate cannot simply be enforced, but should rather be negotiated. Cairns and Williams support this view when they posit that “what the state needs from the citizenry cannot be secured by coercion, but only *through* cooperation and self-restraint ... “ (1985: 43). It is at this level of “negotiation” that I argue for a deliberative model of democracy to determine the nature and extent of citizenship. In relation to values one may refer to, for example, values relating to a sense of identity and how competing forms of national, ethnic, or religious identities are reconciled; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good (Kymlicka & Norman 1994: 353). It seems as if “virtues” may possibly relieve

the tension and create some balance between rights and obligations, and that such virtues should rather be negotiated than enforced. I therefore reiterate my preference for deliberation to determine the nature and extent of citizenship. However, before I further explore this deliberative model I give some insight into how the minimal and maximal interpretation of citizenship deals with the ambiguities and tensions of the concept.

#### **4.5.2. A MINIMAL – MAXIMAL CLASSIFICATION OF CITIZENSHIP**

The minimal/maximal characterisation is not mutually exclusive, but rather two contrasting interpretations that exist in a continuum of identities, virtues, political involvement and social prerequisites necessary for effective democratic citizenship (McLaughlin 1992: 236). The suggestion of a continuum relates to the idea of the possibility that interpretations may neither be entirely minimal nor maximal, but could have elements of both. On another level “continuum” allows space for vigorous and differing interpretations, which is suited to differing historical contexts. To refine this point I refer to the differing meanings of citizenship during apartheid and citizenship under our new democracy. It should be evident that the concept would have different meanings in relation to the differing historical frameworks which potentially shaped the term in the South African sense. Citizenship under apartheid was synonymous with a particular skin colour, whilst citizenship today is framed by political beliefs and contrasting interpretations of democracy.

On the minimalist side of this continuum citizenship involves the proceduralist formal and legal status defined in juridical terms. The individual is a recipient and an executor of formal rights for his/her self-protection and personal benefit based on the rule of law (McLaughlin 1992: 236). This understanding is in line with Berlin’s (in Birch 1993: 96) notion of negative liberty. Minimal citizenship is concerned with local and immediate loyalties and responsibilities where the individual has his/her focus on immediate ends and personal benefits (McLaughlin 1992: 236). This transforms citizenship into a means – ends model thus undermining an obligation towards the “public” except when the individual chooses to or when there is personal gain. The upshot is that

the individual becomes law abiding simply for the acquisition and protection of such personal benefits. Public engagement or widespread involvement in civic affairs (such as serving on SGBs) are viewed with suspicion for the reason that the citizen is primarily a private individual, content with having the right to vote “wisely” for representatives. In relation to the social prerequisites for citizenship the minimal view is that the individual is more concerned with private matters than with those matters that are public. It regard formal equality as its foundation, emphasising individual privacy and the right to vote (McLaughlin 1992: 236). Interpreting McLaughlin I deduce that the minimalist conception diminishes a collective perspective thus undermining social interaction and potentially reinforcing existing identities and subsequently the status quo. At this end citizenship can be interpreted as passive. This view sees citizenship as only a part of the many private roles of a person with little need for civic responsibilities, because democratic vigilance is assured via democratic institutions, such as a legal opposition, free press and an independent judiciary. In this sense the democratic state machinery replaces civic virtues (Enslin & White in Blake *et al* 2003: 113). Does this mean that a virtue-free population/society can sustain democracy? I shall return to this question later on.

At the other end of the continuum citizenship manoeuvres the individual beyond the formal and legal mode, encouraging him/her into mutual social collaboration in quest of a common good. McLaughlin posits that at this maximalist end the individual forms a community consciousness with a shared democratic culture of rights and obligations/responsibilities (1992: 236). Such a shared democratic culture implies negotiation, or alternatively debate and contestation as a means of arriving at the common good. It also presupposes that this common good is not static, but rather open to reflection and reinterpretation making the maximalist view of citizenship critical and dynamic by creating space for continual change. At this end loyalties and responsibilities extend beyond the immediate and local while encompassing a more substantial identity incorporating fuller, more significant public participation. It insists that social disadvantages of various kinds be considered as part of the individual's quest for justice (McLaughlin 1992: 237).



Issues with a broader public connotation, such as justice, recognition of social and economic inequalities, racial and ethnic discrimination, marginalisation of minority groups and so forth, become the concern of the citizen in the maximalist sense. This view of citizenship thus leads towards a more active citizen.

The continuum developed creates the impression that minimal/passive citizenship is individualistic, static and would potentially reinforce the status quo while the maximal/active citizen is communitarian, critical and dynamic with the potential to challenge and transform the status quo. However, I earlier alluded to the idea that the concepts are not mutually exclusive and that elements of the one can be found in the other. My interpretation is that neither end is preferable, meaning that the minimalist end seems too weak while the maximalist end seems too strong/utopian. My view is consequently that democratic citizenship should fall between these two extremes where the individual would at times operate according to the minimalist notion, and at other times institute ideals of the maximalist notion.

Having given some insight into the minimalist/maximalist debate I now return to the question that I posed earlier relating to what is expected of a citizen who resides in a democracy; or alternatively, can a virtue-free population sustain democracy?

It is my view that civic virtues underpin democracy for the reason that the democratic machinery (legislated laws, independent judiciary, free press and a legal opposition) can potentially lead to abuse in the absence of such virtues. For example, in the case of South Africa, judges serving on the judiciary might for instance have a racial or ethnic bias that might possibly influence the decisions they make in favour or against a particular racial/ethnic group. Laws favouring the economic and social elite might be bulldozed through parliament on the strength of the elite's influence/power via remunerated lobbyists or the ANC's two-thirds majority, favouring neo-liberal policies that support market capital. White reinforces my view when she posits that:

Free speech, for instance, will not flourish in a society whose citizens do not want to give a hearing to unpopular views. Not only legal bans but also self-censorship and public indifference can inhibit free speech. Thus even in a society with well-developed political machinery citizens will need basic political virtues like trust and distrust and a sense of fairness (1996: 52-65).

Furthermore, Waghid posits that "... democracies depends not only on the justice of their institutions – for instance, in the case of South Africa on its Constitution, Bill of Rights, Constitutional Court and multi-party democratic system – but also on the quality and attitude of its citizens ...” (2003a: 75). I interpret Waghid’s reference to “quality and attitude” as the link to civic virtues/values that might include tolerance, accountability, equity, trust and a sense of justice. Galston (1991:217) and Macedo (1990: 138) refer to a requirement of some level of civic virtue and “public-spiritedness” to engender a type of responsible citizenship. Furthermore Galston refers to four categories of virtues that include:

- general virtues – such as law abidingness and loyalty;
- social virtues – such as open-mindedness and independence;
- economic virtues – such as work ethic, controlling self-gratification and adaptability to economic and technological change; and
- political virtues – such as to determine and respect the rights of others, to evaluate the performance of representatives and a willingness to engage in public discourse (1991: 221-224).

I am more interested in the virtues pertaining to a willingness to engage in public debate and the ability to question authority for the reason that it relates directly to school governance. This is not to say that the other virtues are less important. On the contrary without citizens being law abiding, democracy stands the chance of becoming ungovernable. The point is that school governance is based on a representative style of democracy and consequently citizens should have the capacity to question and keep

accountable those who govern in their name. Without this virtue representatives might represent their conscience at the expense of their stakeholder group. Relating to public discourse Galston argues that besides the willingness to participate, this virtue should include “the willingness to listen seriously to a range of views which, given the diversity of liberal societies, will include ideas the listener is bound to find strange and even obnoxious” (1991: 227). Together with Macedo he argues that citizens should give reasons that other citizens find agreeable for their political demands, meaning they need to persuade others of the “public good” of their demands. This, I argue, goes to the foundation of deliberation. Clearly then, even in an established democracy with a developed political machinery, citizens do need virtues. This relates to the “attitude” to which Waghid (2003a: 75) refers, which might include the ability to tolerate and work with others who are different (in terms of religion, culture, ethnicity, race, socio-economic standing etc.), the desire to participate in social and political processes and be accountable or keep those in authority accountable, the capacity to be vigilant and responsible when making environmental choices and generally make choices in such a way that it does not harm or negatively influence others. Kymlicka and Norman are emphatic when they claim that: “Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable (1994: 353). Having made my point clear with regard to the question I posed on virtues, I now address the issue of nation-building/national identity that I earlier referred to after which I shall further explore the model of deliberation.

#### **4.5.3. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP: SOUTH AFRICA’S NATION-BUILDING EXPERIENCE**

Since the launch of South Africa’s democratic system of government in April 1994 all policy initiatives was founded upon democratic principles contained within the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In the spirit of democracy such policies echoed human rights, freedom, justice, reconciliation and nation building. Put differently, it is a programme directed towards dealing with the past and at the same time developing the future. High on this agenda is nation

building. In fact it is difficult to find any of the top politicians of South Africa speaking to the public without reference to nation building. But nation building is nothing other than the cultivation of a South African national identity, or alternatively a responsible or democratic South African citizen.

National identity in the sense called for by the ruling government in this country should be separated from those expressed by racial differentiation, ethnocentricity, and aggression towards non-members of the national community. National identity thus entails a basis for a shared sense of community in order to enhance social unity that should underpin our conception of citizenship. My reasoning for this separation stems from the painful history of the social and political “lived experience” that we are trying to overcome in South Africa. Besides more than forty years of institutionalised racism, ethnic violence – particularly between Zulus and Xhosas<sup>5</sup> (predominantly in KwaZulu Natal but also in the Western Cape between the “vigilantes” and the “witdoeke”<sup>6</sup>) – was prominent until a few days before the first democratic elections in 1994. Since then the ANC government together with the Inkatha Freedom Party<sup>7</sup> (IFP) worked relentlessly to foster an environment where these two communities can go about their daily activities in relative peace. The first President of the democratic South Africa made the Zulu political leader a cabinet minister, even though the IFP did not qualify for a ministerial post. It is my understanding that this was a gesture of goodwill towards what was then a rival ethnic group in order to give practical manifestation to the ideal of living and working with those who are different.

Perceived from such a basis citizenship and national identity complement each other. Miller posits that; “... citizens need a shared identity to hold them together and provide them with a sense of community. It is claimed that such a conception of nationality can be rationally believed and can be separated from the forms of aggression that have given nationalism a bad name (1992:

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<sup>5</sup> The Zulus and Xhosas are two distinct ethnic groups within South Africa.

<sup>6</sup> The “vigilantes and the witdoeke” were local groups of the same ethnic divisions as mentioned earlier.

<sup>7</sup> A political party that predominantly attracted Zulu support – with its strongest base in KwaZulu Natal.

86). To further enhance this point I turn to Tamir who argues that national identity is not necessarily “ethnocentric but rather polycentric”, meaning a recognition of the possibility of a “plurality of nations” within the same political community (1993: 79). This is not to say that national identity does not include the potential to become aggressive towards those who do not share the same national values or have different interpretations of what is morally worthwhile. Recent atrocities in Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda on the African continent and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans are reminders of how national identity can become so organic that it can drive the form of ethnic/religious cleansing witnessed in the mentioned countries. What I am arguing is that national identity can be a unifying force if the occupants of the nation state are prepared to accept that a plurality of people may exist peacefully within the same boundaries. Such a peaceful existence, however, needs to be nurtured, for the possibility to explode would remain inherent in the plural society. A case in point is Rwanda, where different ethnic groups (Hutus and Tutsis) lived peacefully for decades while under the surface a hatred for the “other” lurked, to spring to the surface when no one expected it. This is an object lesson for a country like South Africa calling for nation-building within a context of many cultures, religious orientations, ethnic as well as racial groups. So then, while national identity can potentially be the binding material within a plurality, it also inherently has the potential to explode that plurality into their smaller communities hell-bent on preserving their status even at the expense (death/murder/genocide) of others. It is thus my contention that for national identity to be the binding material of a plurality, it needs constant nurturing by all those citizens who occupy the plural space. It is at this level where I posit that deliberation among this country’s citizens has a role to play; it has the potential to foster the nurturing required to sustain a national identity within a plurality. I now further explore the deliberative model.

#### **4.5.4. CITIZENSHIP AND DELIBERATION**

In my understanding of democracy two essential complementary principles underscore its practice. Firstly, it involves the equal distribution of power to make collective decisions and secondly it involves the equal participation for

collective judgments. The essential power apparatus is voting which may be deemed democratic when every individual who is affected by the collective decision has an equal right to shape the outcome via his/her vote. Such a vote then produces a decision. However, there does not seem to be a connection between the decision and what the individual wants, either for himself or for the collectivity. Democratic institutions should consequently not only distribute power through voting, but they should somehow secure a connection between the power to make decisions and equal participation in collective judgements. It is in this regard that Warren argues (and I tend to support his view) that communication which may include argumentation, contestation, demonstration, and bargaining is as central to democracy as voting (in Carter & Stokes 2002: 173). Communication in this sense involves the formation of opinions, developing reasons and justifications for one's point of view, "so that in one way or another voting as an exercise of power also expresses an act of judgement" (Warren in Carter & Stokes 2002: 173). I contend that deliberation as a means of communication is best suited to developing such collective judgements.

To make a judgement the individual has to be clear as to what it is that he/she wants, but more importantly have an understanding of what others want. Put differently, the individual should be convinced of his/her stand and be able to reasonably explain his preference convincingly to others. Warren argues that deliberative democracy requires not only equality of votes, but also equal and effective opportunity to participate in processes of collective judgements. He further claims that:

Deliberation about matters of common concern should not be restricted to political representatives, judges, media pundits, technocrats and other elites, but should infuse a society so structured that it underwrites ongoing processes of public opinion-formation and judgement (2002: 174).

This model of democracy takes as its starting point deliberation among free and equal citizens, committed to collective decision-making. In such a view

citizens share an obligation to propose reasons for settling differences through persuasive argumentation in the hope that others would accept their view as compelling. It is my contention that citizenship based on deliberation should be viewed as a citizenship that asserts that if individuals are to be subject to decisions, the requirement is that it ought to be justified in terms that all who are party to the deliberative process could be reasonably expected to accept. A deliberative conception of democracy opens the space for a more inclusive citizenship where individuals have equal opportunity to initiate speech acts. I have earlier argued towards a form of collective identity/democratic citizenship (nation building) within the diverse South African society. I now claim that such an identity may best be realised through a conception of citizenship based on the principles of deliberation. Deliberative citizens operate on the principle that “decisions affecting the well-being of a collectivity can be viewed as the outcome of a procedure of free and reasoned deliberation among individuals considered as moral and political equals” (Benhabib 1996: 68). Interpreting Benhabib I deduce that what is considered to be in the interest of all citizens (within a given community) would result from a process of collective (those citizens who would be affected by the outcome) deliberation “conducted rationally and fairly” where citizens have claims to the same level of equality and freedom (1996: 69).

Citizenship conceptualised in line with deliberation affords the individual with the opportunity to become more informed on matters involving the collectivity. This is crucial if one of the ideals of citizenship is to become more critical. The deliberative process allows space for imparting new information because:

- no single individual can anticipate and foresee all the variety of perspectives through which matters ... would be perceived by different individuals and;
- no single individual can possess all the information deemed relevant to a certain decision affecting all (Benhabib 1996: 71).

Deliberation is consequently a procedure through which citizens can become informed, leading the individual/citizen to critically reflect on his/her already held views and opinions. Put differently (as stated earlier), one cannot convince others of one's point of view without critically reflecting on their arguments which they produce to convince one of their position. In order to contest their argument one is compelled to sift through it in order to identify shortcomings that will form a basis for one's counter argument. Such contestation of opposing points of view would inevitably involve critical reflection. In this regard Benhabib posits that; "nobody can convince others in public of his/her point of view without being able to state why what appears good, and plausible, just, and expedient to him/her can also be considered so from the standpoint of all involved (1996: 72). Deliberation consequently induces critical reflection thus making the individual more critical. The citizen is not only more critical, but he/she also stands a better chance of inclusion because the communicative aspect of deliberation affords citizenship with the possibilities to become more inclusive (a shortcoming exposed earlier with regard to representation); an ideal that I earlier argued is essential in our movement towards a stronger form of democracy. It is thus my contention that citizenship as deliberation has the potential to reinforce the "cement" required to avoid national identity to lapse into its organic state thereby reinforcing the practices that give nationality a bad name. It is interpreting citizenship as deliberation that creates the possibilities for nurturing a national identity; the identity that the new democratic South Africa is striving to develop. This citizen is in terms of my argument and understanding a democratic citizen.

From the discussion thus far it might seem as if I create the impression that deliberation is the panacea for modern pluralist democracies. This is not necessarily the case, for critics of deliberation, including Young (who can be described as being a deliberative democrat), argue that the emphasis on the importance of presenting rational arguments based on critical reasoning where the most convincing argument holds sway, has the potential to exclude rather than include (in Benhabib 1996: 122-123). She posits that:



... the norms of deliberation are culturally specific and often operate as forms of power that silence or devalue the speech of some people. Deliberation is competition. Parties to dispute aim to win the argument, not to achieve mutual understanding. Consenting because of the “force of the better argument” means being unable to think of further counter argument, that is, to concede defeat (Young in Benhabib 1996: 123).

I might to a certain extent agree with Young when she argues that deliberation might favour specific individuals or groups under specific circumstances. However, to claim that deliberation is “not to find consensus” or “to achieve mutual understanding” is to have the ability to predict outcomes. I do not think that Young has the capacity to determine beforehand that deliberation about a particular issue would always be governed by rules of competition and consequently this generalisation is prejudiced against the goal of mutual understanding. In fact those party to the deliberation process might agree (beforehand) that the aim of their exercise is to find a common understanding about addressing the challenge at hand, meaning their quest is towards understanding/consensus; towards finding the best possible route to address the challenge. When such deliberation provides the desired outcome (all are reasonably contented with the result) then the argument for “competition” does not hold. The first part of her argument might have merit in the sense that deliberation is premised on the ability to manipulate language or acts of speech. It consequently might follow that those with the best skills regarding language usage has the better chance of manipulating the proceedings of deliberation. I contend that this should not necessarily be the case. One might not possess articulation skills, but that does not mean that one is incapable of producing a rational argument. The point is that one only needs to be able to get one’s point across in such a manner that others, (party to the deliberation process), grasp the context of what is being argued for. It is my contention that for this to materialise, language inefficiency should not be an insurmountable barrier. To clarify my stand in terms of insufficient language skills and its potential impact on deliberation, I turn to Miller who posits that:

It seems to me, in fact rather insulting to disadvantaged groups to suggest that norms of argumentative rationality are loaded against them, because it implies that they cannot give coherent arguments for the changes they want to bring about (2000: 153).

Following my own reasoning and with due consideration to Miller's understanding, I argue that diminished language proficiency does not automatically translate into an incapacity to formulate coherent arguments. Individuals from marginalised groups might not perform with the same degree of dexterity when utilising language as a tool to lead to more informed, rational outcomes. However, to claim that this would disadvantage them to the degree that they would not be able to convince others of their point of view is to conclude that they are irrational simply because they do not have the skill levels of others regarding language manipulation. Such a conclusion is obviously an oversimplification and, therefore, an issue that does not necessarily impoverish the deliberation process. On another level Young herself proposes a route out of this supposed shortcoming when she suggests "greeting and narrative/story-telling" (Young 2000: 57-70).

The other issue that I deem necessary to address relates to a claim that democracy, as I argue for, can only be practiced in an environment that is conducive to such practice. Put differently, low levels of education and illiteracy undermines the democratic ideal. The upshot of this is that school governance in disadvantaged communities is destined to less-democratic practices by virtue of the levels of illiteracy found in such communities. This is much the same argument as Young's claim of "language". Again I refute such a claim on the basis that democracy (as a theory) cannot be de-linked from its practices. In other words, inherent in democratic practices is its dynamism which may translate into learning, reflecting, critical understanding and reinterpretation. Being illiterate does not transform the democratic citizen into a moron who shall never have the ability to be critical, to think rationally or to learn. I have earlier argued for a call to "each one teaches one". Such a call in itself has the potential to demonstrate, in a practical sense that democracy cannot, and I would argue should not, be divorced from its daily practices.

Democracy in practice affords the individual with the opportunity to improve his/her plight thus eliciting his/her inherent potential to overcome his/her seemingly lesser position. The claim that democracy can only thrive when conditions are favourable is therefore to my mind fallacious.

My argument thus far shows that I do not suggest that deliberation is the answer to the many challenges presented by democracy. However, the thrust of my line of reasoning suggests that I am of the opinion that deliberation and a conception of democratic citizenship (as argued for) has a better chance of including the marginalised of society. I further suggest that this affinity to inclusion enhances the democratic ideal thus reinforcing a stronger form of democracy.

#### **4.6. SUMMARY**

In this chapter I explored two strands of liberal democracy, claiming that the deliberative model is better suited to “include” as opposed to the liberal conception that favours individualism, which I argued has more potential to exclude. I explained that “excluding” reinforces a weaker form of democracy; conversely that “inclusion” leads to a stronger form of democracy. In my elucidation I linked deliberative democracy to the notion of national identity and citizenship. By framing citizenship as deliberation, I developed a citizen that I claim has the potential to reflect and reconsider his/her views in relation to the views of others thus becoming more critical. In this way I created a course to minimise and hopefully overcome the limitations of a liberal conception of democracy that emphasises the freedom of the individual. I then argued that representation framed along the lines of a deliberative conception of democracy has a better chance of including those who are party to the deliberation process. In this way the link between the representative and his/her stakeholder group is strengthened, thus reinforcing the legitimacy rule. This stronger bond I claim makes the stakeholders more inclusive thus producing a stronger form of democracy. While developing my argument I made reference to the minimalist/maximalist debate with reference to citizenship and explored virtues of a “good” citizen. I concluded that reasoning

along this continuum creates the space for a deliberative democratic citizen who would be more critical and, therefore, better suited to sustain a stronger form of democracy.

In the following chapter I shall argue for the implications of a deliberative understanding of liberal democracy, or alternatively critical deliberative citizenship on school governance. I shall argue that the necessary conditions in disadvantaged schools seem to be minimal. I further argue that deliberation has major implications for school governance on at least three levels, those being the educative level, the community generating level and that deliberation is most congruent with “who we are”. I hold that by creating the conditions for deliberation leads to empowerment at the mentioned levels thus reinforcing more critical governance. In conclusion I shall argue that shaping a critical democratic citizen (responsible/virtuous citizen) has the potential to lead to a stronger democracy thus making school governance more sustainable.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **IMPLICATIONS OF DELIBERATION ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY PRACTICES IN DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I shall explore the implications of a deliberative understanding of liberal democracy on school governance in this country. However, I firstly argue for certain minimum realisable conditions, which I claim constitute democratic governance. Thereafter I shall explore deliberative governance and its implications for school governance practices at three levels. I then proceed to explain the marginalised, being those stakeholders with scant voice on governing bodies, as the “other” with the intention of arguing for their inclusion. I hold that a particular approach towards the “other” allows us to frame our practices and thus the manner in which we relate to one another on school governing bodies.

With reference to the minimal realisable conditions I hold that deliberation or any form of serious debate cannot occur under conditions that are threatening to those who participate in this activity, meaning that governors cannot be expected to attend meetings when their lives are not secure. One may argue that our modern environment is of such a nature that there would always be an element of risk or injury, but when such risk is proportionally greater than what might reasonably be expected, then the impact on governance is such that it inhibits the democratic practice/ideal. The case studies dealt with in chapter 3, reveal that the areas where SGB meetings are supposed to be held are not secure. The socio-economic conditions within disadvantaged areas transform into these regions becoming fertile to robberies and other forms of physical attack, which in turn inhibits the governors from attending SGB meetings. The response of governors under such threatening conditions should not be faulted. In other words the minimum condition to attend meetings without feeling threatened is a precondition for any form of governance, including democratic school governance. It is my contention that

the responsibility to ensure a safe meeting place rests with the Department of Education. In as much as “The Safer Schools Project”<sup>8</sup> is aimed at securing school environments whereby learners may receive their education in conditions of relative safety, the Department of Education ought to ensure that the place where SGB meetings are to take place should be safe and secure. This is not to argue that the Department is responsible for decadent behaviour in disadvantaged communities, but it would be unreasonable to expect that elected school governors should participate in a departmental initiative when the education authorities do not reasonably ensure the safety of such participants. I am not suggesting that the Department has the capacity to guarantee the safety of all participants. This might be impossible given the overall crime levels in this country, but I maintain that a minimum degree of safety should exist before deliberation or any other form of meeting can occur. I can consequently appreciate the reluctance of individuals to make themselves available to serve on SGBs. This does not mean that the Education Department should shoulder the blame for all parents who choose not to participate in the system of school governance. There might possibly be a reluctance to serve on SGBs for other reasons of which a perceived ineptitude may be one. The point is that the case studies reveal that safety is a consideration and the Education Department cannot expect that prospective governors should shoulder such responsibility on their own. Therefore, I argue that the Department, in collaboration with the particular school community, should put mechanisms in place to address the safety issue. To enhance this issue I refer to a principal in a school servicing a disadvantaged community.

This school is situated on the border of an informal/squatter settlement where gangsterism is rife and unemployment is more than 50% (so I was told). Shebeens are littered across the area where drug-merchants are seen as role models because of their seemingly affluent lifestyle. Mr Anderson (fictitious name to retain anonymity of the principal) explains that it is extremely difficult

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<sup>8</sup> The safer schools project is an initiative by the Western Cape Education Department to counter violence and intimidation in schools during school hours. This initiative has its origins within the spate of violence and gang-activity that plagued Western Cape schools to the extent where teaching and learning was under threat from forces beyond the school parameters.

to convince particularly parents to avail themselves to serve on the SGB. According to him:

The only way of securing a parent to serve on the SGB is when I have a personal meeting with that parent. I then have to convince the person that it is not that demanding, and that they don't have to have degrees in order to be able to be a governor (sic). I think they try to avoid serving on the governing body because it is dangerous to attend meetings. I assure them that in the school they are safe but the problem is getting here. Most parents, I think, are scared to venture outside after sunset. Do you know that two days ago a mother of one of our learners was raped? It is such incidents that scare potential parent governors.

In my informal discussions with individual community members whose children attend this school the response was almost identical to that of the principal. The general feeling was that it is too dangerous to venture outdoors after dark, particularly if one does not have one's own transport.

From this report I deduce that without secure conditions for meetings to materialise the chances of conducting democratic governance, as the Schools Act demands, becomes problematic. It is for this reason that I argue for the achievement of minimum realisable conditions prior to the implementation of the School Governing Body's Act. There is thus a need to improve and secure organised public spaces or shared forums that provide governors with the opportunity for collective inquiry. Organised public spaces, according to Crowley, refer to the spatial locations below the level of the state in which school governors share experiences and where they "... can discover and test their values through the essentially political (and non-politicised) activities of discussion, criticism, and emulation ... (where they) come to understand a part of who they are" (1987: 282). The point is that democratic school governance cannot be taken for granted to naturally develop and sustain itself via SGBs. Instead, its occurrence in SGBs requires secured and organised public spaces in which school governors come to understand and pursue

collective inquiry and autonomous individual choices (Adams & Waghid 2003: 22).

The case studies conducted by Karlsson (in Kwa-Zulu Natal), Mbokazi (in three provinces across South Africa) and Adams and Waghid (in the Western Cape) reveal that the skills level of governor representatives, particularly the parent and non-teaching staff, are of such a nature that they cannot effectively represent their stakeholder groups. This is a serious shortcoming when one considers that the Schools Act is explicit on this issue. Put differently, the Schools Act states that the training of SGB members is a requirement by law. Under the heading *Enhancement of capacity of governing bodies*, the Act states:

Out of funds appropriated for this purpose by the provincial legislature the Head of Department (HOD) must establish a programme to:

- (a) provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions; and
- (b) provide continuing training to governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions (ELRS, 1999: 2A-18).

The provisions are clear, meaning that the issue of training according to the Schools Act is obligatory, while the language is emphatic when it clearly states that the HOD “must” provide training. Such training should firstly “enable them to perform their functions” and, secondly, to promote the “effective performance of their functions”. In my deliberations with school governors I found that the initial training did occur, that is the first group of governors received some training. The problem revolves around the idea of “continuous training”. The respondents revealed that this was not forthcoming. I referred this to parent governors at four disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape who summed up this situation. The first one had this to say:



We heard that some training would be available but nothing is forthcoming. This is frustrating because we don't know whether we are doing the right thing. We rely on Mr. Geduld (the principal), however, he is tired of having to explain everything before we can actually start with whatever it is we are supposed to do.

The second governor claimed:

I am an ardent chess player and enjoy the game. What I want to get across is that I can participate because I am familiar with the rules. If you want to participate you must be acquainted with the rules. I am sure that when I know the rules of SGBs I shall come to enjoy it. At the moment I learn as I go along.

When I put it to this parent-governor that she should receive training, her response was that she had never heard that training was available. She subsequently informed me that none of the current-serving members on their SGB received training, and that included the teacher representative and the principal. I subsequently put the same issue to the principal who responded that he had informed the education authorities and was waiting on their response.

The third governor posits:

I am expected to raise funds for the school, but I was not exposed to how this can be done. You must understand I am a housewife for whom it is a battle to make ends meet. I know very little about fundraising. The principal suggested that I bake cake to sell in the neighbourhood. This I thought was a good idea. I took it upon myself to invest my own money in this venture and now at least I have a source of income which lessens the burden from my husband. You know he only works part-time. I cannot share this with the governing body because it is my money and my effort.

The fourth governor responded as follows:

I don't think I need training. Our school principal knows everything about SGBs and I rely on him to lead me. I am sure that he will not ask us to do things that would not benefit the school. He cares about all of us. The only problem that I have is that he is very secretive about the finances of the school. He and Mr. Carolus (SGB chairperson at this school) control the money. This is worrying because the learners requested that the SGB make a contribution towards the matric ball. You know the function at the end of the year? The immediate response was that there is no money.

From my interaction with these governors it seems clear that the lack of training is a constraining factor, meaning that training towards representative governance becomes even more essential. I am not suggesting that some external uniform recipe exists whereby individuals would become competent governors simply because they completed a training course. What I am arguing is that according to the legislation the onus is on the Education Department to ensure that initial and continual training takes place.

Another strain on the training issue is that governors representing the parent and learner stakeholder groups are transient, meaning that when the learner finishes matric he/she leaves with the skills that was acquired, leaving the next representative to start from scratch. This also holds true for the parent group for the reason that a parent may only serve when he/she has a child who is a learner at that school. Once the child of the parent representative is not a learner at the school, the parent's term of office is terminated. However, such a parent may still serve as a co-opted member. The point is that if parents in disadvantaged communities are already reluctant to serve as school governors it becomes less likely that they will continue to serve after their child had completed his/her schooling. In relation to training and enhancing the skill levels of parent representatives one finds that such individuals who initially received training leave with those acquired skills. A system of skills transfer consequently seems important, but it is my contention

that a clause in relation to skills transfer should be incorporated within the School Governing Bodies Act. This does not suggest that improving policy would necessarily transfer into improved practices. The point is that such a clause could empower prospective governors for the reason that it would at least ensure a minimum amount of training, while at the same time it would free the Education Department from the burden of continual training. In this case the training would be transferred from those who received initial training to those who come into the system for the first time. This then transforms into skills not being lost.

While it is not within the scope of this dissertation to prescribe the type of training required to sustain democratic SGBs, I would venture the possibility of working towards a notion of “civic virtue” as espoused by Miller. This is not to suggest that virtue can easily be taught, but a life skills orientation course for school governors incorporating an understanding of a “virtuous citizen” could possibly be a starting point for governors serving in disadvantaged communities. During such a course the conditions can be created where prospective governors are exposed to choosing between contesting alternatives, ie between upholding the law and transgressing it. I am suggesting that spaces be created for individuals to be exposed to differing options where they are compelled to choose. They are then expected to defend their particular choice. It is my view that by opening the space and exposing individuals to alternatives can go some way in training them to choose that which is reasonable, and more importantly for the improvement of their community. According to Miller:

This citizenship is less a legal status than a role the citizen assumes as a full member of his/her community. To be a citizen one must think and behave in a certain way ... which includes a set of obligations: to respect the law, to pay taxes, being willing to take active steps to defend the rights of others in the *political* community, and more generally to promote its common interests” (2000: 82).

Furthermore, Miller argues that this citizen volunteers for public service *to serve on SGBs* (my italics) and that he/she also wants to reach an agreement with other citizens so that what is done, is done in the name of all of them (2000: 84). Moreover, the virtuous citizen acts responsibly and above all, “is willing to set aside personal interests and personal ideals in the interest of achieving democratic consensus” (Miller 2000: 85). I argue that the acquisition of such skills through education and training could possibly pave the way for SGB representatives not only to fulfil in their civic duties, but more importantly to function more democratically.

The final point I want to highlight in relation to securing the minimum realisable conditions revolves around the issue of poverty as portrayed in the practices of School Governing Bodies in chapter three. It is my understanding that it would be difficult to exercise a politics of democratic governance if the state does not secure basic social rights to school governors, which include the right to basic needs such as decent housing, access to clean piped water, electricity, uncomplicated access to health care, to earn a living or to receive social benefits. In other words, providing basic social rights to school governors would help secure loyalty to a politics of democratic governance. A potential critic might argue that giving people food would not secure deliberative politics, and rightly so. I am, therefore, not arguing that the provision of basic social rights would transform the marginalised poor into deliberative democrats. What I am suggesting is that securing the basic conditions could possibly lay the foundation for such individuals to be better able to participate in a system of democratic school governance. Currently much of their energy is channelled into making ends meet thus leaving them with less energy to participate voluntarily in school governance. This point becomes more complicated for the reason that the impression might be created that I am arguing for basic social rights only for school governors. Such a view is erroneous. I am only mentioning school governors for the reason that my aim is to secure the minimum conditions for deliberation to occur.

I particularly emphasise the necessity for state intervention to curb the fall-out of globalisation in relation to job losses that swell the unemployment figures in this country. Minimising the high levels of unemployment through state intervention (and this is not only for serving governor members) would go some way in improving the chances of the poor and marginalised to earn a living thus laying the foundation for jobless citizens to overcome their condition of poverty. In this way socio-economic injustices rooted in a market related economic structure of globalisation might be reduced thus paving the way towards an enhanced level of freedom, which is a constitutive feature of democracy. The point is that unless basic social rights are provided to the disadvantaged poor sector of the population of South Africa, it would be difficult to exercise a politics of democratic school governance. Having argued for the minimal realisable conditions to be in place in order to enhance democratic school governance, I now move on to a discussion of some of the implications of deliberation and citizenship for school governance.

## **5.2. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DELIBERATION**

School governance is in essence about the internal politics of a school. In other words it has implications for learners, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents. Put differently, SGBs and the manner in which they function has a direct bearing on the development of the whole school, meaning that all the functions that a school has to perform may in some form or other be related to school governance. It is on this level that I claim that deliberation and a conception of democratic citizenship has a distinct political function for school governance. I shall first relate the deliberative experience to communication, legitimacy and governability. I then argue for the further implications of deliberation on three different levels.

### **5.2.1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH DELIBERATION**

Firstly, if one accepts that representative democracy involves the aggregation of preferences, then it invariably necessitates a type of bargaining among contrasting interests. Deliberation, as a mechanism for such bargaining,

emphasises decision-making through public reasoning. It is my view that the deliberative experience impacts on individuals' preferences, opinions, understandings and appreciation for the positions held by others who are party to the process. Warren argues that "reasons should motivate individuals to alter, replace or justify existing preferences or received norms" (Carter & Stokes 2002: 186). I interpret Warren as referring to the idea that "altering your preference" includes the capacity to reason in terms of common interests as opposed to slavishly expecting one's personal preference to prevail. This, I earlier argued, is directly related to my understanding of democratic citizenship. From this point onwards I thus use the terms governor, representative and citizen interchangeably as if they are synonymous. To further elaborate on Warren I deduce that one cannot alter or replace one's preference in favour of another's without thinking in terms of the other's argument to the extent that one concedes that the other's argument seems more plausible. This means that when a SGB opts for deliberation, its consequence should be that governors/citizens would be able to generate changes in interests, preferences, opinions and judgements in their mission to resolve conflict. This invariably involves communication between the representatives. It is via this communicative action that ideas, beliefs, norms and possible disagreements are exchanged with the view of reaching understanding. In other words a basic implication of deliberation for school governors is its communicative power. Put differently, one cannot participate in the deliberative process without communication, but to test whether such communication does not give undue power to a single or certain representative/school governor I turn to Benhabib who posits that:

An agreement should follow the general rules and can only be morally binding if such agreement was achieved through the process of deliberation (1996: 70).

This test includes the following features:

1. Participation in such deliberation is governed by norms of equality and symmetry (all have the same chance to initiate speech acts, to question, to interrogate, and to open debate);
2. All have the right to question the assigned topics of conversation; and;
3. All have the right to initiate reflexive arguments about the very rules of the discourse procedure and the way in which they are applied or carried out (Benhabib 1996: 70).

In conforming to the assigned rules every representative on the SGB operates on the same level as every other representative. In other words framing communication in relation to the mentioned features could probably neutralise the “power play” in which particularly principals indulge. Put differently, if principals adhere to the assigned rules it creates the space for other representatives to question and interrogate the preferences of the principal thus forcing the principal to produce a convincing argument to support his preference. In this way the power of the principal, by virtue of his position of authority, is minimised for the reason that he is compelled to listen to, and consider the opinions of other representatives. The upshot of this is that “communication” may also be correlated to practical rationality, because it potentially directs the individual to a tolerance or leniency towards new and even conflicting information. If the procedures enable communicative power by displacing (power distributed evenly among representative governors) and constraining (curbing the power of the principal) power, then outcomes become more legitimate, more rational and more ethical than another possible political arrangement (Warren in Carter & Stokes 2002: 189). Viewed in this way, communication guarantees freedom of speech, not only in the sense that the previously marginalised representative’s voice is heard, but much rather that such voice has the inherent possibility of influencing outcomes. I should mention that freedom of speech in this sense does not relate to an unconstrained freedom, because it finds expression within the assigned rules. In other words it does not mean that one may “say what one likes” but that one should produce reasons for what one prefers. Furthermore, such reasons

should be of such a nature that others who are party to the deliberative process find them reasonable.

Secondly, the accomplishment of legitimacy is directly linked to the concept of democracy. However, Warren argues that over the last several decades' contemporary liberal democracies have been struggling with the deficits of legitimacy. He further posits that such deficits occur when "states respond to the imperatives of markets, often overriding the guidance of democratic institutions" (2002: 187). It is my understanding that the measure of legitimacy would determine the strength of democracy. This means that the more legitimate the outcome, the better the chances for its acceptance would become thus reinforcing my quest towards a stronger form of democracy. It is at this level that deliberation and the type of citizenship it potentially fosters may strengthen democratic decisions.

Deliberation that is premised upon rational argumentation produces reasons to motivate a particular preference. This process should not be confused with legitimacy, as Max Weber argues for. Weber refers to rational legitimacy only to the outcomes of positive procedures (Warren 2002: 187). The legitimacy that I am referring to suggests that when it is produced via a process of deliberation it has the potential to engage most types of conflict and not necessarily be restricted to those that hinge on positive procedures. Once an understanding amongst the representative governors is reached (after contesting views and convincing arguments are produced), the outcome is of necessity more acceptable to all. In this way the decision to be implemented is more legitimate thus reinforcing a stronger conception of democracy. Legitimacy in this sense extends the Weberian notion for it may include a means to bring understanding even in cases where citizens conflict on moral grounds. With reference to moral conflict Warren argues that it is unlikely that deliberation about moral reasons will change moral convictions. However, deliberation can have another effect for negotiating moral conflict. He argues that deliberation can demonstrate that positions are held as a matter of conviction and not opportunistically. By accepting this view, deliberation may lead to understanding (without agreement) thus fostering a recognition and



respect among those who subscribe to conflicting moral identities (2002: 188). Recognition and respect make it less likely that one party will seek to impose their principles on another. I tend to agree with Warren on this point for the reason that individual governors/citizens are exposed to conflicting moral identities thus giving them some insight into the reasons others give for holding such principles. On another level it speaks to the notion that deliberation would not always lead to agreement. The upshot is that critical analysis of conflicting moral identities engages the representatives thus exposing them to the rationality behind such views. However, it affords governors/citizens the opportunity to deal with the situation that to disagree does not translate into the end of conversation. The point is that understanding opposing interpretations allows for the possibility to tolerate those who differ on moral issues without closing the space for further deliberation. Put differently, if deliberation was not the preferred means of confronting conflict, the representatives might not have been exposed to the reasons for the differing moral identities. In other words their opportunity to engage in critical discourse would have been lost, potentially leading to further conflict, rather than understanding. It seems plausible at this stage to claim that deliberation fosters critical reflection by exposing representatives to competing points of view and understandings. Deliberation, therefore, empowers and affords the citizen with the means of identifying his/her own restricted voice/view. This identification, I hold, could possibly lead to emancipation in the sense that the representative is afforded the opportunity to overcome that which had earlier been a restriction.

Thirdly, if the argument for increased capacities for resolving conflicts by altering preferences, producing legitimacy and generating respect for competing moral identities is plausible, then the deliberative process should have a positive bearing on producing critical democratic citizens and consequently also a positive bearing on governability. The upshot is that when governability is improved, democracy becomes stronger, because it means that the capacities for collective citizenship action have increased.

Having sketched some of the accomplishments of deliberation I should warn against the understanding that every deliberative exercise will necessarily produce an effect that is good for democracy, but the potential exists that on balance the effect may be positive. Alternatively there might not be another way in which the effects as argued for above may be achieved.

### **5.3. IMPLICATIONS OF DELIBERATION FOR A PRINCIPAL**

Although I am convinced that deliberation has implications for all stakeholder groups who are represented on SGBs, I particularly need to emphasise the role of a principal. My reasoning relates to the findings of the case studies that were produced in chapter three. In these case studies the power of the principal (more recently referred to as the manager of the school) and the manner in which he/she dominates proceedings at SGB level makes it necessary for me to attend to his/her position separately. This distinction between principal and manager also needs to be briefly unpacked.

The term manager, with reference to the principal of a school, is a recent phenomenon in South African education. It is rather difficult to pin the exact date that the terms came to be used synonymously, but the term manager (with reference to the principal) made its first appearance with the advent of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in this country. Much of the terminology changed with the onset of OBE to the extent that the teacher became a facilitator, Standard 6 became Grade 8, Standard 7 Grade 9 and so forth. It is at this stage that the principal became the manager. Now this is not an insignificant occurrence, taking into consideration my earlier argument for the influences of globalisation. The point is that the role of the principal also changed. He needs to operate more as a manager does in the business sector. This leads to an understanding that a good school is a well-managed school, meaning its functions is based on sound financial principles. The argument is that when a school is well managed, the educative portion of the school would automatically fall into place. Put differently, if the academic results of a particular school are below par, or alternatively below the national average, such a school is deemed to be less well managed and thus

dysfunctional. To solve the problem the Department of Education puts pressure on such a school to improve its school management system, reasoning that this would transform into the learners producing better results. Such a response slants towards top-down control in the guise of management. It shifts the responsibility and blame onto the management system of the school without considering other variables that might impact on poor results.

It should, however, be obvious that such a myopic view towards improving results would not bear fruit. The improvement of results hinges on many other variables which include, the academic ability of the individual learners, the teaching/learning resources available, and the socio-economic environment within which the teaching and learning process takes place. Management and the leadership given by the principal is consequently only a portion of what drives a successful school. The point is that management and particularly the manager have become an important position and function within the school. It is expected of the principal to manage his school effectively, while at the same time not transgress the thin line between internal school management and school governance where all stakeholders should have a voice and a role to play. It is this “thin line” between managing the school and school governance that becomes problematic. This might be because the South African School Act (SASA) does not define precisely what professional management entails (Education Human Resources 1999: 8).

Management is interpreted as “the day to day administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school and the performance of the departmental responsibilities that are prescribed by law. It includes the organisation of all activities which support teaching and learning” (Understanding the S.A. Schools Act 1997: 11). Such an interpretation of management is rather vague with the result that the role of the principal becomes murky. This grey area in relation to the dual role (of the principal/manager) might be a reason for the many problems relating to the role of the principal on School Governing Bodies. It is my contention that the principal cannot straightforwardly distinguish between his role as a manager

relating to the day-to-day functions, and his role as a school governor attuned to the lawful functions as prescribed in the South African Schools Act.

The guide “Understanding the South African Schools Act” does not resolve this issue, but rather exacerbates the problem. For example, part of management is to “organise all activities which support teaching and learning”. However, part of governance is “to provide quality education for all learners at the school” (Understanding the SASA 1997: 14). The overlap between these two specific duties seems obvious. In other words while providing quality education the governance motive can easily slip into the management domain by determining that teacher Y does not fulfil in their expectations. On the other side the manager/principal might be happy with the educative/teaching performance of teacher Y. This then becomes an area of conflict between managing and governance. While this is an issue that the Education Department (in terms of less ambiguous policy) needs to address, it is my view that the problem (in the interim) can at the very least be minimised, if not overcome, by incorporating the process of deliberation and acquiring the skills of virtuous citizenship, as argued for. There are other examples that may be cited, but it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The point is that the border between management and governance is not distinct, which gives rise to problems that should not necessarily be dealt with within schools. Alternatively they are problems that the Department of Education needs to address.

Deliberation has a role to play on many other different levels of which I shall explore three. The first, being its educative power; secondly, its community generating power; and thirdly deliberation’s transformative ability to influence what Cooke refers to as “the congruence of the ideal of politics articulated (by deliberative democracy) with *whom we are*” (2000: 947).

### **5.3.1. EDUCATIVE POWER OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**

The challenge for democratic school governance is to maintain inclusiveness in the maelstrom of controversy, developing the ground rules for debate and

through an equitable negotiating process establishing the boundaries of permissible conduct. A crucial lesson in democratic school governance is learning how to disagree (Knight & Pearl 2000: 199). I have argued that these attributes, with reference to developing the “ground rules” and “learning how to disagree”, can best be realised through implementing the model of deliberative democracy which I contend fosters democratic citizenship. Knight and Pearl (2000: 199) argue that the deliberative process may be construed as “*a meaningful exercise in cognitive development*”, meaning that all governors are “*encouraged to use logic and evidence to buttress*” their preferences thus developing and refining the art of persuasion. It is my contention that it is how the art of persuasion is developed and advanced that would determine whether SGBs move towards stronger democracy. Put differently, by absorbing or inculcating the rules and opportunities that deliberation provides, school governor representatives acquire the potential to prepare themselves for the responsibility of becoming democratic citizens. I now tease out its implications for school governance.

First, deliberative democracy as a normative concept emphasises the ideal of public reasoning, meaning that it is important that a claim/preference can be defended publicly (within the governing body where all stakeholders are present and party to the deliberations) on the basis of good reasons. Illiterate governors with little or no experience in the practices of democratic governance might not be able to realise this requirement. It is for this reason that I emphasised the role of training as a support mechanism for governors in order that they may acquire the skills to participate in deliberation. In a broader sense this means that we need arguments that can help us to choose rationally between various options on offer as a route to follow in order to overcome a particular problem. The point is that if the principal feels that his view should always hold sway by virtue of his position of power in the school’s hierarchy then it creates problems. This is evidenced by the case studies that were produced. Governors serving in disadvantaged communities readily admitted that they sided with the principal not in relation to him producing the more reasonable argument, but on the understanding that “he knows best”. On closer scrutiny one finds that the principal dominates proceedings within

SGBs by virtue of his position, and not because deliberation has produced the most generally acceptable outcome. To overcome this problem I think two issues need consideration. Firstly, the issue relating to power and how it is utilised, and secondly, that associated with “the rules of the game”. Before I explore these two issues I continue to explain the educative power inherent in the process of deliberation.

The argument regarding the educative power of deliberation holds that it should be advocated primarily because of the beneficial effects it has on those who participate in it. J.S. Mill and Hannah Arendt advocate that participation in public affairs is a good in itself and, therefore, “not merely as instrumental in bringing about, or implementing, qualitatively better political decisions and laws” (Cooke 2000: 948). On this view the benefits of participation in public affairs (such as a SGB) are primarily personal. In other words participation improves the moral, practical or intellectual qualities of those individuals who choose to participate. Cooke argues that “it makes them not just better citizens – though clearly this is crucial – but also better individuals” (2000: 948). To enhance the argument for the educative power of deliberation one presupposes that it has educational benefits that a non-deliberative process does not have. For example, it affords the deliberator an opportunity to acquire the skills to produce and present an argument coherently, rationally, reasonably and lucidly. Such production of skills, the adherents of deliberation argue, does not occur automatically, meaning that its potential is linked to participating in the process of deliberation. I am not arguing for the educative spin of deliberation as justification for the process. On the contrary I am only highlighting its educative potential in relation to argumentation and the skill of argument formulation. Cooke (2000: 949) supports viewing deliberation from such a vantage point when she claims that “the educative effects of participation in public deliberation are at best side-effects, they cannot be the main point of, or the sole justification for, such deliberation”.

On another level deliberation affords its participants with the opportunity to engage others with the intention of finding a solution to a common problem.

The upshot of this is that the problem affects the deliberators as a group. Although individual governors represent particular stakeholder groups with distinct interests, the group identity cannot be ignored. It is my view that within this “group identity” deliberation creates the space for individual representatives not only to produce arguments, but also absorb and analyse the arguments of others. To this end individual governors are afforded the opportunity to acquire the skill of reflection not only on his/her own argument, but also on the arguments of others. Put differently, those who are party to the deliberative process are afforded with the opportunity to make contact with different points of view, meaning coming to grips with the thinking processes of others. The result is that the deliberator (school governor) comes to see the problem from perspectives that he/she did not imagine before. Such exposure to alternative points of view enriches the individual in terms of argumentation thus broadening his/her perspective on the issue under consideration. This thus becomes part of an educative process where the individual becomes more critical not through formal “schooling,” but through participation in the process of deliberation. The other important factor to consider relates to the process of deliberation itself. Here the educative tendency relates to the process instead of the contents of the argument which the process makes possible.

When one considers that the process of deliberation makes it incumbent on each deliberator to adhere to the rules governing deliberation, it seems reasonable to expect that governors would act differently after having engaged in its process. Furthermore, such individuals now possess the skills to look at and apply information differently. I hold that such skills have been acquired in two ways. Firstly, during the training process (as prescribed by the Act) and secondly, by participating in the process of school governance where they are exposed to the deliberative process. . For example, let us for argument's sake presume that the school governor (parent) has to deal with a situation within his/her home environment. His/Her child wants to attend school, wearing “tekkies”<sup>9</sup>, knowing that such footwear is not part of the

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<sup>9</sup> A specific type of footwear used mostly by athletes for sport or training; might also be referred to as training shoes.

school uniform. The child might reasonably argue that the style or type of footwear has no bearing on his/her academic performance. The parent would then have to produce a counter argument, invoking the school rules in relation to uniform. The point is that the process of deliberation, which for this parent had its origins within the school governing body framework, is practically being invoked outside of that formal framework; something that might not have occurred if the parent was not exposed to the process at school governing body level. I am arguing that the skills acquired through participating in the deliberative process at school governance level may be acted upon in other spheres of social relations. Such an understanding of the educative implication of deliberation could possibly have an influence on the realisation of more virtuous citizens. I am consequently convinced that the deliberatory process has distinct educative value for its participants.

Before I explore the second level on which deliberative democracy may have an influence I should return to the issue of power that I raised earlier with reference to the principal/manager.

### **5.3.2. POWER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

The evidence – according to the case studies – reveals that the power of the principal (in especially disadvantaged schools) seems overwhelming. I shall now tease out this issue and argue that what power is or who has any amount of power should not be emphasised, but rather the manner in which power is used should be explored. By bringing the different stakeholder groups together within the system of school governance (predetermined by the South African Schools Act), power and influence are distributed to individuals who traditionally had a previously curtailed voice within school governance. I have earlier argued that each representative stakeholder grouping would want to emphasise his or her own interests, which could possibly occur at the expense of another interest group. I argued that this was a recipe for conflict. It is my contention that the manner in which this conflict is handled fits comfortably into the approach in relation to the utilisation of power. Democracy presupposes that power would be exercised, but the use of power



has to be in accordance with certain democratic regulating principles, including the legitimate and controllable exercise of power (Criblez 1999: 111). The question that needs to be addressed relates to what type of power relations are justifiable in a system of democratic school governance? In other words how can power be utilised legitimately and meaningfully in the interest of democratic educational governance? To answer this question I shall in the main rely on the five power-bases identified by French and Raven (in Johnson & Scollay 2001: 49) that include:

1. Legitimate power. The legitimate right of the leader usually by virtue of the position that the leader holds to prescribe or control behaviour;
2. Coercive power. The leader's control over punitive measures or punishment;
3. Reward power. The leader's control over reward;
4. Expert power. The leader's special knowledge or expertise; and
5. Referent power. The subordinate's desire to identify with the leader.

Johnson and Scollay posit that the school principal (manager/leader) utilises "one or more of these power bases to influence subordinates" (2001: 49). I am particularly interested in their reference to "subordinates" for the reason that it is significant in its assumption of degrees of authority. Interpreting them, one might reasonably presume that the representative groups serving on SGBs are not equal. Sartori (1987: 30) supports this view when he argues that within the people as a whole (all representatives serving on the SGB) some people count more, while others count less. I interpret his "counting" to relate to the individual capacities that each governor brings into the SGB system. If such an interpretation is plausible, then the understanding of "subordinates" in this sense should not be deemed as problematic to the politics of democracy. It would be absurd to expect that the principal, teachers, learners and parents must all be equal in terms of their skill-levels that they bring into the structure of school governance. Given that they possess differing levels of skills the possibility exists that one might exploit his/her superior ability to undermine

those less powerful. However, it is the manner in which this is done that would determine how legitimate or democratic it is.

In his study Rahim (in Johnson & Scollay 2001) found that the utilisation of legitimate, expert and reverent power bases were positively associated with compliance, while reward and coercive power is associated with resistance. I argue that resistance fuels conflict that can potentially contribute towards the governing body becoming less capable of solving the original problem. I consequently argue that particularly the principal should have the skill to identify the outcomes of power-base usage prior to its practical implementation. In this way some of the potential conflict may be avoided to foster a more reasonable form of democratic governance. I am not arguing for the utilisation of power for the principal only. I am aware that all stakeholder representatives have the potential to activate their ability to employ power as a mechanism to influence the position or understanding of other representatives. Each of the representative constituencies on the SGB brings its own basis for influencing decisions. The point is that the evidence illustrates that the power of the principal (in disadvantaged communities) is overwhelming to the extent that decisions on SGB level become less democratic. The movement should thus be towards the use of legitimate, expert and reverent power, as opposed to reward and coercive power.

When one considers that power includes the ability to influence others to behave in a manner in which they would not otherwise have behaved, then its influence on a social level is “simply a special instance in causality, namely, the modification of one person’s responses by the actions of another” (Johnson & Scollay 2001: 50). Following such a line of reasoning, it seems plausible that when one has influence, the effect on a decision seems to be without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command. Johnson and Scollay refers to this as “behavioural contagion”, which means involving the spontaneous pickup or imitation by others (governors on the SGB) of a behaviour initiated by one member, where the initiator did not display any intention of getting the others to do what he/she did. While this view is debatable for the reason that one might question the reason for the initiator

exhibiting the particular behaviour other than influencing the rest within the group. Put differently, if the intention is not to influence the behaviour of others then what is the point? It is not my intention to question this issue. I am trying to expose the idea that power or influence is not necessarily linked to force or coercion. On the contrary: there are other ways in which power can be positively employed without relating to force. It is this kind of operation of power that I argue, should be the manner in which SGBs apply the concept.

Giddens (1991) takes this argument further in his exploration of the duality of power. He posits that power refers to “ ... the capability of individuals to intervene in events so as to alter their course, and is defined as transformative capacity: the use of resources to secure desired outcomes”. In this view power depicts a duality between the individual and the structure, in other words between the governor and the governing body/structure. Giddens argues that there is an unavoidable interplay of power between the capacity of the agent (individual power) and that of the capacity of the structure (power based within the SGB via the South African Schools Act). Structure is viewed as an accumulation of rules or policies (inherent in the SASA) that we employ to shape our practices/social conduct. I am aware that Giddens does not refer to structure in terms of a School Governing Body structure. His reference to structure is more related to the structural characteristics of a social community, where it forms patterns of acceptable social behaviour, particularly guided by the utilisation of language skills. Put differently, his “structure” refers to those with the skills to manipulate language having more power than those with fewer language abilities. However, interpreting Giddens in this way, meaning that structure may reasonably refer to the South African Schools Act, it seems as if the power of the structure in some way precedes the power of the individuals who serve on governing bodies. Put differently, the structure which is legislatively binding, is the origin of power. In other words the South African Schools Act determines and shapes the constitution of governing bodies which must be within the parameters of official policy, meaning that power in terms of who may assume it, is predetermined. Here I am particularly referring to how stakeholder groups are elected. For example, the Act determines that schools should ensure that a Representative Council

of Learners (RCL) is elected as the statutory body of recognised learner leadership in the school. The structure thus gives power to learners who otherwise might not have had such power. The point is that the interpretation of the Act thus becomes crucial with the emphasis on how power is distributed.

In my reading of the Act I conclude that power should be evenly distributed with the exception that parents are the majority on the SGB. This translates into them supposedly having more power. In reality, however, the case studies reveal that this is not the case in disadvantaged communities. On the contrary, the principal wields power. Such an interpretation of Giddens consequently leads to an understanding that according to the “structure” the power as assumed by the principal leads to less democratic practices. I have earlier argued that a more plausible route would be to interpret power in terms of how it should be utilised. It is thus my view that power be practiced in terms of the three power bases that I have referred to, meaning those bases that are premised on reasonable influence rather than force or coercion.

Furthermore, with power comes responsibility, meaning, “a person can neither be held accountable nor responsible for something which is not under his/her control” (Morrow 1989: 3). In referring to my earlier argument regarding “structure”, the South African Schools Act codifies the power in terms of how School Governing Bodies should function. Two examples should suffice to demonstrate that responsibility in this sense is directly linked to power. Firstly, every SGB has to operate within a binding constitution, thus limiting its sphere of influence and subsequently its power. Secondly, school governors are legally recognised as juristic persons thus opening the space for civil suits against them. In other words they can be legally sued. This form of built-in checks and balances curtail the misuse of power and could act as a deterrent, and alternatively it discourages irresponsible representation. This is not to say that the use of power is curbed to such a degree that it does not come into play on other levels. I have earlier argued that those who have the skills to manipulate language have the edge when it comes to deliberation. Superior language skills make the deliberation process easier thus giving an advantage

to those possessing such skills. One's power to deliberate in this sense might slant towards the exclusion of those with fewer language skills. Having made my point clear on the utilisation of power I now return to the implications of deliberation on school governance.

### **5.3.3. COMMUNITY-GENERATING POWER OF DELIBERATION**

With the demise of apartheid and the emergence of the South African Schools Act (1996: Act No 84) our schools have become sites of multi-culturalism, religious diversity, social inequality and racial diversity. It is within this framework that school governance should operate. The realm of school governance is, therefore, a melting-pot of differences that has to operate as a single unit (School Governing Body) notwithstanding such differences. This in itself is a daunting task, but add the notion that individuals already possess different life philosophies together with little or no training in democratic governance; the task of governance becomes more intimidating. How then can democracy flourish under conditions of such individual differences? It is my contention that diversity should not necessarily be equated with disorder or disarray. On the contrary: diversity has the potential to enhance unity. This point finds expression in the preamble to the South African Constitution which refers to being “united in diversity” (More 1998: 369). My understanding of being united in diversity goes to the heart of deliberation and also underscores my argument for critical virtuous/democratic citizens.

The success of a deliberative form of democracy depends on creating the conditions and institutional arrangements that foster the public use of reason. In this respect the SGB structure with its elected stakeholder representatives can be said to be an institutional arrangement that is premised on democratic ideals. It is to the conditions within this institutional arrangement that I am referring in the sense that I favour free and open dialogue among representatives who are “equal” and who are intent on making rational judgements about ways to resolve problems. The consequence is that all are committed to resolving the conflict in such a way that the outcome is reasonably agreeable to all. However, such an agreed outcome should of

necessity have gone through the process of deliberation where each representative should have had an equal opportunity to influence the decision by means of producing a rational coherent argument in order to persuade others that his/her route is the most plausible under the present circumstances. Following such a route leads to fostering unity among diverse stakeholder representatives. The argument is, therefore, towards a more communitarian version of deliberative democracy. Communitarianism favours the common good, meaning that the individual (stakeholder representative) becomes aware of his/her co-membership within a collective (SGB). Such an awareness appeals to the individual's co-membership, rather than to his/her individual preference. The common good thus finds precedence over the individual preference. In this way the power of community formation overrides individuality. On another level this reinforces the quality of tolerance in the sense that the individual gives preference to the larger picture/value as opposed to that from which he/she may personally derive a benefit. Following such a line of reasoning the deliberative process fosters a sense of community irrespective of individual diversity. I further elucidate the community formation implication of deliberation by citing an example.

At a school in the Plumstead/Wynberg<sup>10</sup> region a meeting was called to resolve the conflict that had arisen because learners, together with their parents, of the Islamic faith felt aggrieved that they had to return to school after attending Friday congregational prayers. The crux of the argument seemed to revolve around the perception that other schools in the immediate vicinity closed at 12:30 on a Friday, whereas this school closed at 14:30. The Muslims argued their position within the framework of religious freedom (guaranteed by the Constitution) and the SGB having the right to determine school times (within the framework of the minimum hours per week, as prescribed by the South African Schools Act). After some heated debate a compromise was reached precisely because the Muslim representatives who argued for them were part of the school community, notwithstanding that they only comprised 15% of the school population. Prior to this debate/deliberation

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<sup>10</sup> A suburb in Cape Town in the Western Cape Province.

it seemed as if the status quo should remain, but the force of the communitarian ideal and the fact that the school community determined that creating divisions between Muslims and those of other faiths was more detrimental to the development of the school, influenced the resulting outcome. This example illustrates in a practical manner that deliberation has the ability to generate and foster a sense of community. I should, however, report that the deliberation process took place within an open forum, meaning not within the official framework of the School Governing Body. Parents of all learners were invited to this meeting. The point is that although the conflict was seemingly resolved in a forum where all constituents had an opportunity to influence the outcome, it still had to be ratified at SGB level. The governors representing different stakeholder groups were exposed to the preferences of all the stakeholders and the outcome and ratification thereof became a formality. I now move onto my last implication of deliberation which refers to deliberation's transformative tendency as being congruent with "whom we are".

#### **5.3.4. TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF DELIBERATION: BEING CONGRUENT WITH WHOM WE ARE**

The argument that deliberative democracy elucidates the ideal of democracy most harmoniously with "who we are" is premised on two key essentials:

- a. That there are certain key normative conceptions of knowledge, of the self and of the good life that are so central to modern Western history and traditions that rejecting them is not a matter of simple decision, but would require a fundamental reorientation in our thinking, and;
- b. That a deliberative model of democracy makes best sense of these normative conceptions (Cooke 2000: 954).

Cooke argues that certain normative conceptions of knowledge, of the self and of the good life, are not simply a matter of choice, but are constitutive of our self-understandings. Put differently, firstly, there are no authoritative

standards independent of history and cultural context that could adjudicate claims to epistemic validity and that the knowledge in areas of science, law, politics and morality should be construed as fallible. Secondly, autonomous reasoning is a valuable part of human agency. Thirdly, everyone is in principle deserving of equal respect as an autonomous moral agent with a distinct point of view (Cooke 2000: 955). In my understanding of Cooke's argument he means that knowledge of "science, law, politics and morality is never final or conclusive". In other words such knowledge can never be deemed to be irrefutable, or alternatively it is always open to contestation and reconsideration in the light of new evidence and arguments. It is this reference to unconstrained rational argumentation that seems the more appropriate route for mediating rival claims. Viewing knowledge in this way helps to explain the value attached to autonomous reasoning with particular emphasis on "rational accountability and objectivity of judgements" (Cooke 2000: 955).

On the one hand the school governor, by implementing the process of deliberation, is inclined/schooled to accept responsibility for his/her self-interpretations and judgements as expressed in his/her willingness and ability to provide reasons in support of his/her preference, and to enter into unconstrained dialogue in defence of it. On the other hand, with reference to "objectivity of judgement", the school governor is inclined to engage in dialogue (contestation of opposing views) with others in a critical and reflexive way while acknowledging the principle of equality and respect for the point of view of others. In this sense "equal respect" should be interpreted as every individual/representative being capable of making an informed decision and that no one's argument should be discounted on the grounds of their ethnicity, race, sex, socio-economic class, culture, religion, illiteracy or even incoherence. Put differently, deliberation affords the individual citizen/representative the opportunity to value any contribution to the deliberation process as worthy of consideration. Viewed in this way, it seems logical that one cannot indulge in a practice where one considers others' points of view and then determine that one's own argument is less convincing, without that person having the capacity to change. I use change in the sense that the individual is willing to transform his/her view and resolve to abide by



the outcome that he/she agreed was more plausible. Consequently one does not only transform one's argument in favour of the more convincing one, but also one's behaviour by abiding by the agreed to decision. This in turn suggests a conception of autonomy in terms of an ideal of self-authorship; "citizens are held to be politically autonomous insofar as they can see themselves as authors as well as subjects of the law (political principles, public policies and so on) ... suggesting, in addition, a deliberative interpretation of self authorship" (Cooke 2000: 956). To conclude this argument I turn to Cooke who posits that:

If there are no historically authoritative standards of legal, political or moral validity, then in order for citizens to be able to see themselves as authors in this sense, they must be able to see the law, political principles and public policies as the outcome of a process of public deliberation whose aim is the best possible justification of the proposals under discussion (2000: 956).

The three points that I have raised with reference to "fallible knowledge claims, autonomous reasoning and equality as moral agents" can be combined to provide a strong argument in favour of the implications of deliberative democracy, or alternatively democratic citizenship on the governing process in disadvantaged schools. My reasoning is that they imply the need for an environment in which all governors have an equal opportunity, and are equally encouraged, to contribute to deliberation on matters of common concern. I have earlier hinted that such matters of common concern emerge in an atmosphere of conflict where each governor might be intent on pushing his/her stakeholders' preference. However, since the overwhelming purpose of school governance is to produce outcomes that have the best possible justification and is in the least instance agreeable to all, it presupposes a community ideal. Therefore, I tend to agree with Cooke when she argues that deliberation conceived in this way is in principle unbounded, and "has an in-built transformatory potential". If this argument is plausible then the upshot is that deliberation and its concomitant implications have a direct

bearing on the type of critical citizen that the post-apartheid government wishes to realise.

Moreover, the transformatory influence of the deliberative model of democracy finds resonance with the transformation agenda of education in general and schooling in particular in this country. The notion of transformation has been part of education's aim since the inception of the South African Schools Act. To put it mildly, transformation has been the foundation on which South Africa hopes to raise its new nation, where there would be space for all its citizens notwithstanding our different cultures, religious orientations, ethnic origins, political affiliations and so forth. It is thus my view that deliberation's implication for transformation underscores our movement towards fostering a nation within the diversity of the population of South Africa. I am not arguing that the deliberative model on its own can practically realise this objective, but I am rather arguing for the potential of the deliberative model in furthering the cause of forging a South African nation. I am aware that there are other forces that have the potential to retard this process. However, I am confident that following the deliberative ideal has the potential at least to create the opportunity for the voices of the marginalised to be heard. School governance has the potential to become more democratic when representatives acquire the skills to make persuasive arguments for learners, parents, teachers and even legislators. Representatives involved in school governance, having acquired the tools to become more critical and reflexive can then possibly become lobbyists, involved in the political process that influences the direction of education.

Having argued for the implications of deliberation on school governance in disadvantaged communities, I am still perturbed at the possibility of exclusion. Although I feel that my argument for inclusion via the deliberative model of democracy is plausible, a potential critic may argue that deliberation's insistence on the production of critical argument has the potential to either silence or devalue some groups. Although I have argued against this tendency I feel this might still pose as a brittle moment in this dissertation. As I have earlier explained, Young argues that the deliberative model has the tendency to restrict democratic discussion to argumentation thus implicitly

slanting towards cultural bias that can lead to exclusion. She further posits that: “Its assumption that unity is either a starting point or goal of democratic discussion, moreover, may also have exclusionary consequences” (Young in Benhabib 1996: 122). To address this issue I shall frame the marginalised (those who might still potentially be excluded) as the “unknowable other”. My aim is to circumvent the supposed tendency of exclusion that might occur notwithstanding my argument that deliberation as a process has a better chance of inclusion than other strands of democracy. I now proceed with framing the “other”, but I shall first refer to a conception of being reasonable for the reason that reasonability is linked to creating space for otherness. The way in which being reasonable is perceived also determines the possibility for exclusion alternatively inclusion. I shall present my argument for a specific interpretation of reasonableness to further enhance the possibility of including those marginalised voices (learners and parents) serving on school governing bodies.

### **5.3.5. AN UNKNOWABLE OTHER IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

In the main I shall rely on the concept of *via negativa* and Michalinos Zembylas to construct my argument for the “unknowable other”. I shall also refer to the works of Emmanuel Levinas in my quest to make sense of what referring to the “unknowable other” means. It is my view that the tradition of *via negativa* incorporates unknowability, which can occupy an important place in school governance, a place that embraces the unknowable other. My hope is to create space for unknowing as an act of ethical responsibility by emphasising the uniqueness of the other. Reflecting on the value of unknowing may potentially inspire in school governors a sense of vigilance, responsibility/accountability and reasonableness. In short, unknowing is an act of embracing/including otherness. I shall return to this issue after exploring the concept of being “reasonable”. I find this concept to be crucial in our relations with “the other” for the reason that it supports a view that otherness is reciprocal. In other words, to be reasonable have implications for those who regard the marginalised as other, while at the same time it has implications for

those who are deemed other. I now turn to an analysis of reasonableness after which I shall explore how “otherness” may foster inclusion.

#### **5.4.1. WHAT IT MEANS TO (BE) REASON(ABLE): A BROADER CONCEPTION**

I cast my gaze back to the years of apartheid when it was common practice for the then leader of the Nationalist Party<sup>11</sup>, Mr P.W. Botha, to argue in terms of “reasonable people”. In his speeches on the desirability of separate development where South Africa’s ethnic groups were referred to as being nations in their own right, he would continually refer to “reasonable people”. In reality he argued that reasonableness meant to agree with his understanding, thus accepting apartheid or separate development. Those who opposed his view were then deemed to be unreasonable. I allude to this example to point to the understanding that “to be reasonable” can be in the form of a rebuke or in this particular case a command to silence the thoughts and feelings of others. Burbules reinforces this point when he argues that:

When reason is held to be a strict adjudicator of legitimate and illegitimate expression, its effect is often to suppress those beliefs and values which do not measure up to its standards (1993: 1).

In my reading of Burbules I deduce that when one’s understanding runs roughshod over the understandings of others, meaning that one is averse to other points of view, then the individual cannot claim to be reasonable. Put differently, the term reasonable is invoked in a fallacious manner, meaning its aim actually borders on the unreasonable. The point is that invoking reason or being reasonable in this sense leads to exclusion. It excludes all those who supposedly are not reasonable.

Particularly post-modern philosophers have contested a formalist conception of reason/rationality, firstly by arguing that any ordering system of thought is

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<sup>11</sup> The National Party was the ruling party that produced/steered apartheid policies prior to the advent of democracy in South Africa.

inherently discursive. This might be true, for we choose the rules by which we want to live through the way that we converse and cooperate with each other. In other words we do not discover such rules or conventions in perfect form somewhere, waiting only to be revealed by contemplation of untainted reason. We make them up over the course of our collective cultural history. Burbules argues that this is true even for “the conventions of argumentation” (1993: 1). However, when a particular way of thinking, of reasoning, of rational argumentation and of mediating rival claims of truth have survived the test of time, then it suggests a flexibility and efficiency that other alternatives might not match. In other words reason/rationality should be fulfilling its purpose beyond the preferences of those who promote its application.

Secondly, postmodernists argue that formal conceptions of rationality exclude considerations of affect and non-cognitive elements of thought and feeling. This criticism seems fair particularly at the level of social interaction where the formal validation of ideas (during discussion) may exclude the disadvantaged or marginalised groups, especially if their language skills should be rudimentary. It is this claim that I have extracted as a brittle moment in this dissertation. However, if reason has a discursive or communicative grounding (discussion), then part of the process of creating and maintaining effective communicative relations will entail matters of feeling, empathy, and concern. The result is that arguing for a more inclusive and multifaceted conception of reason/rationality reinforces its value, because the very values of tolerance and openness to diversity of modes of thought and feeling express such standards (Burbules 1993: 1). If such an understanding is plausible, then the one alternative might be that we abandon the idea of rationality as an impartial arbiter of the rules of clear thinking; a dispassionate means for reaching concrete conclusions or a common guide to human thought and conduct. The other alternative would be to regard reason/rationality as a practice growing out of communicative interactions in which the full play of human thought, feeling, and motivation operates. It is my view that the second alternative is more plausible if a more substantive conception of reason, or rather reasonableness, is possible.

Burbules suggests (and I tend to agree) that “reasonableness” refers to the virtues and capacities of a person who is related in specific contexts to other persons and not necessarily to the following of formal rules and procedures of thought (1993: 3). Virtues in this sense may be flexible aspects of character fostered by the communities and relations with others who provide the context in which we choose and act. In relation to school governance, stakeholder representatives within the context of School Governing Bodies encourage such “flexible aspects of character”. Moreover, virtues affect our conduct because it portrays aspects of our character that affords us the opportunity to care about the feelings of others, meaning that such virtues are part of who we are. Put differently, a person who wants to be perceived as operating within the bounds of reason wants to make sense. To be reasonable consequently is to make sense, to be fair to alternative points of view, to be careful and prudent in the adoption of important issues, to be willing to admit to being fallible and so forth (Burbules 1993: 3). These are the qualities one hopes school governors would internalise and practice when they deliberate about issues that concern their school communities. Doing so would not only enhance the chances of the marginalised to be included in the process of deliberation, but also improve the likelihood of them influencing decisions. It should be noted that such qualities are not displayed by following certain formal rules of reasoning. They are rather revealed in an array of circumstances that are not governed by strict rules.

Another dimension of reasonableness relates to one’s capacity to enter into communicative relations where people inquire, disagree, adjudicate, explain, or argue their points of view together, in pursuit of a reasonable outcome. This is precisely what school governance is about. The outcome is reasonable to the extent that those who are involved in the communicative relation (school governor representatives) are satisfied, not only by the means through which the outcome was reached, but also by the outcome itself. Burbules supports this understanding when he posits that:

This communicative aspect is chiefly what makes the pursuit and attainment of reasoned positions a practical and contextual endeavour.

... We judge the adequacy of our reasoning and conversation by the efficacy and social acceptability of the conclusions they derive; and we judge in turn the reliability of our conclusions by the thoroughness and care of the processes by which we reached them (1993: 3).

I am, therefore, of the opinion that this is a more substantive conception of reason/rationality for the reason that the outcome of this form of inquiry might not be settled (convincingly) in advance by means of a particular logical argument. Rather the process of reasoned inquiry is manifested in the thoughts, conversations, and choices that the actual persons involved pursue towards some conclusion. I further argue that such a notion of reasonableness, incorporating my claims for deliberation makes a strong case for a type of deliberation that does not exclude those whom Iris Marion Young claims are susceptible because of deliberative democracy's insistence on critical rational argumentation. Furthermore, if the participants claim to be reasonable people, this conclusion is as reliable as can be. The opposite may also be feasible, meaning that the conclusion might be mistaken/wrong, but it can be established as such and be rectified only by further applying the same process.

I have shown that the patterns of investigation or scientific inquiry play an important but limited role when people sought to understand the "truth" of their situation. I argue that such patterns are effective only in social contexts of communication, practice, and judgement. The issue at stake now concerns the nature of these contexts and how we conduct ourselves within them. To address this issue I again rely on Burbules and his claim that four traits seem to be central to reasonableness, those being objectivity, fallibilism, pragmatism and judgement. The idea is to show that these characteristics of reasonableness can be translated from a formal decontextualised language (rationality) to one concerned with personal character, practical contexts, and communicative relations. Framed in this way it becomes richer and more effective, and is also better able to withstand some of the postmodernist criticisms that I have raised.

- **Being Objective**

Two conditions seem to be crucial when adopting an objective attitude, those being tolerance and a “pluralistic sentiment”. I have dealt with the concept of tolerance as a constitutive feature of democracy in chapter three. I thus only reiterate that developing tolerance depends on the kind of communicative and other social interactions one has with others. A person who lacks tolerance cannot enact that component of reasonableness called “objectivity”.

Regarding the requirement of “pluralistic sentiment”, objectivity is supported by the position of having regarded a range of other points of view thoughtfully and to realise that each has its merits. In this way one is protected from an attitude that there is or can be “one best way” for all. The range of differing points of view should have been seriously considered (by all) before an outcome is reached. To do this one should not only have some intellectual capacity, but also aspects of character, personal relations, and social contexts that encourage and support the development of objectivity. When participants are able to do this, meaning they invoke values of tolerance and pluralism, they may be regarded as objective for the reason that they are able to display methodological as well as moral edicts (Burbules 1993: 4). In other words persons with a vast intellect, who cannot consider opposing points of view, fail to be objective. In this sense, those who are able to listen to others without critically reacting, also fail the objectivity test. At both of these extremes such persons fail to be reasonable. This particular point goes to the heart of power relations as played out in the school governance context. Invoking objectivity in this sense has the potential to curtail the power of the principal, or alternatively to improve the power ability of the marginalised stakeholders so that they may have an increased effect on outcomes.

- **Enabling Fallibilism**

Karl Popper reminds us not to be afraid of making mistakes because it is through discovering error (via a process of falsification) that we are driven to



change; that we proceed not towards truth, but away from error. This motive for change extends beyond scientific hypothesis testing (positivism's falsifiability) to a broader vision and attitude towards life. The point is that we have all experienced error or failure, however, the manner in which we react to it is vital. If we have learnt a lesson that strengthened our capacities to endure then we accept fallibility may have positive aspects. The outcome of fallibility teaches us how to respond under the same set of circumstances in future. In this sense being fallible is a component of a reasonable person. Conversely, if the failure does not prepare us to act differently in future, meaning that if we did not learn anything from it then we cannot be considered to be reasonable people.

The question that follows is what does this virtue entail? Initially it requires a commitment to take risks that run the possibility of error. In other words, withholding commitment, or always deliberately complying with the obvious in order to circumvent mistakes, runs the risk of avoiding change, or alternatively avoiding the creation of opportunities to learn. Secondly it requires an ability to not only recognise the wrong but also being able to admit it to oneself and to others. Burbules argues that in this way we learn to hear and respond critically to the criticisms of others (1993: 5). Thirdly, it involves reflection in order to determine how the error occurred and how it might possibly be avoided in future. In short it leads to learning, and it leads to change. Reasonableness in this view drives change through a process of not only admitting to failure, but also learning from it. Again its influence on the practice of governance seems obvious. Accepting that one is fallible relates to an understanding that it is virtually impossible that one can always be right. In other words if the principal wants to claim that he is reasonable, then he has to afford others the opportunity to make mistakes for the reason that he has the inherent potential to do likewise. When citizens/governors are capable of applying reason in this sense, it opens the space for inclusion and at the same time restricts the probability of exclusion.

- **Being Pragmatic**

Here pragmatism is not used in the Deweyan sense, but rather referring to attitude: a belief that practical problems drive the process of intellectual, moral and political development. Pragmatism in this sense is sensitive to the particulars of given contexts and a variety of human needs and purposes. Accordingly Burbules argues that it reflects a tolerance for uncertainty, imperfection, and incompleteness as the existential conditions of human thought, value, or action, yet also recognises the need for persistence and flexibility in confronting such difficulties (1993: 6). For example, in practice it is easier to determine when we are wrong than when we are right, the philosophical consequence being a distrust of teleological conceptions of rationality. I am of the opinion that we rely on certain approaches of inquiry not because we can be sure that the outcome is the best, but because experience proved that such approaches are more reliable to pursue an outcome. There is, however, no guarantee that it would produce what we seek; it is merely the prospect that the approach is more reliable than another. To this end Burbules posits that:

Such a commitment to a process of inquiry ... without certainty of results is what defines the pragmatic attitude; and this is a primary feature of reasonableness (1993: 6).

We are frequently in situations where problems appear intractable and where the outcome is unpredictable. In such difficulties a reasonable person would approach the problems with an open mind, adapting and persisting in the face of initial failure. The issue at stake, however, is that a choice is made. This is the sign of pragmatism. Furthermore, Burbules clarify that the pragmatist (as being argued for) needs a supportive context in which an emphasis on success is not exaggerated. In other words it is a context where failure or disappointment is accepted as a condition of growth and where cooperative assistance is socially and personally accepted as alternatives (1993: 6).

- **Implementing Judgement**

Burbules argues that “one of the reasons that a dispositional account of reasonableness is prior to, and not just a supplement for, an emphasis on *logicality* is that one of the chief characteristics of a reasonable person is the ability to judge, to distinguish situations in which a rational calculation in the narrow sense might be called for” (1993: 7). In other words a reasonable person knows when not to try to reach conclusions in a particular rational way because it is not reasonable to apply logic or the strict rules of evidence in every situation. Part of judgement is the capacity for moderation, even in the exercise of reason itself. If such an understanding makes sense then it is fair to argue that we are not always reasonable. Conversely, we sometimes fail to act on our best inclinations for the reason that we are fallible or prone to mistakes. Accepting this, I have earlier argued is part of our pragmatic spirit. Also consider that there is often more than one reasonable thing to believe, to say or to do. It is part of our pragmatic spirit to choose without necessarily relying on formal conceptions of rationality. The point is that we do not always and under all circumstances exercise the rules of dispassionate clear thinking in order to derive at the “best” or “right” outcomes. In the actual practice of human communication, strict and conclusive argument is rare, causing us to sometimes act against our better inclinations. This does not mean that our capacity to balance conflicting views, to adhere to rules of rationality or to exercise serious reflection becomes redundant. On the contrary, we only sometimes act without considering it. Accepting, and having an appreciation for sometimes limiting our tools of inquiry when making a judgement, is consequently part of being reasonable. Moreover, reasonableness includes a deliberate awareness of trying to improve our communicative interaction with others. According to Burbules this entails remaining open to the influences of exploration and negotiation, but more importantly to pursue mutual understanding. In this endeavour, a respect for the force of reason is crucial, as is the attempt to be clear, coherent, and accurate in what one says. To conclude this argument I refer to Burbules who argues that:

In each of the four elements that have been discussed, the process by which we exercise and cultivate these virtues involves us in a set of communicative interactions with others. They are neither acquired nor exercised in isolation. ... Through encountering new, challenging, and often conflicting ideas; through making mistakes and trying to learn from them; through persisting through levels of difficulty and discouragement to something more worthwhile; and through learning to judge in practice both the applicability and the limits of the general principles and skills one acquires. ... Through the exercise of these we learn to be reasonable (1993: 8).

Having argued for what it means to be reasonable, and how it has the potential to overcome the criticism of the deliberative model supposed tendency to exclude, I now claim that this potential pointed at deliberation by its critics, is now further reduced. Even though I am convinced that my argument is sufficient to persuade a potential critic that being “reasonable” could and should be incorporated in our understanding of citizenship, and in doing so the possibility for exclusion from the deliberative process becomes remote, I still proceed with exploring the notion of the “unknowable other”. My aim remains to create space for the voices of the marginalised thus making citizens more critical in my search towards a stronger form of democratic governance.

#### **5.4.2. VIA NEGATIVA AND UNKNOWABILITY: TOWARDS INCLUDING THE MARGINALISED OTHER IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

*Via negativa* is based on the notion that God is ineffable and that the best way to God is through silence and un-knowing (Zembylas & Michaelides 2004). In other words, in order to come to know the indescribable God we need to un-know the normal content of our awareness of Him so that an awareness of God may flow in. I should immediately stress that “to come to know” cannot and, therefore, should not be equated with “knowing”. Conversely one may come to know without fully knowing, or alternatively that which the individual comes to know might not necessarily be true. What a person comes to know

might possibly be one's interpretation of what a person estimates might possibly be true. The upshot of this is that where we have no rational understanding of something, or are unable to fully describe or explain it, we can nonetheless experience it as real. This form of "knowledge" St. John<sup>12</sup> refers to as "unknowing" (Zembylas 2005: 141). Responding to the "other" is therefore not an issue of knowledge about the other, but implies approaching the other as an unknowable entity. If we want to learn something from the other we should approach such Other with ignorance. In other words we cannot pre-empt what otherness is or what the other might be. At best our understanding and grasp of otherness can only be realised if and when we approach the Other out of ignorance, meaning our starting point is from "zero" knowledge of the other. Put differently, we "attend" to the other by recognising that the other is unknowable, in the hope that we may learn something in the process. In this regard Zembylas posits that unknowing describes a realisation of inadequacy to anything approaching full and comprehensive understanding (2005: 142). Consequently the Other is incomprehensible to the extent that we can never attain full knowledge about him/her. Levinas argues that one way of getting to grips with unknowing is to think of God as the inexpressible and the unknowable, because He keeps silent and remains unknowable, just as the Other is unknowable (in Zembylas 2005: 146). Following this argument it seems clear that our relation with the Other becomes an experience "of the impossible", of the impossibility of knowing him/her. It is, however, possible to experience the Other. The unknowability of the Other signifies that the relationship with the Other is an ethical relationship. In this regard Levinas argues that:

Ethical responsibility to the Other is not a matter of free will, because one has infinite responsibility to the other. The impossibility of knowing the Other is precisely the condition of ethics; the encounter which occurs between self and Other gives birth to an infinite ethical responsibility (in Zembylas 2005: 147).

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<sup>12</sup> St. John of the Cross (Spain, 1542-1591) is considered as one of the most important mystical philosophers in Christian history. He is responsible for major works, including *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *Dark Night of the Soul*, and *Spiritual Canticle of the Soul*.

The argument that ethical responsibility is not “a matter of free will” is significant for the reason that it implies that responsibility for the Other becomes the domain of every human being. Ethics, as interpreted by Levinas, has no absolute rules that prescribe responsibility towards the Other, which means that no one ever knows whether his/her response in relation to the Other is just. In other words ethics “as a relationship” is a matter of sensibility, not the application of objective and universal rules. Conversely, there is no certainty whether one ever fulfils his/her ethical debt to the Other (in Zembylas 2005: 149). Having given some insight into the “unknowability” of the “other”, I now move on to explore how this relates to the marginalised voices within School Governing Bodies in disadvantaged communities.

#### **5.4.3 THE UNKNOWABLE OTHER IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

I have earlier argued for the impossibility of ever knowing the Other. When one frames the marginalised as Other the consequence is that the marginalised can never be known. In this regard I contend that school governance should not focus on “knowing” the Other (this is impossible) but rather approach governance as open communication and attention to the Other. Unknowing in governance would then refer to a commitment to the impossibility of knowing. One might argue that if it is impossible to know, then what is the sense in trying to pursue, that which in any case is impossible? The answer lies in how one interprets or understands “impossible”. Biesta argues that “impossibility” does not denote that which is not possible, but that which cannot be foreseen as a possibility, and thus the recognition of the impossibility of knowing releases the possibility of transgression (2001: 48). An important implication of unknowing is that stakeholder representatives (who serve on SGBs), especially in a pluralist society, need to give up their position as knowers and engage in ethical relations that welcome and attend to the experiences of the Other. This is a call for accepting and respecting Otherness, alternatively the movement should never be to “sameness”. The point is that once there is a radical onslaught to change the Other to conform or to become the same, such a practice involves unethical behaviour. On this issue Zembylas is emphatic when he argues that:

The fundamental concern of Western philosophy is to make the Other an object of knowledge, something to be understood. In this way strangeness is reduced to sameness and alterity becomes controllable (2005: 155).

The consequence of this is that alterity should be preserved, because this kind of experience opens us to the voice of the Other. Once the other is accepted as Other, the foundation is laid for accepting ethical responsibility which is infinite. This implies that one's responsibility towards the other never stops.

Following this argument, it is precisely the ethical responsibility of the principal, the teacher representatives and those who currently dominate proceedings on SGBs to respond to the marginalised representatives by stimulating and inspiring them. In so doing they may inspire and enable the “voiceless” representatives to develop their own capacities which might include the ability to deliberate and so overcome their seemingly powerless status. This does not mean the “voiceless” undergo change for the sake of better participation on the contrary from an ethical perspective it merely means that opportunities are created for the “voiceless” to be better able to represent the marginalised stakeholder groups. For example the marginalised representatives may be given the opportunity to relate their testimonies of poverty and hunger so that the principal and teacher representatives can witness their suffering. This might provoke new forms of experiencing the Other. The point is not to “know” the Other; the ultimate goal is to “witness” the unknowable Other. In this way respect for the Other becomes possible. To further clarify this point I turn to Zembylas who argues that:

The significance of a pedagogy of unknowing is that it provokes *dominant school governors* to re-evaluate what constitutes *educational governance* in order to inspire the *marginalised* to develop and enact relations with one another (2005: 152 *my italics*).

Witnessing in this sense assumes an engagement/relations in seeing the Other differently thus negating the placement of the Other in habitual categories. Such categories may include viewing the marginalised voices of parent and learner representatives as having nuisance value, something that may easily be brushed aside. I consequently contend that Otherness should be maintained as “an ever deepening mystery” that continues to “revitalise the very meaning of every encounter” we have with the Other (Zembylas 2005: 154).

In conclusion, when framing the Other in this way, it creates the space for the marginalised voices on SGBs to stand a better chance of being included in deliberative governance. Alternatively the chances that their voices would not only be heard, but much rather also have an impact, would be enhanced. At this stage I claim that Otherness according to my understanding is reciprocal. This implies that we are all other. In other words the marginalised are deemed as Other by those who dominate proceedings on SGBs, while at the same time those who dominate proceedings are deemed as Other by the marginalised. This is what I mean when I refer to Otherness as being reciprocal. If this view is plausible then it should follow that we are all other. This point becomes the crucial moment for the reason that if we are all Other, then the chances for exclusion of any voice in school governance becomes remote.

## **5.5. SUMMARY**

I shall conclude this chapter by taking some brief leaps through this dissertation in order to give some insight into how I confronted this research, and more importantly how my growth as a researcher was galvanised. I then expose its brittle moments and argue that such moments allow much space for further research.

A personal reflection, on the one hand, “draws attention to the view that the self that researches has an autobiography marked by the significance of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class” (Usher 1996: 38). Disciplinary



reflexivity, on the other hand, “concerns moving away from the researcher to the research act so that the focus switches to the communities within which the research as a practice is located” (Usher 1996: 37). It is my intention to reflect on my journey through this dissertation thus giving an autobiographical account of how my contact with the research material shaped my thoughts and practices.

In chapter one I hinted that I have been in the teaching profession since 1980. I was, therefore, at the cutting edge of the changes that impacted on education in general and on schooling in particular. It was because of my perceived social responsibility and the social context within which I found myself that steered me towards adopting a particular discourse, namely teaching as a profession. My interest in democratic transformation (by confronting the development of school education) informed my desire to undertake this journey of struggle and growth. I shall in the main refer to the major theme of this dissertation, which is founded on the concepts of deliberative democracy and citizenship. The change from apartheid rule to a constitutional democracy had significant consequences for all who reside in this country, and more so for those who suffered the humiliation of being denied the opportunity to full citizenship. Given my own position within this social setting it seems logical that I shall attend to a conception of democracy and citizenship. My autobiographical account is thus rooted in the space within which I found myself, and informed the manner in which I confronted my own realities. It should also be mentioned that the demise of apartheid and the onset of democracy created the space for a different movement. I no longer felt restricted, in fact the spaces that democracy brought was at times overwhelming. It might sound brazen, but one may reasonably compare it with a prisoner who yearned for freedom knowing that its chances were remote. So, when the freedom suddenly dawned upon me the burden of the shackles of my imprisonment evaporated and the spaces that I earlier referred to opened.

In my contact with the realities of schooling, and particularly school governance, I came to realise that the claim by Peters (in Aspin 1995: 56) that

“Citizens of a democracy do not simply arrive at political maturity and stand ready, willing and able to run its institutions” to be visionary. This then informed my quest to determine whether SGBs in disadvantaged communities’ function democratically particularly after ten years of democracy. In my search for reading material on the genesis of school governance in this country I became frustrated for the reason that such material was scant. By a stroke of luck I stumbled upon the writings of Hyslop who inspired me to link specific moments within the history of schooling in this country. I then proceeded to build on these moments thus recounting the development of school governance in specifically disadvantaged schools. It was during this stage of my research that I determined that democracy was inextricably linked to citizenship.

In coming to grips with the concept of democracy my efforts soon indicated that this concept was extremely difficult to define (if at all). I then made a conscious decision to restrict myself to the liberal conception of democracy, but even then the dearth of research material on the subject brought me to the realisation that even this would be too broad. I further restricted my research to two strands of liberal democracy, which included the libertarian, and deliberative strands. This, however, was the result of much research and making contact with many political theorists. It was during these contacts that I became exposed to the work of Seyla Benhabib, James Bohman, Iris Marion Young, Will Kymlicka, Benjamin Barber Jürgen Habermas and Mark Warren (all proponents of the deliberative ideal). They reinforced my decision to opt for a deliberative conception of democracy, emphasising the communitarian ideal.

With regard to the libertarian conception of democracy Charles Taylor, Norman Wintrop, Steven Mulhall and Adam Swift influenced my understandings. It is through these scholars that I was introduced to the works of the classical liberal theorists, including John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and later Jean-Jacques Rousseau. However, it was particularly the works of John Stuart Mill that navigated me past utilitarianism. It is my interpretation that

Mill's defence of utilitarianism laid the foundation for its destruction. Bill Brugger concurs with this view when he argues that:

But once pleasures are seen as qualitatively different, pleasure cannot be used as the criterion to assess utility and one must seek an alternative standard. But Mill did not provide that standard. It seems, therefore, that Mill's defence of utilitarianism constituted its demolition (in Wintrop 1983: 31).

This brought me to *On Liberty* where Mill makes his case for individual liberties and minimal state interference. His insistence on the liberal conception that the individual is prior to society negates the view of "collective action" which I argue is crucial for School Governing Bodies. Such collective action was abhorrent to Mill because he argued that this might lead to the "tyranny of the majority". In fairness to Mill I should mention that although most of his writings were in defence of "negative liberty" he introduced strong elements of "positive liberty" (Brugger in Wintrop 1983: 32). It is at this stage of my growth that I determined that a more plausible conception of deliberative democracy should emphasise the communitarian ideal. My aim was continually to devise a type of democracy that I feel may best suit democratic school governance in South Africa. It is because of this quest that I resolved that deliberative communitarianism could possibly be better suited to drive democratic school governance in particularly disadvantaged schools. In this regard Kymlicka navigated me with his argument that, "the problem with the *libertarian* strand of liberalism is not its emphasis on justice, nor its universalism, but rather its individualism" (2002: 212). The point is that by this stage in my growth I concluded that school governance could not rely on an individualistic conception of liberal democracy at the expense of a more communitarian understanding. In other words it seems plausible to argue that in terms of school governance each individual's concern becomes a matter of common interest. The other important issue raised by Kymlicka revolves around the notions of justice and legitimacy, two concepts with a direct bearing on the transformation agenda of school governance in South Africa. Libertarianism's insistence on a market driven capitalist economy have scant

regard for past inequalities, something that has to be addressed for South Africa's new form of school governance to pass the legitimacy test.

This ideal of a market driven economy as the panacea for the survival of disadvantage communities steered me towards researching the influence of globalisation on school governance, particularly relating to how it influenced school governance policies. Prior to this I thought that globalisation was restricted to the economy, with little or no bearing on education. My ignorance was rudely exposed when Anthony Giddens and Will Hutton informed me that globalisation was so wide-ranging that it embraced almost every aspect of human life, meaning that it included school governance. It was with a sense of trepidation that I then embarked on the course of linking globalisation to school governance. I soon realised that although South Africa initially seemed unique against the onslaught of globalisation, the politicians soon had to succumb to its pressures. The consequent decentralisation I found was not only because of the clamour for inclusion in school matters, but also because of economic rationalism.

I could at this stage of my research for the first time understand why the education playing field was not level, even after ten years of democracy. I also started to realise that the previously marginalised would not automatically become part of mainstream school governance and that it would remain a struggle. However, such a struggle may be contextualised within a critical paradigm thus opening the space for the marginalised to become more critical, and consequently contest their marginalised position through self-empowerment. It is my contention that school governors who become more critical has the potential and opportunity to become emancipated thus paving the way for more inclusion, something that I deem crucial for school governance to practice a stronger form of democracy.

This brings me to the type of citizen that democracy requires to make school governance part of the practices of those who are marginalised. Although I am concerned with school governance in particular, my participation in the realities of day-to-day life in South Africa informed me that one of the major

issues on the South African political agenda is to foster a “new nation”. With this realisation, and under the influence of my promoter (Yusef Waghid) I was introduced to what may be described as a programme of dealing with the past (legacy of apartheid) and at the same time developing the future. Nation building is a fairly new phenomenon in the politics of democracy in South Africa with the result that it has almost become a cliché to include the concept in every political speech. However, nation building can be interpreted as the cultivation of a South African national identity, or alternatively a call for responsible citizenship. It is for this reason that I grappled with the notion of citizenship directly linking it to school governance. This brought me into contact with the ideas of Will Kymlicka, Wayne Norman, April Carter, Geoffrey Stokes, Martha Nussbaum and others. Guided by these theorists I argued for a citizenship based on the rules of deliberation, which I claim, have the potential to be more inclusive. It is my view that citizens share an obligation to propose reasons for settling differences via persuasive argumentation. I am, therefore, guided by an understanding that citizenship based on deliberation is a citizenship that claims that if individuals are to be subject to decisions, they ought to be justified in terms that all could be reasonably expected to accept. It is within such a context that I argue for a South African citizenship/nation based on deliberation for the reason that deliberative citizens operate on the principle that “decisions affecting the well-being of a collectivity can be viewed as the outcome of a procedure of free and reasoned deliberation among individuals considered as moral and political equals” (Benhabib 1996: 68).

One of my objectives was to make the citizen more critical in order to be able to better contest views and preferences thus creating the opportunity for inclusion. The underlying rationale was always inclusion to the extent that it seemed as if deliberation was the vehicle towards inclusion. In my deliberations with my promoter I soon realised that deliberation's insistence on reasoned and persuasive argument potentially excluded rather than included. This became more apparent when Young argued for a means to overcome such exclusion with reference to the notions of “greeting” and particularly “story telling”. However, I was not satisfied with Young's explanation, meaning

that I was not convinced that “greeting and narratives” may overcome this problem, with the result that I sought some other alternative.

In my search I became acutely aware of “time”. I was engrossed in the last chapter thus nearing completion, and thought that I might conclude my dissertation without researching a way out of this possible form of “exclusion”. I then pondered the situation and was on the brink of escaping the problem by stating that a potential critic might allude to this shortcoming. However, it created ample scope for further research. When I put this to my promoter he became extremely despondent. He could not believe that a student who had been under his constant supervision for more than two years could react in the way I did. After heated debate he introduced me to the work of Michalinos Zembylas which related to a “pedagogy of unknowing”. This became a moment of inspiration for the reason that it seemed as if my search to overcome the potential exclusion of deliberation had been realised. However, I did not keep track with the difficulty of understanding the “unknowable other”. This, together with working under time constraints, became almost unbearable. I could not make sense of Zembylas and as the days passed I stopped writing, determining that I would not be able to do justice to including the “marginalised” and finishing my dissertation in time to graduate in December of 2005. I also did not have the courage to approach my promoter, remembering our previous encounter. In my moment of despondency I decided to revisit the work of Burbules and his conception of “being reasonable”.

It was by coincidence that an article by Gert Biesta entitled “preparing for the incalculable” lay next to the Burbules article. The inscription on the first page was highlighted, and it read; “Once you relate to the other as the other, then something incalculable comes on the scene, something which cannot be reduced to the law or to the history of legal structures” (Derrida in Biesta 2001: 32). This jolted me out of my self-imposed bitterness and it became another moment of inspiration. By reading Biesta, while not being convinced that I have overcome my weakness of not being able to grasp the notion of “being other”, I could better understand the notion of “otherness”. I then

tackled the argument for inclusion incorporating the work of Zembylas, convinced that I have at last “discovered” a plausible route to include the “other” (marginalised). In short, the reciprocal understanding of the Other became my vehicle which chartered my argument for inclusion.

I am, therefore, convinced that fostering citizenship along the lines of deliberation has the potential to not only evolving critical citizens, but also reinforcing a notion of a stronger form of democracy. It is my contention that the more inclusive the deliberative process, the better the chances for the legitimacy of the outcomes thus reinforcing a stronger form of democratic school governance. I have come to realise that deliberative democratic school governance should always be a project in the making where the otherness of the other should be reasonably attended to or ‘witnessed’.

My attempt to critically reflect on my journey through this dissertation is not an easy task. It seems to me rather difficult to reflect with the intention to admit that my work includes limitations. I must thus acknowledge that in my self-critique there are shortcomings, but this is not entirely negative for it opens the space for further research. Democracy, I have argued, is a dynamic concept, constantly evolving in order to adapt to the realities of life as it unfolds. South Africa, being a novice at this system, is to my mind at the cutting edge of this democratic development. My attempt at arguing for a deliberative conception of democracy, linking it to citizenship and being critical is, therefore, only a step on this journey towards realising a type of democracy that would include more rather than less. I am convinced that there are as many interpretations for inclusion as there are interpretations of what democracy should be. In this regard there is a great deal of scope for further research. One of the major brittle moments in this dissertation links precisely with exclusion. My research effort concentrated on the disadvantaged and marginalised as if the advantaged in this country have no problem with the manner in which democracy is practiced. Having exposed myself I proffer a defence from the foundation that I could not make the enquiry too broad. Again there seems to be much scope for further research, particularly related to school governance in advantaged communities. Education policy changes

would also broaden the space for research and as I am writing the Minister of Education has hinted towards changes in policy, specifically related to school governance. The debate would consequently continue because the divide between policy formulation and the enactment thereof needs to be narrowed. The scope for research that mediates between policy development and the reality of its practice seems to be ripe, holding much promise for educational researchers.

In conclusion (which might be interpreted as a new beginning), this dissertation brings a new perspective to the practice of democracy in general and its exercise in school governing bodies in particular. Much has been written about school governance in South Africa, however, I have not encountered its link to democratic citizenship. In this sense this dissertation makes a contribution to the debate around school governance. On another level, arguing for reasonableness and being Other makes this dissertation unique in the sense that this has not occurred at an academic level before. I therefore conclude that notwithstanding its shortcomings (that I referred to earlier), this dissertation has a contribution to make in the quest to foster a democratic school governance system in this country.



## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

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1. Adams, F. & Waghid, Y. (2003) In quest of a special education programme for democratic school governance in South Africa. *International Journal of Special Education*, 18(1): 17-23.
2. Adams, F. & Waghid, Y. (2005) In defence of deliberative democracy: Challenging less democratic school governing body practices. *South African Journal of Education*, 25(1): 25-33.
3. Adams, F. (2005) Managerialism and higher education governance: Implications for South African universities. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, (forthcoming).

### BOOK & BOOK CHAPTER

4. Waghid, Y., Van Wyk, B., Adams, F. & November, I. (eds.). 2005. *African(a) Philosophy of Education: Reconstructions and Deconstructions*. Matieland: Stellenbosch University Printers, (316pp.). ISBN: 0-620-34077-0.
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## **ABSTRACTS**

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