#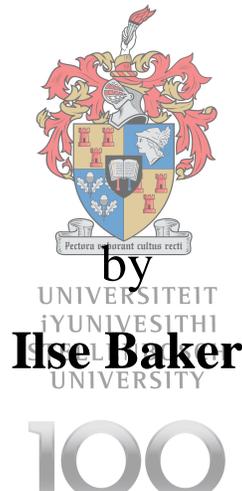 The nature of parental involvement in school governing bodies: A comparative study of four primary schools in the Western Cape

by

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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Ilse Baker

Date: December 2018

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Abstract

In an attempt to make schools democratic through soliciting participation and involvement, school governing bodies (SGBs) were introduced and legislated in 1996 via the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), and were implemented at schools in 1997. The introduction of SGBs in post-apartheid schools is viewed as a means through which to secure parent and community involvement, and thereby ensuring greater parent responsibility and accountability. One of the growing concerns surrounding SGBs in South African schools is that although all SGBs are expected to comply with the same legislation and stipulated responsibilities in terms of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), SGBs are expected to function under very different circumstances, and with widely disparate sets of skills and knowledge. The central concern of this research study is the particular capacities, knowledge and skills of parents on SGBs at four historically disadvantaged schools on the Cape Flats, in the Western Cape. Through adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the study sets out to:

- Understand why and how parents become involved in the SGB
- Explore the levels of involvement and contribution of parents on the SGB;
- Explore the working relationships and responsibilities between parents and the principal on the SGB; and
- Understand how parental involvement affects the functioning of the SGB, and hence the governance of the school.

Key findings of the research revealed that parents become involved in the SGB for their own personal reasons and not necessarily to foster a democratic culture at the school – as envisioned in the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Parent governors are not aware of the purpose of the SGB and of their roles and responsibilities while serving on the SGB. Poor qualifications, knowledge and skills meant that the parent governors could not necessarily fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The poor fulfilment of roles and responsibilities by parent governors led to a poorly functioning SGB, an increased workload for the principal, and tension between the principal and the SGB. Conversely, where the parent governors are actively involved, there exists an optimally functioning SGB. Finally, the research revealed that the existence of an SGB does not

necessarily imply a functioning SGB, bringing into disrepute commonly held assumptions about school governance by parents, particularly in relation to advancing a democratic agenda.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing literature on parent involvement in SGBs in South Africa. Specifically, that although all SGBs are expected to fulfil the same functions across all schools, the particular socio-economic contexts, qualifications, skills and knowledge of parents, have a direct impact on the functionality of the SGB. As this study shows, a poorly capacitated SGB has the potential to add to the level of responsibilities of the principal, and can lead to tensions between the principal and parent governors. Greater consideration, therefore, has to be given to capacitating SGBs within deficient socio-economic communities – if the mandate of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) is to be fulfilled.

Keywords: SGBs, South African Schools Act, governance, leadership, management, challenges.

Abbreviations and acronyms

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE – Department of Education

HOD – head of department

NNSSF – National Norms and Standards for School Funding

NGO – non-government organisation

RSA – Republic of South Africa

SA – South Africa/n

SGB – school governing body

SMT – school management team

WCED – Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of the study

1.1. Introduction

This study is interested in the nature of parent involvement in school governing bodies (SGBs) in four historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape. Specifically, the study is interested in how and why parents become involved in the SGB, what roles and responsibilities they perform, how they engage with the leadership and management structures of their respective schools, and how parents, in particular, contribute to cultivating the democratic agenda of the SGB as envisioned in the South African (SA) Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011).

SGBs were introduced to SA public schools in 1996 via the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011). SGBs were established in order to involve parents and the community in schools by allowing parents to be the biggest component of school governance. The motive for parents being involved in school governance is first to foster a culture of democracy, so that parents might have a voice and a role in the daily functioning and decision-making at the school. Secondly, parents are expected to represent the interests and concerns of their respective communities. Thirdly, parent involvement is expected to stimulate greater parent and community involvement and accountability for the overall functioning of the school.

There are many differences between historically disadvantaged schools and historically advantaged schools. For example, historically disadvantaged schools have fewer resources (Van der Berg, 2007, 2008; Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2008 and Timaeus, Simelane and Letsoalo, 2013), more learners per class (Hindle, 2007) and fewer extramural activities (Ndhlovu, 2012) than historically advantaged schools. Moreover, the historically disadvantaged school has less learning support services (Mashau, Steyn and Van der Walt, 2008), such as teacher assistants, less parental involvement (Mbokodi, Msila and Singh, 2004) and less financial support from its surrounding community than historically advantaged schools. Yet, historically disadvantaged schools and historically advantaged schools are mandated to follow the same legislation as stipulated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011). However, the differences, such as those listed

above, between historically disadvantaged schools and historically advantaged schools promote the ever-widening gap between schools that experience very different circumstances. Moreover, it encourages the difference in the quality of the functioning of SGBs (Xaba, 2011) between historically disadvantaged schools and historically advantaged schools.

Parents from historically disadvantaged schools do not necessarily possess the same skill sets as parents from historically advantaged schools. The differences in the skill sets between these two types of parents have had a significant impact on the quality of functioning of the SGB. According to Tshifura (2002), at historically disadvantaged schools the parents serving on the SGB have very little to contribute to the SGB, and these poor skill sets of historically disadvantaged parents is the motive for including co-opted SGB members, as they possess the necessary skills to serve on the SGB. Whereas, according to Mncube (2009), at historically advantaged schools the parents are equipped and have a variety of qualifications to use in serving the SGB. It appears that the advanced skill sets of historically advantaged parents enable the SGB to function effectively, whereas the opposite is true for historically disadvantaged parents serving on their SGB. Van Wyk (2007) claims that the establishment of the SGB provides an opportunity for the parents and state to form a new relationship. In other words, the quality of the functioning of the SGB may have a substantial influence on its school and community, and this influence is evident in the growth of the school and its community.

The above mentioned differences between historically disadvantaged schools and historically advantaged schools concerning their resources, extra-mural activities, support services and parental involvement, interested me to explore the nature of parent involvement in school governance.

1.2. Aims of the research

The aims of this research are to:

- Understand why and how parents become involved in the SGB at four different schools on the Cape Flats;
- Explore the levels of involvement and contribution of parents on the SGB;

- Explore the working relationships and responsibilities between parents and teachers, and the principal on the SGB; and
- Understand how parental involvement affects the functioning of the SGB, and hence the governance of the school.

1.3. Motivation for research

As a post level one teacher, I have experienced SGBs in different schools and have noticed that SGBs function differently in different contexts. What concerns me is how these very different SGBs function while following the same legislation, not only in terms of levels of parental involvement, but also in terms of the role that the SGB plays at each of these schools.

The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011: 24-27) legislates various responsibilities and functions for SGBs to fulfil. When I take into consideration what the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) stipulates as the obligations, functions, roles and responsibilities of the SGBs, it becomes evident that these responsibilities pertain to the governance of the school it serves. The governance of the school works with the management and leadership of the school. According to Section 21 of the SA Schools (No. 84 of 1996), the primary functions of the SGB are organisational and administrative. Thus, it becomes apparent that the SGB is responsible for the overall governance of the school. As such, the members of the SGB are required to have certain knowledge and skills which allow them to fulfil this mandate.

At the time of this research very little was known about how and why parents become involved in the SGB. Little was known about the unfolding relationships between parents and teachers, as well as the principal, in relation to their roles and responsibilities on the SGB. This research therefore is keen to understand how parental involvement and contribution affects the functioning of the SGB.

1.4. Problem statement

In terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), SGBs are mandated to govern public schools and to perform such functions and obligations as prescribed by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) section 16(A) (DoE, 2011:24-27). SGBs hence stand in a position of trust towards the school

(DoE, 2011: 20). Yet these mandated purposes seemingly do not take into consideration the disparate socio-economic context of communities which have a direct impact on the qualifications and capacities of parents who might potentially serve on SGBs. Consequently, the functioning and experiences of SGBs are largely determined by the school context in which they operate.

The question, therefore, that this research sought to address is how does parental involvement affects the functioning of SGBs.

1.5. Research questions

The primary questions motivating this research are as follows:

Main question:
- What is the nature of parental involvement in SGBs at four primary schools in the Western Cape?

Sub-research questions:
- How and why do parents become involved in SGBs?
- Which type of roles and responsibilities do parents fulfil on the SGB?
- How do parents interact and work with teachers and principals in relation to their functions on the SGB?
- How does parental involvement affect the functioning of the SGB and hence the democratic governance of the school?

1.6. Research context

This study was based at four historically disadvantaged primary schools on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape. As previously mentioned, I intended to conduct two sets of interviews: semi-structured interviews with each of the four principals and semi-structured interviews with each participating parent from each of the four SGBs. Furthermore, to ensure an even distribution and validation for my research, three schools were located in a suburb that experiences unfavourable circumstances and are considered historically disadvantaged. The other school that was involved

in my research was located in a nearby suburb that appears to be experiencing more favourable circumstances and was considered historically advantaged.

Although three of the participating schools were in quintile five, they were very different in terms of learner-to-teacher ratios, resources and learning support materials, as well as the amount of school fees that each school charged. The principals from these schools reported, that although the payment of school fees was compulsory, many parents could not afford to pay. The other school was in quintile four and was a no fee school. Here the number of learners per class was high and the school was not as well-resourced as the other participating schools. One of the biggest challenges at this school, identified by the principal, was the lack of parental involvement and interest in their children's education. For the sake of clarification, in order to address equity in funding school education, the South African government introduced the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) policy (DBE, 1998). The NNSSF policy provides a statutory basis for school funding in that schools are now classified into wealth quintiles, and subsidised accordingly. According to the policy (DBE, 1998), schools serving poor communities must receive more state funding than schools serving better-off communities. Schools are assigned to one of five quintiles on the basis of the socio-economic context of the school. The quintile system is highly problematic, because it seemingly ignores the fact that the economic sustainability of a school cannot only be determined by the area in which a school is located. In other words, the quintile system does not take into account that schools often accommodate learners, who do not live within the community of that particular school. The system also fails to take into account the financial realities of particular parents, who cannot necessarily afford the school fees. The fact that historically disadvantaged schools, such as those in this study, are allocated in quintile five, lays bare the inherent problems within the quintile system.

1.7. Research methodology

According to Harding (1987: 2), methodology refers to the theory of knowledge and the interpretive framework guiding a particular research project. Fien (1992: 2) states that methodology is the philosophical framework that guides the research activity. Similarly, Van Manen (1975: 27) describes methodology as the general orientation to life. The aim of research

methodology is to help researchers understand the process, and not the product, of their research question (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005: 62).

My research will be informed by, and modelled on, the interpretive paradigm, in order to

- Understand how various SGBs function in various circumstances;
- Understand how the community context influences the roles and responsibilities of SGBs;
- Discover the contribution of parents on the SGB; and
- Discover what affect the level of functioning of an SGB has on the functioning of leadership and management at a school, as well as the contribution of an SGB towards the cultivation of a democratic space.

The interpretive approach is concerned with the understanding of human action and takes cognisance of the fact that human actions are influenced by their contexts, which in turn give their actions meaning (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Morgan, 1983; Phillips, 1987). Thus, in order to understand human actions, the reasons for these actions have to be understood and interpreted. Additionally, the interpretive approach considers the possibility of multiple realities, which in turn require multiple methods of understanding, since the purpose of the interpretive framework is to understand human actions. In this regard, the research methodology takes into account the particular understandings of the SGB parents, and the principals, in relation to the interpretation of their roles and responsibilities of the SGB.

1.8. Research methods

A research method refers to the tools by which information; for a study is gathered (MacDonald and Headlam, 1999: 3). In order to construct data for my study, I used a case study and its associated research methods.

A case study explores and investigates contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Zainal, 2007:1-2). A case study uses research methods which enables the researcher to examine the data within a specific context closely (Zainal, 2007: 1). In order to collect data for the case study research, a small geographical area or a limited number of individuals are selected as the subjects of the study (Zainal, 2007: 1)

I have decided to use a case study research method, because it involves qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews and reading documentation (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009: 16). These qualitative research methods do not hold the limitations that quantitative research methods do when we are concerned with the responsibility of providing a holistic and in-depth explanation of human actions (Zainal, 2007: 1). Moreover, with a case study research, methods such as asking questions, observing events and reading documents (Bassey, 1999: 81) allow the researcher to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand human actions from the actor's perspective (Zainal, 2007: 1).

The first research method employed was the observation of policies and documents related to the SGB. This includes ascertaining whether the respective SGBs each have a constitution, whether they have stipulated roles and responsibilities for each of the SGB office bearers, whether there are records of minutes, policies, and any strategic or developmental plans. By looking at these documents, I gained some insight into the level of technical functionality of the SGB.

The second research method that was utilised in this study was semi-structured interviews with each principal and parent from each of the SGB's. Semi-structured interviews are a basic research instrument used in case study research (Nisbet and Watt: 1984). Additionally, semi-structured interviews require the researcher to prepare an interview schedule and questions, but also provide the interviewee with opportunities to raise his or her matters related to the research topic (Le Grange, 2015: 5).

1.9. Ethical considerations

Since I am a researcher in the field of social science, concerning people in their context, I had the obligation of being ethical towards those who were included in my study (Berg, 2007: 53). My obligation to be ethical towards my participants stems from the fact that the lives and circumstances of my participants were being interviewed.

In order to construct data for my study I needed written consent from my participants, that is, the principal and SGB of each school. I needed to seek ethical clearance from the Research Ethics

Committee of Stellenbosch University, as well as permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The reason for applying for ethical clearance from Stellenbosch University was to ensure that my research complies with the eight key norms and standards of South African National Research Ethics Guidelines 2015 (see DoH, 2015).

1.10. Limitations of this study

Firstly, the findings of this research are limited to four historically disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape. Secondly, when I first embarked on this study, I had hoped to secure the participation of more parents – at least two from each of the four schools. Initially, when I first met with the respective principals and SGB chairpersons, there was great enthusiasm to participate in the study, especially from the parents. But, as the time drew closer for the interviews to take place, a number of parents withdrew their initial consent – citing issues of time, and not knowing what to say. The third limitation centred on the parents' availability – it was very difficult to find a convenient time to conduct the interviews. It was not always possible for them to meet with me during the day as some of them worked, while others were unavailable. Finally, the findings reported in this study are limited to this research project, and might not necessarily be the same for other schools, who operate in similar contexts. However, certain insights might be used for further studies at both historically advantaged schools and historically disadvantaged schools.

1.11. Chapter outlines

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and overview of the study. It considered the research aims, research questions, research methods, research methodology, the problem statement, limitations of the study and ethical considerations. The chapter also offered an insight into the motivation for the research as well as the research context.

Chapter 2 is composed of two sections: first the literature review and then the conceptual framework. The first half comprises its own introductions followed by a discussion of school leadership and management and the way this is needed in our understanding of school governance. This is followed by a discussion on the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the roles and responsibilities of the SGB, the way the SGB is constituted and the challenges with which SGBs

are tasked. The second half of this chapter offers an understanding of participatory democracy and deliberative democracy and the way this is needed in our understanding of how SGBs function.

Chapter 3 focuses on the research methods and methodologies that I used in order to collect my data. The chapter also explains the research sample and context as well as the research validity and the ethical considerations for this research.

Chapter 4 reveals the research findings with the parent participants. This is followed by the research findings as found with the principal participants. With each group of participants, I discussed the research findings in relation to the sub-research questions. I concluded each discussion with a summary of the findings according to the parent participants and the principal participants.

Chapter 5 offers the research analysis, also in relation to the four sub-research questions. Additionally, through the research analysis, this chapter also reveals the comparisons of different leadership styles and how they affect the functioning of the SGB. This chapter also reveals how each SGB functions with its own component of parent governors. Moreover, this chapter explains how parent involvement affects the functioning of the SGB and how it affects the quality of the functioning of the SGBs.

Chapter 6 concludes the research study with the summary of the main findings which is followed by the implications of this research for SGBs and schools. The chapter then continues by presenting the significance and contribution of this research followed by recommendations for SGBs, recommendations for the Department of Education (DoE) and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

In the first half of this chapter, I provide an in-depth discussion of SGBs in South Africa by discussing the inter-relatedness between the structures of leadership, management and governance. I then provide an overview of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) to explain the motivation for introducing the SGB in SA public schools. Following this, I discuss the roles and responsibilities of the SGB, what challenges they experience, as well as where these challenges stem from. In turn, and in relation to the research focus of this thesis, I pay particular attention to the role and responsibilities of parents on the SGB. In the second section of this chapter, I look at the conceptual framework, which informed this research study. In this regard, I consider the SGB in relation to particular conceptions of democracy, specifically participatory democracy and deliberative democracy.

Thurlow (2003a) states that democratising South Africa was accompanied by moving to school-based management. This essentially meant that management of the school was devolved into three areas that need to work together in order to produce a functional school. These three areas are **leadership**, as vested in the principal, **management**, as vested in the school management team (SMT) and **governance**, as vested in the SGB. According to Moloi (2007: 465), school leadership, management and governance are all directly linked to the development of school management. This approach to strategic school management is self-management of the school, which means that the greater the authority exerted by the SMT and SGB of the school, the greater the potential for a truly strategic approach to emerge, and in so doing, an effectively functioning school. Furthermore, according to Moloi (2007: 467), the management (SMT) and governance (SGB) of the school are required to think and act strategically in order to align school policies and practices to national legislation. This explains why the roles of the principal, as leader, are so necessary. According to Mestry and Grobler (2002: 22), the training and development of principals can be considered as the strategically most important process necessary to transform education successfully, as they are instated to lead the management and the governance of the school. The structure of a school has

three arms: leadership, management and governance. These three branches of a school are interrelated and depend on each other and must work together in order to create a functional school.

2.2. Leadership

There are many conceptions and ideas of leadership. Leadership, according to Coleman (2003: 155), is largely dependent on the context and circumstances in which it serves. Leithwood, Jantz and Steinbach (1999) support Coleman when they claim that there is no agreed definition of the concept of leadership. The concept of leadership is arbitrary and subjective because there is not a 'correct' definition of leadership. Leithwood et al. (1999) concur with this when they note that there is a central element in many definitions of leadership, which is that all the definitions of leadership involve the process of influence and that, additionally, influence seems to be a necessary part of most conceptions of leadership. Christie (2010: 695) also agrees that leadership is characterised by influence and consent rather than coercion. Furthermore, Yuki (2002: 3) explains that the purpose of leadership is to structure activities and relationships in groups, or organisations, to which Christie (2010: 695) adds that leadership is also associated with visions and goals.

At this point in our discussion, it is worthwhile to note Christie's (2010: 695) agreements with Leithwood et al, when she states that leadership can be described as "a relationship of influence directed towards goals". Additionally, Christie (2010: 695) says that leadership is also framed in social relationships of power whereby some are able to influence others. When we relate this to leadership in education we can note from Christie (2010: 695) that schools are social in context and that it is also an organisation that considers many groups of people. As such, Christie (2010: 695) also says that school leadership practices take locally specific forms, which can be attested to the observation that each SGB serves in a unique circumstance.

For education in South Africa, Coleman (2003: 155) further states that the leadership that is present draws on Western culture, mainly from North America. According to Bush (2007: 395), in agreement with Coleman (2003: 155), it appears that in post-apartheid South Africa, leadership styles take on authoritarian and hierarchical forms, and that the principal's authority is perceived to be preordained and juridical. In this regard, principals often view their leadership as incontestable, and view any form of questioning or 'talking-back' as undermining, rather than as

a necessary part of leadership. Moloi (2007: 463) affords this conception of leadership to the fact that some population groups were never prepared for the responsibility of leadership and management. Not only are principals in South Africa not expected to have any formal qualifications in educational leadership, but they often base their leadership practices on traditional and cultural practices of patriarchy. Further complicating the context of educational leadership in SA is the role and influence of apartheid – which instilled top-down structures of authority, with no opportunity for deliberation or consultative decision-making between education officials and principals (Ndou, 2008: 2). This, according to Ndou (2008: 2), undermined the role of the principal because he/she was at the receiving end of the top-down departmental management structure, but was still subjected to the criticism of the community in which the school served. In addition to this, Ndou (2008: 2) claims that the principal was expected to manage the school, but the DoE made all the managerial decisions. Thus, leadership and management skills were not taught to the disadvantaged population groups during apartheid, and the only example of leadership that was evident was the authoritarianism of management coming from the DoE. Instead, principals simply adopted the authoritarian forms of leadership to which they were subjected.

With the devolution and decentralization of school leadership, the authoritarian approach to educational leadership was considered unsuitable for post-apartheid democratic school contexts and society. As such, according to Bush (2007), educational leadership had to develop many other forms of and approaches to, educational leadership, such as transformational leadership, participatory leadership, political and transactional leadership, post-modern leadership, moral leadership, as well as instructional leadership and contingent leadership. Furthermore, according to Bush (2007: 391-406), all of these different leadership approaches developed after the end of apartheid.

With regard to the various types of leadership mentioned above, Bush (2007: 391-406) claims that it would appear that all of these post-apartheid educational leadership approaches adopted particular values, which were reconcilable with democratic principles, such as unity, commitment, participation, consultation, and the right of others to participate in leadership structures. Commonly encountered in post-apartheid educational leadership reform is an emphasis on leadership as an exercise of influence, rather than coercion – thereby cultivating a climate of

participation and consultative decision-making (Christie, 2010: 696). Although each leadership approach may have its own means of achieving this influence, Bush (2007: 402) claims that it is not effective to have a "one-size-fits-all" approach, since each school experiences different circumstances and contexts. Bush (2007: 402) further contends that since South Africa has such a diverse education system, it seems counterproductive to prescribe a universal approach to school leadership and management. Christie (2010: 696) adds that school leadership is always embedded in broader social relationships and cultural understandings. Thus, it is much better to equip principals with a tool-kit of skills to apply in different contexts, such as those skills taught through the new ACE course. This view is supported by Yuki (2002: 235), who argues that the managerial job is too complex and unpredictable to rely on a set of standardised responses to events. Further, according to Christie (2010: 694), there are many tangled networks of regulations on school governance, which then adds to the already existing inequalities that exist between schools. It is these inequalities, according to Christie (2002: 694), which means that the work of the principal is very different in different contexts. Thus, leadership in different schools will be different in order to accommodate the unique circumstances.

When we consider leadership in a schooling environment, we look at the principal as the primary leader of the school. According to Christie (2010: 694), educational leadership by way of the principal, is shaped by the changes in education and the terrain of the policy frameworks adopted after apartheid to transform education. But what does leadership actually mean? According to the DoE (2008: 42), and in agreement with Bush (2007: 402), leadership is about influencing the actions of others and achieving desirable ends. Also, according to the DoE (2008: 42), leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations and actions of others. According to the DoE (2008: 32), leadership in general must maintain an ethical focus, which is orientated towards democratic values within the community. When we consider these responsibilities, intentions and functions of leadership, it becomes apparent that leadership pertains to the ability to lead with the orientation towards creating a democratic climate at the school. While leadership might traditionally be associated with the principal, leadership in reality finds shape and expression through all staff members.

Noddings (2006: 339) states that good leadership varies with the sort of enterprise that is to be led. In other words, leadership is effective when the leader adapts to the situations of the organisation and meets the needs of the organisation. Noddings (2006: 339) further contends that leadership in education requires both the breadth and depth of knowledge about education. Thus, if a leader is not knowledgeable about the organisation, as well as its goals and needs, then this would result in leadership that is ineffective. Christie (2010: 696) supports this when she says that leadership is organizational and takes place inside, and outside, of an organisation because it is situational. Let us now turn our attention to the responsibilities of a leader as vested in the principal of a school.

According to the DBE (2015: 8), the principal has the overall responsibility for leading and managing the school and is accountable to the employer (Provincial Head of Department) and, through the SGB, to the school community. Additionally, also according to the DBE (2015: 8), the principal is responsible for leading and managing and evaluating the curriculum. Thus, school principals in SA public schools may take on various forms of leadership. These forms of leadership take on the nature of strategic leadership, executive leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership and organizational leadership. Moreover, according to the Standards of Principalship Policy (DBE, 2015: 8-10), principals of SA public schools are expected to fulfil eight key functions, namely:

- Leading the teaching and learning in the school;
- Shaping the direction and development of the school;
- Managing the school as an organisation;
- Managing the quality of teaching and learning and securing accountability;
- Managing human resources (staff) in the school;
- Managing and advocating extramural activities;
- Developing and empowering self and others; and
- Working with and for the community.

With the various types of leadership, that entail their own conventional responsibilities, as well as the principal needing to fulfil the eight key areas of principalship mentioned above, we can understand that educational leaders have many complex duties to fulfil. It is due to the many roles and responsibilities that principals had to follow, that the SGB was introduced via the SA Schools

Act (No. 84 of 1996). Fundamentally, the core function and motivation of the SGB, in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), is to support the function of school leadership through governance. Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 47) state that SGBs are regarded as the fourth tier of government because the SGB reflects the most important interactions that citizens have with the state. In this sense, the mandate of the SGB is to act in the best interests of the school by fulfilling its governance function alongside that of leadership (as vested in the principal), and management (as vested in the SMT). For example, Christie (2010: 965) says that leadership and management can be used interchangeably as they both have different inflictions and contextual variations. With this in mind, let us now look at educational management and investigate how it is evidenced and vested in SA public schools.

2.3. Management

According to Coleman (2003: 156), in practice, leadership and management functions are likely to overlap and to be carried out within the same role. Coleman (2003: 156) explains that management is equated with processes and structures, while leadership is equated with visions and values. Coleman (2003: 157) states that management and leadership styles are not fixed because each style serves a different circumstance. In addition, management is an organizational concept because it relates to the structures and processes by which organisations meet their goals and central purposes (Christie, 2010: 696). Unlike leadership that can occur outside of and independent of an institution, management declares Christie (2010: 696), can only take place within the organisation because it is more concerned with the formal positions in an organisation.

If I am to borrow from Christie (2010: 696), I find that management within the schooling environment pertains to maintaining the current organizational arrangements effectively and efficiently, and that the ability for management also requires leadership skills. Mchunu (2010: 42) supports Christie's (2010: 696) definition of management by explaining that management in a schooling environment pertains to maintaining the structures that are already in place, rather than changing what already exists.

The relationship between leadership and management skills might have been formed by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) to develop leadership on one hand to the SMT, and on the other hand

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to the SGB. The decentralization of leadership and management is supported by Van Wyk (2004: 49) when she explains that decentralisation originates from the belief that the state alone cannot control and manage schools. In addition, therefore, to the principal, parents are invited to serve on SGBs, and schools are expected to establish a School Management Team (SMT), which comprises of the principal, deputy principal (or deputy principals) and senior teachers who are generally the heads of department. Depending on the various structures and committees within schools, the SMT could also include a head of sport, music, and other extramural activities.

The primary responsibility of the SMT is to manage the school, whereas the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school. Marumolaa and Van Wyk (2012: 102) note that in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the purpose of the SMT is to assume responsibility for the day-to-day professional management of the school and to implement the policies of the school. Heystek (2004: 308) claims that the other reason that the SMT was introduced was to be involved in other activities that support teaching and learning. The DoE (2007: 124) says that in order to inform the role players involved in the SMT of what is expected of them, written details of each policy must be available. Another responsibility of the SMT, according to Marumolaa and Van Wyk (2012: 103), is to accept or decline policy.

The SMT has other managerial responsibilities which, according to Ndou (2008: 38), include being tasked with the day-to-day responsibilities of professional and operational management of the school. This is to ensure that policies agreed upon by the SGB are put into practice, that all the areas of the school function effectively and that people work productively towards achieving the vision and mission of the school. Moreover, according to Marumolaa and Van Wyk (2012: 104), the SMT must also know what is needed to guide the school in translating the policy decisions into practice. This helps to achieve the intended goals. This puts the SMT in probably the best position, according to Marumolaa and Van Wyk (2012: 104), to guide schools in policy matters. The DoE (1996: 24) supports translating the policy when the policy expresses the view that self-management should be accompanied by internal devolution of power. The DoE (1998: 11) maintains this when it states that it is the leaders, in the form of the principal, teachers and parents or governing body, who need to transform the previously top-down autocratic decision-making hierarchy, to a more

horizontal, participatory style of leadership. Thus, it is worthwhile to note that although the SMT is responsible for school management, it also contributes to the leadership of the school.

From translating policy into practice, it becomes apparent that management is concerned with the maintenance of the structures and the daily functioning of the school. As such, I can also understand that management, as put forth by the DoE (2008: 42-55), is measurable because it is tasked with implementing the policies that the SGB has developed. Management is also relatable to leadership because leadership is about effective and constructive influence, which is in the best interest of the learners. Leadership would thus have an impact on the responsibility of the SMT as the principal, as the leader, would have to ensure that these managerial responsibilities are active. The way in which the school management and governance are interrelated is that the SGB creates the policies that the school is to follow, and the SMT is responsible for implementing those policies, ensuring that it materializes practically. Therefore, what the SGB decides would not be possible if the SMT is not there to ensure its implementation.

2.4. Governance

The third related concept of school-based management is governance as constituted through the SGB. As has been briefly discussed in the aforementioned section, governance and management work together with leadership. Darr (2010: 4) also claims that governance establishes the vision, and mission of the school and decides upon policy, while management ensures that these policies are implemented. Consequently, according to Darr (2010: 4), the governance decides the direction that the school should go in and the management ensures that it happens. Governance also decides on the strategic planning while management guarantees that it is accomplished. School governance takes on many different forms and responsibilities – from creating, implementing and monitoring policies, such as codes of conduct, to managing a school's finances and employing staff.

When we consider these core responsibilities of the SGB, we can understand why parents are the majority of the membership of SGBs. Mncube and Naicker (2011: 54) explain that it is assumed that parent governors would know more about what the school and schooling community needs.

The governance in a schooling environment is vested in its SGB by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). In this regard, the SGB is responsible for all school-based policies, which I will discuss in the ensuing sub-section. However, as questioned by Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 54), how effective is this body if there is a risk that the members of the SGB are ill equipped due to the effects of apartheid. As evident through this research, I share a similar concern. South African schools experience different circumstances, but they are all expected to implement the same guidance. Parents, who constitute the majority members of the SGB, are not necessarily qualified or skilled to fulfil the requirements of school governors. Yet, they are expected to fulfil the same roles and responsibilities as parents who hold professional qualifications, and have particular skills. Once-off training, as provided by the WCED, cannot necessarily bridge this gap.

2.5. The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) and the introduction of the SGB.

According to Mncube (2009: 83), SGBs were introduced to South Africa in public schools as a means of cultivating democracy after the end of apartheid. Thus, SGBs were introduced as a means of promoting a democratic South Africa because establishing SGBs meant that the community could have an impact on school governance through the SGB. The introduction of SGBs according to Edge (2000), was also a radical form of decentralisation being introduced to SA schools, since the leadership and management of the school could now devolve some of its responsibility onto the SGB and the top-down management approach would change to a supposedly democratic approach. In other words Van Wyk (2004: 49) says that the concept of decentralisation originates from the belief that the state alone cannot control and manage schools. Therefore, SGBs were introduced to share in this partnership and also to orientate South Africa towards democracy. In other words, Parker and Leithwood (2000: 38) claim that the need for decentralisation is based on the assumption that to improve schools, those closest to the learners, i.e. the parents, should be offered the authority to make key decisions about school governance. Similarly Van Wyk (2004: 49) claims that the rationale of the SGB is to involve its members to participate actively in the governance and management of the school with the view of improving teaching and learning, while still orientating the school towards democracy.

SGBs are compulsory mandated committees that govern SA public schools. The committee is composed of various members. These members include teachers from the school, the school

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principal, a support staff member of the school, parent members, and co-opted members (optional). Parker and Leithwood (2000:38) mention that parent SGB members are in the majority of the SGB because the assumption is that these parents are from the school community and know what the school needs best with regards to governance. In other words, as Johnson and Christenson (2000: 180) state, the needs of each school are best determined at local level as each community, and therefore the school, has distinctive needs. Additionally Mncube (2009: 83) says that parents' participation in SGBs is motivated by the need for greater democracy in education and in South Africa.

For the purpose of this literature review, I commence by looking at the roles and responsibilities of the SGB. Implicit in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) is an assumption that all parents - who constitute the majority of any SGB - are adequately equipped and capable to fulfil their mandated responsibilities. In light of the focus of my research, which centres on the nature of parent involvement in the SGB, the review will afford special attention to the roles, responsibilities and challenges of parents as school governors.

2.6. Roles and responsibilities of the SGB

Governing the school in accordance with the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), means that the SGB has many different roles to fulfil with regard to serving the school and operating in a position of trust towards the school (DoE, 2011: 20). According to Motimele et al. (2005: 2), this means that by governing the school the SGB must create, supervise and evaluate policies and rules, which guide and govern the actions of the school and its members, while the SMT ensures that what the SGB decides, is implemented. According to Karlsson (2002: 328), the role of the SGB is also to create a democratic school. In this regard, SGBs are expected to fulfil the following responsibilities.

The SGB responsibilities and functions, in accordance with the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011: 24-26) are as follows:
- To promote what is in the best interest of the school and to strive to ensure the development of the school through the provision of quality education for all the learners in the school;
- To adopt the constitution;

- To develop the mission statement of the school;

- To adopt a code of conduct for all the learners at the school;

- To support the principal, the educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;

- To determine the length of time learners are at school, as well as the working hours of the educators;

- To administer and control the property of the school;

- To encourage educators, support staff and parents to volunteer at the school;

- To interview potential educators, and support staff, to be employed at the school;

- To recommend potential employees in the time frame prescribed;

- To allow the conditional use of the school for communal activities in which the school is not primarily involved in; and to make the budget of the school known to all educators and parents of enrolled learners.

As previously discussed in this chapter, the above-mentioned responsibilities of the SGB can only be fulfilled in collaboration with the leadership and management structures of the school. This is to say that in order for the SGB to fulfil their mandate, the principal and SMT are required to be actively involved, but the governance of the school is the responsibility of the SGB. Since the SGB is responsible for these functions regarding school governance, it is assumed by Mncube and Naicker (2011: 54) that the members serving on the SGB are capable of fulfilling this mandate. Let us now briefly, turn our focus to who serves on the SGB.

2.7. Constitution of the SGB

Squelch (2000: 137) states that after the 1994 elections, a new system of education and training had been created in South Africa, based on the fundamental principles of democracy, unity, non-discrimination, equity and equality. According to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (1996) (Section 16), this means, among others, that government is committed to the development of a democratic system that provides for participation of all stakeholders with the vested interest in education. This is evidenced in the establishment and mandate of the SGB where members of the parent community may contribute to the governance of the school through their representatives on the SGB.

The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) (DoE, 2011: 20) specifies the following three categories of membership to a SGB: elected members; the principal in his official capacity (automatic membership); and co-opted members. This means that the membership of the SGB consists of the elected parents, or guardians, the principal, representatives from teaching and support staff, and in a case of a high school (or where grade 8 is offered at a primary school), representation from the learner body. The term of office for any SGB is three years. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2014: 4) says that SGBs are allowed to nominate co-opted members, who fulfil special tasks on the SGB on an ad hoc basis. Co-opted members do not necessarily have to be parents at that particular school, while parent or guardian members must have children at the school at which they serve on the SGB. Motimele et al. (2005: 2) states that co-opted members can be drawn from any sector of the community, on the basis that he/she has expertise or skill to offer the SGB. Once the SGB is elected, members are required to elect office bearers – that is, a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary. In terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the DoE (2011: 29) says that parents are not only required to constitute the majority of the SGB but the chairperson also needs to be one of the parent members.

Van Wyk (2007: 132) states that education is often used to bring about normality in a society through a process of democratisation. In the case of SGBs in SA schools, the involvement of parents is considered as important for democratic practices of decision-making, taking the needs of respective communities into account – particularly in relation to determining the language of instruction, and school fees. Moreover, the direct involvement of parents is meant to secure greater ownership of schools by parents and communities, and hence greater accountability – which affirms the post-apartheid imperative of decentralising the responsibility of schools. Van Wyk (2007: 132) explains that as a majority group on the SGB, parents have been placed in a powerful position and are able to influence the school budget, language policy, discipline and the appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff. The latter however, is only possible if parents are capacitated in their roles as governors.

Van Wyk (2007: 134) believes that the parent representation on the SGB remains unequal at historically advantaged schools and at historically disadvantaged schools. The inequalities being

referred to include qualifications, skills, as well as equality in terms of racial, economic and cultural representation of parents. Van Wyk (2007: 134) and Carrim (2001: 106), both believe that although an SGB may have the correct number of parent representatives, the parent governors may not represent the racial distribution of the learners at the school. The second reason for inequality between schools is, according to the DoE (2004b: 52), is that even in racially homogenous settings, SGBs are dominated by well-educated and economically stable members of the community, whereas in some communities SGBs are composed of parents, who may be illiterate and unable to serve effectively. The last reason for inequality, according to Van Wyk (2007: 134), is that, although there is transformation in the racial structure of SGBs, such transformation is incongruent with the learner population within the school.

2.8. Challenges of SGBs

SGBs in South Africa are largely influenced and run by people, rather than policy. This is because, as Mncube (2009: 85-86) states, people may sometimes have their own notions of what the school is about and how it should be run and be organized. Mncube (2009: 86) says that these power relations will then always control the understanding and practices, and the processes of the school governance. The control from other members may occur due to a range of reasons such as some members having dominant personalities, and members taking advantage of the lack of knowledge and training of other members. Additionally, Mncube (2009: 85) claims that this is also why the functioning of SGBs differs between schools, not only because of power relationships and an ill-equipped parent component, but also because some schools possess greater managerial expertise among the parents, where the parents have the skills, knowledge, understanding, experience and qualifications needed to develop an effectively functioning SGB. Furthermore, Mncube (2009: 85) says that former model C schools, or historically advantaged schools, operate more effectively than other schools because of the type of parental community they have. There are similar vast differences between urban schools and rural schools. In addition, because of different socio-economic circumstances of parents, the type of contributions to various SGBs differ between schools in urban and rural areas.

SGBs experience many challenges. These challenges are both internal and external to the SGB, considering its members and outside influences. Many authors such as Mncube (2009), Xaba

(2011) and Mestry (2004) claim that challenges with SGBs lie with the principal of the school, while other authors claim that many of the challenges of SGBs stem from the parent component of the SGB. The main challenge identified with regards to parent governors is the lack of skills that they have, and whether they are equipped adequately to carry out the mandate of the SGB. Other, lesser reported, challenges centre on the silence of learner voices on the SGB.

2.8.1. Principals and the SGB

Principals are often considered to be at the centre of any difficulties or conflicts on the SGB. In turn, this perception is created by complex reasons and factors. On the one hand, as Mestry (2004), points out, principals may be reluctant to share the day-to-day leading and managing of the school with a parent – particularly when that parent has no qualifications to do so. On the other hand, parents might experience the SGB as an additional burden and interference – again, especially in circumstances where parent governors do not possess the necessary skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Mestry (2004: 131) explains that there may be a lack of collaboration between the principal and the other SGB members where the principal is unwilling to share responsibility for school governance for fear of losing control. This echoes the authoritarian style of leadership mentioned in this chapter – that is, that traditionally, in SA schools, principals are prone to authoritarian practices of leadership, since this is often the only type of leadership to which they have been exposed.

Additionally, Heystek (2011: 459) notes that principals may also infringe on the responsibilities that SGB members have as governors because not all principals appear to assist and support the SGB, but instead control it. However, the need for principals to control the SGBs may be justified, according to Heystek (2011). Heystek (2011: 458) claims that since the situation in poor schools is such that parents lack the minimum skills to function as effective SGB members, where responsibilities such as drafting policy and reading legislation are concerned, those principals have no choice but to take control and fulfil the responsibilities that SGB members cannot because some SGB members may lack the necessary skills to do so. Furthermore, according to Mncube (2009: 83), parents at rural schools are reluctant to participate in SGB decision making due to their low education level, language barriers and their inability to attend meetings. Moreover, according to Mncube (2009: 85), decisions are made by the principal, or other SGB members, because the

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parent component is ill equipped with regard to the skills needed to contribute to the effective functioning of an SGB.

Creese and Early (1996: 6) claim that dominant principals seem consistent with research conducted in other countries which shows that the principal is essentially in charge where the governors have little impact upon the direction of school. When we consider the principal the way Van Wyk (2004: 49) understands the role of the principal in the SGB, we can understand why principals need to take such control occasionally. Van Wyk (2004: 49) states that sometimes principals have to dominate the SGB - both the teacher and parent governors, because there is a lack of experience, collaboration and skill in participatory decision-making. In agreement with Van Wyk (2004), Clarse, Kok and van der Merwe (2007: 245) who argue that since management, leadership and governance also came from the top, parents and educators were never trained, and never gained experience in making decisions as they were always on the receiving end of the DoE's instructions. Therefore, they are now unable to govern and this is also why, according to Heystek (2011: 458), principals still play dominant roles in decision-making within the SGB. In fact, Mncube (2009: 83) says that it is understandable why principals may have to control the SGB, as some SGBs are actually incapable of fulfilling their mandates because they are reluctant to make decisions due to their poor level of education. But this affects the nature of parental involvement in SGBs, because they are not using their voice and are not representing the community and also not orientating South African schools toward democracy.

Following the above discussion, principals may not necessarily be in a position where they can easily relinquish or share responsibilities with the SGB, and in fact, may choose, not to assign any responsibilities to the SGB. Such actions, then, defeat the purpose of the SGB, and certainly contradict any potential role that parents might play. Xaba (2011: 205) says that another reason for principals having to take control in the SGB, involves the principal having to resolve conflict between teacher and parent governors. Moreover, Xaba (2011: 205) states that these conflicts that arise are due to the differences in the education and qualifications between teacher and parent governor. These conflicts, according to Mestry (2004: 131), create a lack of collaboration between the SGB and the principal.

2.8.2. Disparate and unequal communities

Le Roux (2014:1) contends that when we consider affluent communities, it becomes apparent that they are concerned with protecting their already existing privileges through access to power. This sets the premise and context for affluent communities to keep on progressing, while the disadvantaged population groups struggle to advance their circumstances. This creates unfitting circumstances for democracy to be cultivated, because while affluent communities may be progressing, disadvantaged population groups are struggling to progress. The inequality between wealthy, affluent, schools and poor schools from rural areas is essentially due to the amount of money present in these different communities. In other words, as Van Wyk (2007: 135) states, whether decentralization results in greater equity or inequality depends to a large extent on the sources of funding of the school. For instance, where schools are expected to raise their own funds to supplement state funding, this has the potential of increasing inequality, since poorer communities are less able to provide for themselves.

Furthermore, Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis (2001: 146) state that wealthy and influential communities often have the political muscle to ensure that they gain better access to state resources and are able to supplement meagre state allocations with their own private contributions. Thus, it bodes unfavourable, unequal and conflicting circumstances for SGBs to fulfil their duties effectively. Essentially, Heystek (2011: 456) notes that the local community, i.e. the parents, are entrusted with school governance because the assumption is that they would know best about the school funds and the unique policies that need to be developed in order to address the needs of the school. However, seemingly implicit in this assumption is that governance can only work, if parents are capable of doing what is expected of them. As many authors, such as Heystek (2004), Van Wyk (2007) and Mestry (2006), have testified thus far, this is not always the case, especially in communities of historically disadvantaged populations groups.

Given the responsibility placed on an SGB, it becomes apparent that its members have to have a particular set of knowledge and skills. According to Mestry (2006: 126) this set of knowledge and skills include the ability to manage finances, work out practical solutions and develop policies. In turn, the SGB is also expected to raise school funds, interview and appoint teachers, and manage any disciplinary procedures pertaining to SGB appointed teachers. Maile (2002: 239) and Van

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Wyk (2004: 51) note that SGB parent members, particularly at historically disadvantaged schools, are often ill equipped to manage any of the afore-mentioned SGB responsibilities, because they either lack the skills, or confidence. The implications of unequal SGB capacities have serious and far-reaching effects, and continue to contribute to the widening gaps between schools. While historically advantaged schools, in well-resourced contexts, are able to draw on a wide array of professionally qualified and skilled parents, schools which serve economically deprived communities, do not enjoy this privilege. The access to resources in terms of parental skills and networks means that while some schools are able to rely on professionally-driven fundraising drives, or professional accountants, as well as legal experts, the majority of SA schools cannot. Heystek (2011: 457) points out that the types of disparities and inequities that continue to define schools in post-apartheid SA are historically based. He explains that, historically white parents were exposed to school governance; they were actively involved in parent associations - before SGBs were formally introduced in post-apartheid schools. As such, white parents have a better sense of what it means to serve on school-based structures, how to engage with school leaders, and the confidence that they have something to contribute.

For other population groups, as Giliomore (2012: 66) highlights, the experiences were, and still are, entirely different. Schools were not necessarily viewed as welcoming spaces – particularly in their roles as instruments of the state in propagating apartheid. Historically, black parents, would not have been exposed to parent-teacher associations, and would have little understanding of the organisational structure of a school. Moreover, the majority of black parents would have had a limited time at school – that is, they would have had to exit the system at an early age due to many different reasons, which include the need to find employment, political turmoil, or other social reasons.

In continuing, Van Wyk (2004: 53) points out even when parents receive SGB training, they do not necessarily understand, and are not necessarily capacitated to fulfil the required roles and responsibilities. Notably, all newly elected SGB members are required to attend a training program prior to assuming their roles and responsibilities on the SGB. The reality however, is that parents do not attend this training, due to a host of reasons, which includes work commitments, transport, caring for children, or reluctance to participate in formal training sessions, due to their own limited

schooling experiences. On the other hand, even when parents attend SGB training, they are not sufficiently capacitated, either due to their own educational deficiencies, or poor training, provided by the respective education district offices. Either way, an incapacitated or untrained SGB cannot fulfil the roles and responsibilities of governance, as stipulated within the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Consequently, Van Wyk (2004: 52) contends that in South Africa, principals of poor schools have more control of the SGB because parent SGB members, who are in the majority, are largely unqualified. Additionally, Van Wyk (2004: 52) says that the SGB of poor schools in South Africa will continue to weaken because SGBs from affluent schools have the power to appoint qualified teachers and offer better salaries unlike poor schools.

The problem being highlighted here is an inherently complex one. On the one hand, SGBs at historically disadvantaged schools do not have the capacity and knowledge to make informed decisions about key issues, such as school-based policies; financial management; and the appointment of teachers (Maile, 2002; Mabasa and Themane, 2002). As a result, these schools falter from one issue to the next, creating a school that is barely functional. On the other hand, it is difficult for these schools to change existing practices, as the communities in which they find themselves in are not necessarily in a position to act in the best interest of the school. Then there is the added complexity that the community of a school is not necessarily constituted by the community in which the school is located. In other words, it is commonly the case in SA that learners do not attend the school from the area in which they live – this creates a further gap between the school community and the parent community.

2.8.3. Parents

Xaba (2011: 201) is in agreement with Van Wyk (2004: 53) that some SGBs are incapable of governing schools effectively, because they lack the necessary skills needed to do so. As stated previously, Mabasa and Themane (2002: 112) supports that most parents are not adequately trained prior to assuming their responsibilities on the SGB. Mabasa and Themane (2002: 112) maintain that appointed SGB members are unfamiliar with meeting procedures, they have a problem with the language used in meetings, they have difficulty in managing large volumes of paper work, they do not know how to contribute, they do not know the appropriate legislation, they feel intimidated by other members who are more knowledgeable and they endorse exactly what others have already

decided due to feelings of inadequacy. Xaba (2001: 210) ascribes this lack of capacity to one very prevalent factor: that the term for which SGB members are appointed is too short in order for them to sufficiently gain the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding. Additionally, according to Mestry (2006: 126), this lack of skills affects the management of the school finances and does not bode well for developing practical, and implementable, solutions to school governing challenges.

Furthermore, according to Van Wyk (2007: 134) and Xaba (2011: 206), many parents misunderstand their roles and responsibilities, which further infringes on their ability to fulfil their mandate. In this regard, they either do not do what is required at all, or they perform their task incorrectly. This, continues Xaba (2011: 206), is especially prevalent when SGBs are required to design and implement policies. Similarly, Maile (2002: 239) contends that SGBs are ineffective because parent governors are illiterate, and since parent governors make up the majority of SGB members, there are serious negative consequences for the functionality of the SGB. Parents, according to Van Wyk (2007: 135), are reluctant to ask for help from the principal or teachers on the SGB, as they fear exposing themselves, and being asked to leave. Karlsson (2002: 332) reports that where parents share their misunderstandings, confusion or general sense of discomfort, the principal often simply assumes any responsibilities which the parents might have, thereby raising concerns about the level of actual parent involvement on the SGB. The resultant dysfunctionality of such SGBs brings into question the very existence of SGBs within such communities. In turn, parents might become reluctant to serve on SGBs, if they are made to feel inadequate (Van Wyk, 2007; Xaba, 2011). In sum, the serious lack of education and qualifications among parents in poorer communities, and at historically disadvantaged schools, means that the majority of SGB members simply cannot function as they are required to do in terms of the SA School Act (No. 84 of 1996). It is this lack of knowledge that also negatively affects the SGB as the SGB then cannot be as effective as it could have been.

As an additional observation, parents are not the only ones, who might experience marginalisation or difficulty while trying to serve on an SGB. A study by Mncube and Naicker (2011: 157), for example, found that learners experience particular forms of marginalisation and alienation, when they attempt to participate on the SGB. As explained by Mncube and Harber (2013: 8), the notion and implementation of SGBs are considered as a western construction, and hence, irreconcilable

with African ways, and specifically, with the African traditional role of children. In this regard, according to Mncube and Harber (2013: 19), the African adult view of the learner hinders the autonomy of learners to participate in, and contribute to, the SGB. Similarly, Mncube and Naicker (2011: 157) found that learners might not be able to participate at all, due to cultural boundaries, which stipulate that children cannot participate in adult discussions. Consequently, although learners might be elected onto the SGB, they do not necessarily enjoy any right to participation or deliberation. Mncube, Harber and Du Plessis (2011: 215) argue that when learners do not contribute as they are legislated to, democracy is not practiced as well as it could be, or at all, which compromises the role of the SGB and its mandate to develop democracy.

In concluding this discussion, Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 49) argue that the challenges that SGBs face reflect the fundamental tension between largely "affluent communities attempting to protect their privileges and a state attempting to advance its own interests as well as the interest of South Africa's many disadvantaged learners". In turn, Chipkin (2007: 3) states that although SGBs have the structure of being inclusive, the democratic culture may not actually be active between the members of the SGB for reasons previously mentioned, such as the principal having to take control and parental governors agreeing with what the teachers and principals suggest. This is confirmed by a study by Van Wyk (2007: 134), when she found that the parent members of the SGB are not always made aware of their power, and that their contributions and decisions are often disregarded by the rest of the SGB, namely the principal and teachers. This is where the cultivation of democracy in a school may fail to show itself. In this regard, Chipkin (2007: 3) observes that SGBs may not actually be developing a democratic culture in schools, as is required in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

2.9. Conceptual framework

When we study and consider the SGB, there are particular concepts that need to be considered in relation to this research study. Key to the exploration of governance and SGBs in SA public schools, is whether indeed, SGBs fulfil not only their roles and responsibilities, but whether SGBs extend the democratic project, as expected in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). By involving parents in the day-to-day management of a school, the expectation is that parents will participate and deliberate with the leadership and management structures of a school towards joint

decision-making. The two key concepts of participation and deliberation are constitutive of any democracy, since it ensures consultation, responsibility, as well as accountability. As highlighted in this chapter, the decentralization of responsibilities to school-based management has dramatically increased the responsibilities of the principal and the SMT. The levels of capacity and involvement of the SGB are therefore key to the overall functionality of a school. According to Grant Lewis and Naidoo (2004: 1), within the increasing decentralization of fiscal, political and administrative responsibilities to local spheres of government, local institutions and communities have given rise to the notions of participation and deliberation, which have also emerged as fundamental tenets in the promotion of the local governance of schools.

As has been discussed thus far, SGBs have been established in public schools in South Africa in order to foster democratic engagement from within schools. According to Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 47-48), SGBs have a responsibility to enhance various forms of democracy because SGBs rely on a thick conception of democracy, as expressly manifested in the text of the SA Constitution. Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 49) state that the SGBs status as "juristic persons", enhances various forms of local democracy. These forms of democracy are primarily participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. Additionally, SGBs are constituted in such a way that members of the school community are involved in the SGB and are also the majority members thereof. Since this is the purpose and make-up of SGBs, decisions are supposed to be made, and agreed upon, by all of the SGB members through the practice of participatory democracy which employs the functions of deliberative democracy. In other words, reaching a consensus about a decision involves the employment of democracy – since it involves discussing, listening, possibly debating, and then reaching a majority-based decision. In this sense, SGBs are not only constitutive of a democratic agenda, but are expected to function within the framework and principles of democracy.

Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 50-51) note that the state has remained deeply committed to the process of participatory democracy through the Bill of Rights, which affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, all the while treating democracy as an independent value. Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 51) contend that the purpose of SGBs is to contribute to creating an open and democratic society, because when democracy is taken seriously, virtues such as belonging, deliberating and participating become evident in democracy because democracy is

inclusive. Moreover, Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 52) state that public participation enhances deliberation, but depending on the issues concerned, some information will be elicited from the discussion. Thus, Woolman and Fleisch (2008: 52) state that the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), creates the space for public deliberation regarding school affairs, and the school's governance, to take place through the SGB. In exploring the conceptual framework of this study, I now turn to participatory democracy and deliberative democracy, which according to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 59), are both part of the functionality of an organisation, and the organisation in our case is the SGB.

2.9.1. Participatory democracy

Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60) state that theoretically defined, participatory democracy refers to a form of direct democracy that enables all members of society to participate in decision-making processes within institutions, organisations and societal and government structure. In other words, according to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60), the participatory model of democracy is such that when power is shared within an organisation, it involves joint decision-making and participation practiced in both management and governance.

According to Zittle and Fuchs (2007: 45), participatory democracy involves a process of joint decision-making. Furthermore, Zittle and Fuchs (2007: 45) state that since participatory democracy involves a process of joint decision making, participatory democracy creates the opportunity for compromise about decisions amongst the individuals involved. The individuals involved in the process of decision-making within participatory democracy are typically those who will be affected by the final decision. In the case of this research, however, most of those affected by the decisions are not directly involved in the processes of participation, deliberation and decision-making. In other words, by virtue of their roles on the SGB, parents are involved in the day-to-day management of a school. The decisions made by the SGB have particular implications and effects on the functionality of a school – for example, on policy implementation, codes of conduct, financial management, the employment of teachers, as well as any extra-mural programs. Ensuring the participation of parents in the latter is motivated by a belief that as members of a school community, and as parents of learners, who attend the school, parents are best placed to understand the needs and dynamics of a school (Mncube and Naicker, 2011: 54). In terms of this

understanding, parents have (or should have) a vested interest in the school which their children attend, which means that they would want to participate in the functioning of that particular school. Additionally, Zittle and Fuchs (2007: 46) say that participatory democracy means that everyone's voice is to be heard in the process of decision-making. The entire SGB should therefore be involved in the deliberation about an issue. The space that the SGB creates is that of allowing all SGB members to contribute to the decision-making, and as such, practice democracy. Furthermore, Karlsson (2002: 329) says that by orientating South Africa towards democracy, the SGB (within itself) should be practicing democracy by deliberating on the issues through making decisions participatory. Since this is the nature of participatory democracy, we can assume that all members of the SGB are active participants in decision-making. To participate, according to Floridia (2013: 4), thus means to be an active agent in the process of decision-making. This should be the case in all SA SGBs.

As has been pointed out, the SGB comprises teachers, support staff, the school principal and parent members, who constitute the majority of the SGB. Parent SGB members are the majority governors because they represent the public, namely the parents from the community whose children attend the school in question. Serfontein (2011: 109) says that since parent members are the majority members on the SGB, it denotes an open and accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision-making. According to Cooke (2000: 949), the nature of participatory democracy is inclusive because participatory democracy has the power to generate a sense of community, and according to Floridia (2013: 5), a new subjectivity. Additionally, Cooke (2000: 950) states that the decisions made under the climate of participatory democracy, through discussion, deliberation and decision-making are fair because they produce democratic outcomes. In other words, if SGBs are not practicing participation and deliberation, then they are not practicing democracy.

Floridia (2013: 4) says that participatory democracy is evidenced within SGBs when deliberation and decision-making are morally justifiable. In other words, Floridia (2013: 4) says that we can understand that participatory democracy is a space in which unique individuals can voice their subjective views about a topic. Benhabib (2004: 119) asserts that participatory democracy allows the public to voice their contribution. Furthermore, Benhabib (2004: 119) explains that the views

and opinions expressed by individuals all stem from personal points of departure about the topic being discussed, and thus opinions are morally justifiable to those who hold them. Barber (1984) says that it is this allowance of voicing one's ideas that encourages participatory democracy. Furthermore, since participatory democracy is so flexible in its nature, when applied to the context of the SGB, it could accommodate public opinions. Firstly, for example, the application of participatory democracy allows the SGB members to adapt its guiding policy in such a way that it best helps the SGB to reach the needs of the school. Secondly, according to Barber (1984), deciding these adaptions would require the participation of all SGB members, which inevitably encourages participatory democracy, and its traits, to be active.

In summary, participatory democracy is evidenced in the SGB when the SGB engages in decision-making through a fair process of talking and listening to different points of view and perspectives. A fair process of decision-making entails that all those involved in the SGB are able to voice their views and represent their role on the SGB effectively – that is, that dominant personalities or voices are not allowed to exclude the voices of others. Thus, when participatory democracy takes place, decision-making occurs through deliberative democracy, which is what we will explore next. Consequently, if participatory democracy is not practiced in the SGB, then not only is the SGB not practicing democracy, but then it can also not function effectively and fulfil its purpose of orientating South Africa towards democracy. With that said, let us now turn our attention to deliberative democracy and gain an understanding of how these two democracies are present in SGBs.

2.9.2. Deliberative democracy

According to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 61), when deliberative democracy is theoretically defined, it refers to the notion of legitimate political decision-making, which emanates from the public deliberation of citizens – as might be encountered in the SGB. According to Cunningham (2002: 163), as a normative account of political decision-making, deliberative democracy evokes ideals of rational legislation, participatory politics and civic self-governance. Furthermore, according to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60), the deliberative model of democracy incorporates features of liberal and republican traditions because the public is involved in politics and there is transparent communication to reach consensus. This is what should occur in an SGB, since SGBs

are the embodiment of democracy in SA public schools. Young (2000: 6) supports the notion of SGBs embodying democracy when he says that the SGB involves a group of people, transparent communication is necessary. Moreover, this communication should occur through a deliberative process and thus employ deliberative democracy involving the public in politics through deliberating governance of the school.

Gutmann and Thompson (2004: 3) state that deliberative democracy affirms the need to justify decisions made within a group, or as Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60) call it, a "process" or "forum". Deliberative democracy then encourages leaders to give reasons for their decisions and to respond to the reasons given to them by individuals outside of the group. This is the space created within SGBs where all members can voice their decisions and motivations in this group or forum. As Cooke (2000: 949) argues, democracy can also be practiced because everyone is able to get an opportunity to contribute to the SGB. Additionally, according to Gutmann and Thompson (2004: 3), decision-making is encouraged in an SGB through deliberative democracy. Gutmann and Thompson (2004: 3) maintain that decision-making is the nature of deliberative democracy since deliberative democracy takes place within a group. And consequently, Cooke (2000: 949) also argues that deliberative democracy has the power to generate a sense of community. Cooke (2000: 959) further claims that democratic decisions are fair if they are produced by a fair deliberative procedure. Deliberative democracy is thus evidenced in the SGB when members make a contribution

Cooke (2000: 949) states that deliberative democracy essentially refers to a conception of democratic government that secures a central place for reasoned discussion – as typically encountered through the platform of an SGB. Cooke (2000: 952) says that deliberative processes are essential to the practical rationality of collective decision-making because

- Deliberative processes impart new knowledge;
- Deliberative processes help individuals to order their preferences coherently; and
- Deliberative processes impose a certain reflexivity on individual preferences and opinions forcing participants to adapt an enlarged mentality.

Since the process of deliberation speaks of collective decision-making and justifying those decisions, this process also requires participation.

Deliberative democracy contains other traits that might be seen in the SGB, as Cooke (2000: 948-953) explains:

- Deliberative democracy is normative and involves, and emphasizes, public reasoning.
- Deliberation contributes constructively to the practical rationality of democratic outcomes.
- Due to deliberation, policies can be promoted and adapted.
- The procedure of deliberation improves the fairness of democratic outcomes.
- When there are various types of individuals involved in decision-making about the governance of the school, then the outcome is fair.
- Those persons affected by decisions made by government bodies should be involved in deliberating about the outcomes of decisions that will affect them.
- Deliberation constructively contributes to rationality of democratic laws and policies and their implantation, since those who create the policies have to implement them as well.
- The process of deliberation has an educative power, not just by abiding by the guidance of policies, but also by developing them.

In concluding this section, Eriksen and Weigard (2003: 128) state that the deliberative model of democracy maintains that citizens are treated equally when they exercise political or bureaucratic power, and this should be justified by reasons which can be approved by rational deliberation. When individuals discuss issues and come to a consensus through deliberation, then deliberative democracy has functioned effectively in the SGB. It is important to note however, that inasmuch SGBs are expected to espouse and facilitate the principles of democracy through participation and deliberation, these principles also premised on a particular set of presumptions. Both participatory and deliberative democracy presume a skills set and a capacity to fulfil these mandates. Parents can only participate and deliberate, through speaking, listening to different and opposing viewpoints, and making decisions-making, if they have the knowledge and skills to do so. Parents, for example, can neither participate nor deliberate on financial matters and management, if they do not understand what a budget is. Similarly, parents who have no qualifications or who have never been employed, will not necessarily know how to conduct an interview with a potential employee. We know, based on the discussions highlighted in this chapter, that all parents do not enter the public arena, as created through the SGB, on an equal footing. It is therefore, fair to claim

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that all parents on SGBs might not have the capacity to engage in either participatory or deliberative democracy.

2.9.3.   Chapter summary

This chapter comprised two sections: the literature review, which constituted the theoretical framework, and the conceptual framework. After distinguishing between leadership, management and governance structures within schools, I discussed why SGBs were introduced in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). I provided insight into the range of responsibilities, attached to the SGB, and paid particular attention to the designated roles of parent governors. This was followed by an intensive look at the types of challenges, typically experienced by SGBs, particularly, in relation to the involvement, participation and capacity of parents. I highlighted the complexities and difficulties, which arise when parent governors are not capacitated to fulfil their responsibilities, and raised questions about whether all SGBs are actually of benefit to their respective schools, and whether they can fulfil the mandate of enacting democratic practices. Taking the afore-mentioned into account, and in concluding this chapter, I considered participatory and deliberative democracy as a conceptual framework for this research study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology and methods, which were used in this research study.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology and methods

3.1. Introduction

This chapter considers the research methodology and methods in order to address the main and sub-research questions, which were as follows:

Main question:

- What is the nature of parent involvement in SGBs at four primary schools in the Western Cape?

Sub-research questions:

- How and why do parents become involved in SGBs?
- Which type of roles and responsibilities do parents fulfil on the SGB?
- How do parents interact and work with teachers and principals in relation to their functions on the SGB?
- How does parental involvement affect the functioning of the SGB and hence the democratic governance of the school?

3.2. Research Methodology

According to Harding (1987: 2), methodology refers to the theory of knowledge and the framework guiding a particular research project. Fien (1992: 2) says that methodology is the philosophical framework that guides the research activity. Similarly, Van Manen (1975: 27) describes methodology as the general orientation to life. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 62) describe the aim of research methodology as a way to help researchers understand the process, and not the product, of their research.

The methodology used for my research was informed by and modelled on the interpretive paradigm in order to understand the nature of parental involvement in SGBs, and specifically, to

- Why parents become involved in the SGB;
- Understand how various SGBs function in various circumstances;

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- Understand how the community context influences the roles and the responsibilities of SGBs;

- Understand the contribution of parents on the SGB; and

- Understand the effect the level of functionality of an SGB has on the functioning of the leadership and management at a school, as well as the contribution of an SGB towards the cultivation of democratic space.

In this sense, I relied on the particular interpretations from SGB parents and principals in order to make sense and meaning of their experiences and challenges. The interviews with the parents focused on why they became involved in the SGB; the types of skills they brought; and their particular experiences and challenges. In turn, the interviews with the principals focused on the participation, involvement, and contribution of parent governors on the SGB.

According to Phillips (1987), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Morgan (1983), the interpretive approach, is concerned with an understanding of human action and takes cognisance of the fact that human actions are influenced by their contexts, which in turn gives human actions meaning. Polelis (2015: 538) says that in order to understand human actions, the reasons for these actions have to be understood and interpreted. Additionally, Schultze and Avital (2011: 3) say that the interpretive approach considers the possibility of multiple realties, which in turn require multiple methods of understanding. Since the purpose of the interpretive framework is to understand human actions, the research methodology used for my research took into account the particular understandings of the parents and principals who served on the SGB at the time of this research, in relation to the interpretation of their roles and responsibilities on the SGB in their unique contexts and circumstances.

3.3. Research methods

A research method, according to MacDonald and Headlam (1999: 3), refers to the tools by which information for a study is gathered. In order to construct data for my study, I used a case study and two associated research methods. The two research methods that were used were document analysis and semi-structured interviews. I believed that with the combination of these two methods, I would be able to understand the nature of parental involvement in SGBs.

These two methods allowed me to understand the research participants' perceptions, experiences, and how they understood their context of serving on an SGB. This is why they fitted perfectly into the interpretive framework within a case study. Exploring the participants' understanding of their context was necessary because it reflected the purpose of the interpretive paradigm, within a case study research, and helped me to understand the nature of parental involvement in SGBs.

A case study, according to Zainal (2007:1-2), explores and investigates contemporary real-life phenomena through a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events of conditions and their relationships. Zainal (2007: 1) continues that case study research uses research methods, which enables the researcher to examine the data within a specific context closely, and to construct data from a small geographical area or a limited number of individuals.

I decided to employ a case study research method because, according to Hancock et al. (2009: 16), this involves qualitative research methods, such as semi-structured interviews and reading documentation. These qualitative research methods, according to Zainal (2007: 1), do not hold the limitations that quantitative research methods do when we are concerned with the responsibility of providing a holistic and in-depth explanation of human actions. Moreover, Bassey (1999: 81) avers that with case study research, methods such as asking questions and reading documents allow the researcher to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand human actions from the actor's perspective. Furthermore, the case study research method allowed me to employ a qualitative study as I was concerned with making sense of experiences of parents, rather than the amount of data and area statistics (MacDonald and Headlam, 1986: 8). Moreover, MacDonald and Headlam (1986: 8) argue that the aim of a qualitative study is to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations for actions and to establish how people interpret their experiences and the world around them, as well as to provide insight into the setting of the problem. By applying methods such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis, I therefore gained insight into the particular understandings and experiences of the research participants. In addition, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 1) explain that interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data as the interviewee would be a more contributive participant by the way of meaning making rather than a conduit from which information is retrieved. With

this in mind, the ensuing discussion reflects the use and the motive for the type of interview used in my research study.

3.3.1. Document analysis as a research method

Document analysis, according to Kothari (2004: 110), comprises analysing documents associated with the participants. In the case of my research study, document analysis included ascertaining whether the respective SGBs had a constitution, whether they had stipulated roles and responsibilities for each of the SGB office bearers, and whether there were records of minutes, policies and any strategic or development plans. By examining the specific documents and policies of the school, I gained some insight into the level of technical functionality of the SGB. These documents provided insight into how the SGB at each school was constituted, the different portfolios, roles and responsibilities of SGB members, how regularly meetings were held, whether minutes were kept and, indeed, whether the policies and strategies of the SGB were implemented within the respective schools.

3.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants because these allowed me to discover more than what I had planned to ask of my interviewees. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 2), semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews are the most widely used format for qualitative research and can occur either with individuals or in a group.

Nisbet and Watt (1984: 82) say that semi-structured interviews are a basic research instrument used in case study research. Additionally, according to Le Grange (2015: 5), semi-structured interviews require the researcher to prepare an interview schedule and questions, but also to provide the interviewees with opportunities to raise their own matters related to the research topic that the researcher might not have asked for. Here, just like focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewee the freedom to sequence the questions differently, or to omit questions if he or she so chooses (Kothari, 2004: 98). Since I wanted to accumulate as much information as my participants would allow, I needed to use an interview method that would not restrict participants in providing the study with more data. This is confirmed by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 2) who claim that semi-structured interviews are organized around a set of

predetermined open-ended questions, which allow other questions to emerge from the dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. Since this is the nature of semi-structured interviews, according to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006: 2), it allowed me to delve deeply into social and personal matters, which enable me to understand the lived experienced of my participants as being a part of the SGB.

These two research methods used simultaneously helped me to gain an understanding of parent involvement in different SGBs, as well as to draw comparisons between the SGBs. On the one hand, therefore, the document analysis provided me with insight into the textual and technical functionality of the SGB. On the other hand, the semi-structured interviews gave me access to the perspectives of the participants. To this end, the research methods fulfilled the purpose of the interpretive paradigm and case study research.

3.4. Research sample and context

For my research I selected four primary schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. These schools were located in Grassy Park, Kuils River, Portland and Rocklands, the third and fourth schools are both schools in Mitchell's Plain. Since these schools were from different geographical areas that experienced different socio-economic circumstances, they were also in different quintiles. According to Collingride (2018), a quintile is a category that public schools are assigned according to the income rates, unemployment and illiteracy within the school's catchment area.

According to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE, 2008: 8), quintile 1 refers to "the group of schools in each province catering for the poorest 20% of learners" while "[q]uintile 2 schools cater for the next poorest 20% of schools and so on" (DoE, 2004a: 8). Additionally, according to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE, 2004b: 8), "[q]uintile 5 schools are those that care for the least poor 20% of learners" In summary, we can say that quintile 1, 2 and 3 cater for the poorest of learners, and quintiles 4 and 5 cater for the least poor learners, nationally. Also note that while the quintile system is supposed to reflect the socio-economic condition of a school, the system is highly problematic, because it does not take into account that even though a school might be located in Portlands, for example, its learners might not be from the area. Moreover, it is not unusual to find that schools, which are located on the

Cape Flats – a relatively impoverished socio-economic context – are in the same quintile as schools located on the Atlantic seaboard – an area renowned for its wealth and beauty, as evidenced by Zoch (2017: 13). While none of the research schools were from quintiles 1 - 3, School C was no-fee paying school, even though it is based in quintile 4.

The four schools were selected because they reflected different socio-economic situations and communities – despite three of them being located in quintile 5. The variation in schools made them compatible to be a part of my research study since I was attempting to compare the nature of parent involvement in SGBs, and the way this affects the functioning of the SGB. Below is a table summarising the information of the four schools.

School	Number of teachers	Number of learners	Quintile	Schools fees per year	Number of SGB teachers
School A	28	813	5	R750,00 per annum	8
School B	14	449	5	R1000,00 per annum R300,00 per month for Grade R	5
School C	28	1200	4	R0,00 per annum	4
School D	46	1240	5	R9900,00 per annum	16

Note: Fees for Grade R at School B are more than that of other grades in the school, as according to the school's principal, the school fees from these learners are used to pay for additional resources the Grade Rs may need.

From the table above we can deduce that **School A** had many learners as the ratio of learners to teachers was approximately 1:29. At the time of this study, the school had one acting principal, one acting deputy principal, and one head of department (HOD) for each phase. At this school, the principal sometimes took a class for teaching and the deputy principal had a class of her own. This was a fee-paying school with a total of eight teachers being employed by the SGB. A few learners used public transport to get to and from school, but most of the learners travelled to and from school by private transport.

School B had fewer learners and subsequently fewer teachers, consequently, the ratio of teachers to learners in this school was 1:32. Their school fees were slightly higher than that of **School A,** with the exception of Grade R learners who paid higher school fees in order to account for the materials needed. This school also found itself in quintile 5 with five teachers being employed by the SGB. This school had one principal, one deputy principal and one HOD for each phase. At this school, the principal also took a class for teaching occasionally and the deputy principal has a class of his own.

School C had over 1000 learners at the time of this study, and 28 teachers. The ratio of teacher to learners was 1:43. This was also a no-fees school in quintile 4 where only four teachers were filling SGB posts. From my observations, it seemed that the school was overcrowded and the teachers appeared to be doing more crowd-control than teaching. Many of the parents were unemployed, and many of the learners came to school were hungry. These learners either walked to school, used public transport, or made use of lift clubs. Very few of these learners were dropped by their own parents, using their own vehicles. The community is largely disadvantaged. At the time of this study, the school had one principal, one deputy principal and two HODs per phase. The principal taught a class occasionally, but did not have a class of his own.

School D also had over 1 000 learners but seemed to have a very healthy teacher to learner ratio, namely 1:26. This total excluded the teacher assistants. At the time of the study, each Grade 1 teacher had an assistant, while the rest of the grades – up to Grade 7 – shared one assistant per grade. The school has two campuses with one principal and one deputy principal. At the time of this study, the principal did not do any teaching while the deputy principal had a class of his own. Each phase also had one HOD. Many learners travelled to and from school by private transport. Sixteen teachers were employed by the SGB.

The interviews were conducted with each of the four school principals, as well as one parent from each of the SGB's. After establishing contact with the four principals, and gaining their permission and willingness to participate in the study, the principals took responsibility for informing their respective SGB's. The only criterion used in relation to the parent sample was that they had to be office bearers on their respective SGB's. Initially, most of the parents from each of the four SGB's

indicated an interest and willingness to participate in the study. However, when the time came for the parent interviews to be conducted, many parents cited various reasons for no longer being able to participate. These included time constraints; difficulty in finding transport to the school – despite my offer to come to their home; and work commitments. I got the impression, after I had conducted the interviews with the principals and parents that some parents might have withdrawn because they felt uncomfortable about their participation. While I can only speculate about the reasons for their discomfort, I am not too surprised that parents did not feel free about a topic (the SGB) when they themselves were unsure about their own roles and responsibilities. Consequently, in order to ensure consistency within the research sample, it was decided to interview only one parent from each of the four SGB's.

3.5. Trustworthiness of data

According to Anney (2014: 272), rigour is defined as trustworthiness in qualitative research when the findings consider dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability. In other words, the quality of the findings from the qualitative research lies in its ability to be dependable, credible, transferable and confirmable.

The importance of this research study to possess the above mentioned research qualities, namely; dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability, lies in the employment of the interpretive framework. Furthermore, the importance of rigour in this research study is necessary because I am employing an interpretive framework which seeks to understand the lived experiences of my research participants. Since the interpretive framework seeks to understand an individual's reality, making use of semi-structured interviews is a method that can be used in order to ensure quality of the research findings.

Since the nature of trustworthiness in qualitative research involves dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability, I have sort to identify these qualities in my interview questions. In other words, I have sort to ascertain these qualities in my interview questions in order to ensure that the findings of my research are trustworthy and that quality of my research has been achieved. Thus, quality has been achieved in this research study by employing the workings of semi-

structured interviews. Employing the workings of semi-structured interviews allows discussions to be tailored to extract truthful answers about the lived experiences of my participants.

3.6. Ethical considerations

According to Berg (2007: 53), I am a researcher in the field of social science, which concerns people in their context, and as such, I have the obligation of being ethical towards those who were included in my study.

In order to commence with this research, I had to comply with particular ethical considerations. This included attaining ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University, and permission from the WCED, in order to conduct research at each of the four schools. I also had to seek permission from each of the four principals, and they, in turn, took responsibility for ensuring the involvement of parent governors from each of the SGB's. Each of the four parents and principals were required to complete consent forms, which confirmed their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw from the research at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants (parents and principals) were assured. The identities of the parents, principals, as well as the schools are protected, and pseudonyms are used in this study. Data was stored in my personal computer, which was password protected. After the interviews were voice-recorded, and transcribed, the participants were asked to read and verify the transcriptions.

3.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has provided insight into the research paradigm and methodology; methods; research sample and context; as well as the ethical considerations, which were taken into account. The various research methods – that is, semi-structured interviews and document analysis – helped me to understand the nature of parent involvement in SGBs. I also shared particular challenges in setting up the research sample, as a number of parents became reticent to participate in the study, the closer it got to the time for the interview. Building on chapter three, chapter four presents the data of this research study.

CHAPTER 4

Research findings and discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, which were constructed from the interviews with the SGB parents and the four school principals. The findings are presented in relation to the following sub-research questions:

- How and why do parents become involved in SGBs?
- Which type of roles and responsibilities do parents fulfil on the SGB?
- How do parents interact and work with teachers and principals in relation to their functions on the SGB?
- How does parental involvement affect the functioning of the SGB and hence the democratic governance of the school?

Ultimately, the findings and responses to the afore-mentioned questions, feed into, and address the main research question, which is centred on the nature of parent involvement in SGBs at four primary schools in the Western Cape.

In order to construct my data from the participants, I examined SGB-related policies and documents. Secondly, I also used semi-structured interviews with each of the four parents and the four principals. In the interest of ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the schools, the four principals, and the four SGB parents, I have provided pseudonyms. The schools will be known as School A, B, C and D respectively in this thesis. Parents are identified in line with their schools, and are therefore referred to as Parent A, B, C and D respectively. Similarly, each principal is identified in relation to his or her respective school, and identified as Principal A, B, C and D respectively. Please note that all quotations are reproduced verbatim and unedited in this thesis.

4.2. Document analysis

The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) stipulates that SGBs possess a constitution which complies with minimum requirements determined by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the

Provincial Gazette (DoE, 2011). In terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), all SGBs are required to have in place a Constitution, which must provide for:

1. A meeting of the SGB at least once every school term;

2. Meetings of the SGB with parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school, respectively, at least once a year;

3. Recording and keeping of minutes of governing body meetings;

4. Making available such minutes for inspection by the Head of Department; and

5. Rendering a report on its activities to parents, learners, educators and other staff of the school at least once a year.

In turn the SGB is required to abide by a Code of Conduct, with a quality governance structure at a public school:

1. All members of a governing body must adhere to the code of conduct;

2. The code of conduct must contain provisions of due process, safeguarding the interests of the members of the governing body in disciplinary proceedings; and

3. The Head of Department may suspend or terminate the membership of a governing body member for a breach of the code of conduct after due process.

My objective in asking the research principals and parents about the above was to gain a sense of the level of organization of each of the SGBs. Although the existence of particular documents and policies is not an assurance that these are actually being implemented, they do, however, provide some idea of the functionality of the SGB.

According to both Principal A and Parent A at School A, the SGB meets regularly once per term. In addition, the SGB meets with staff and parents once per year, for the specific purpose of reporting school-related matters, finalising strategic plans for the ensuing year, and discussing financial matters, including school fees. At the SGB's annual meeting with the parents and the rest of the school's staff, the SGB reveals its plans for that year. However, it was also reported that the annual meetings with the parents and staff members only occur if there is something to report. In other words, the SGB of School A, may not meet once a year with parents and school staff if they do not have anything to report back. At any meeting which involves the SGB or that the SGB

holds, minutes are recorded and filed. The minutes of all meetings, according to Principal A, are available upon request for inspection for the Head of Department, or any other official from the Education Department. A copy of the SGB's constitution was also submitted to the Head of Department within 90 days of its election. Principal A could provide evidence of the SGB's Constitution, Code of Conduct and SGB related policies. Although Parent A confirmed that she had attended SGB training, she was uncertain about which documents were required by the SGB. She was equally unaware of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), which informs the functions of the SGB.

Principal B at School B reported that the SGB met more than once per term. However, he could not provide precise details of how often these meetings took place. According to Principal B, the SGB met with the parents at the end of each academic year in order to discuss any plans for the ensuing year such as the budget and fund-raising initiatives. However, neither Principal B nor Parent B could confirm the existence of a Code of Conduct or Constitution for the SGB. Moreover, they did not have any records or minutes of SGB meetings. Principal B cited the absence of a Code of Conduct and Constitution for the SGB as one of the reasons for its 'dysfunctionality'. It was evident from both Principal B and Parent B, that they did not have any of the documents, as stipulated in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Principal B could not provide an adequate reason as to why certain policies and documents were not in place, except to state that the SGB needed 'guidance on policies' and 'more training'. Moreover, like Parent A, Parent B did not know what the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) was, and did not realise that the SGB was required to abide by a Code of Conduct and Constitution. The absence of the necessary documents at School B revealed certain tensions between Principal B and Parent B. Seemingly, while Principal B attempted to lay the blame on the SGB for not attending to what is required of them, Parent B revealed that she was unaware that SGBs were required to have particular documents in place. Parent B could not recall learning about a Code of Conduct or Constitution, or that SGBs are required to have one at the SGB training, which she had attended.

At School C and D it was reported that both of these SGBs possess all of its associated documentation. The SGBs from School C and D both have quarterly meetings as a committee and annual meetings with the school staff and parents. At the annual meetings the SGB makes its plans for that year known to the parents and staff of the school. At every meeting held by the SGB, and

at every meeting that the SGB may be involved in, minutes are recorded and filed. Both Principals C and D could provide evidence of their SGBs' constitution, minutes of meetings, and a range of policies, including, admission, uniform, codes of conduct for both learners and educators, and safety and security. Unlike School B, and to a lesser extent School A, School C and D seemingly had all the necessary documentation, as required in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Moreover, these documents were readily available.

In contrast to the confidence of Principal C, Parent C, who is also the chairperson of the SGB, indicated an awareness of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), but did not understand what this Act had to do with the SGB. He had never seen a copy of the Act. He was equally unclear about a Code of Conduct, and the necessity for record keeping and minutes. Despite not having any knowledge of the documents required by the SGB, Parent C felt confident about his role as a school governor, and that the school was functioning well. Unlike Parent C, Parent D (who is a school principal) had a clear understanding of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), and the necessity of a Constitution, and keeping minutes of meetings.

4.3. Interviews with parents

4.3.1. How and why parents become involved in SGBs

Parents were asked how and why they became involved with the SGB. The responses from the parent participants differed substantially. However, parents at the three fee-paying schools (A, B and D) explained that they became involved in the SGB because they paid school fees, and wanted to have a say in their children's education.

Parent A stated that she became involved in the SGB in order "to be able to improve the way things are done at our government schools".

Parent B stated:

> I became involved in the SGB because I was a stay-at-home mother and the school offered me a job and then I just became a part of the SGB since my salary was now affected by the SGB.

While Parent D described his involvement on the SGB as due to being approached, he stated, "I was approached and nominated due to my specific leadership skills that was needed".

Parent C, whose children attended a no-fee school, became involved in the SGB for a different reason. He stated:

> Not for my kids, because their mother works at the school. But I wanted to be a father to all of the kids and hold teachers accountable. Because our children attend the school, we wanted to contribute to our kids' education and to improve the school.

From the above, it was clear that Parent A was concerned about improving education for her child. In other words, by being involved in the SGB, she had the opportunity to affect her child's schooling career positively. For Parent B, the motive for getting involved in the SGB directly affected her and thus her household too, since in addition to serving as a SGB member, she was also employed at the school. Additionally, like Parent B, Parent C was approached and made the choice to contribute to the school with a specific skill the SGB thought he could offer. Parent C chose to become involved in the SGB as he saw the community and its children as his responsibility to make a positive contribution. Moreover, Parent C is a former learner of the school, and he grew up in the community where the school is situated. Parents A, B and C had returned to the school to "give back". Only parent D reported that he had been directly approached by the principal to join the SGB. Also evident from the parents' responses was a strong sense of responsibility to the community, and playing a meaningful role in creating a better school. Evident from the interviews is that while parents A, B and C wanted to be involved in the school, and play a meaningful role in improving the school, they had little knowledge and ideas of how to do so. They saw their mere willingness to support the school as a positive step.

4.3.2. Roles and responsibilities of parents of the SGB

When parents were asked about the roles and responsibilities they fulfilled, I noticed many differences among the SGB parent members. For example, Parent A was the treasurer of the SGB, and her responsibilities included "checking and signing bank statements, financial reports and checking the budget". She did not have any qualifications or experience working with finances, but felt equipped to fulfil her role on the SGB because of the SGB training, which was provided

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by the WCED. Parent A fulfilled this role with enthusiasm because she believed that it was important for parents to be involved in the SGB in order "to give the SGB the views of the parents".

Parent B was a member of the SGB because she was employed by the school. She however felt indifferent about the roles and responsibilities she fulfilled. For example when asked about her roles and responsibilities, she responded: "I do not want a role in the SGB, I just want to help where I can, like with fundraising." She also felt equipped to be on the SGB, and viewed her role as more pro-active than other SGB members:

> [B]ecause to a certain extent I have a say for my children, for example, where bullying is concerned. The SGB members are also never on the school premises, so they don't really know what goes on in the school. I work at the school, so I know what is going on.

Parent B felt that it was important for parents to be on the SGB in order to "listen to complaints and to help where they can. Not just to be seen and to come to meetings." She also described the role of the parents on the SGB as insignificant because they appeared to be inactive. In reference to the other SGB parent members, Parent B shared the following: "[t]hey only appear to be at the school when there are meetings, but the rest of the parents are never at school. So I don't know what they are on the SGB for." When Parent B stated, "the rest of the parents are never at school", she was referring to the rest of the parent component of the SGB not being present for meetings and generally not being involved in the school, unless a situation directly affected them. In other words, Parent B felt that she was the only active parent serving on the SGB. Thus, Parent B did what she could in the way that affected her immediately, such as with fundraising since it affected her salary. Evident from Parent B, is that she did not actually want to serve on the SGB. But, she did it anyway, as it allowed access to certain information, discussions and decisions, which she ordinarily would not have had. It was difficult to confirm her version about the rest of the parents and their involvement on the SGB.

Parent C is a police officer, and considered himself a leader both professionally and in his community. He therefore viewed his position as chairperson of the SGB as fitting for him – that is, that he saw himself as a natural leader. He states, "[a]s the chair, I see that everything goes smoothly. I hold the people accountable and keep a schedule." He also described the role of the

SGB as "very valuable" as he was a part of the community and regarded children from the community as his children too. As stated earlier, Parent C revealed that he did not have knowledge of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). He also did not understand the necessity and importance of keeping records and minutes. Despite this serious lack of knowledge, he maintained that he knew how to run the SGB smoothly.

Parent D appeared to be the most competent and knowledgeable of the group of parents, but this was predominantly due to the fact that he is a school principal by profession. It became apparent that he led and managed the SGB in the same way that he functioned at his own school. He saw himself as a natural leader, and considered the presence and active involvement of parents as vital in order to "assist with school policy and governance". Parent C and D seemed to have a particular understanding of their roles and responsibilities as chairpersons of their respective SGB's – specifically, that they were required to "provide leadership", and keep the SGB together. Both reported a healthy working relationship with the principal of their respective schools. They saw themselves as playing key roles in the day-to-day management of the school, and believed that a well-functioning school lead is important to the community. They could not, however, elaborate on their knowledge of school-based policies, or what specifically they dealt with, other than identifying themselves a "chairperson".

4.3.3.   Interaction with the principal in relation to the parents' functions on the SGB

When discussing the nature of the teamwork in the participating SGBs, many differences became prevalent. Parent A felt that there was a good sense of team work amongst the SGB members and stated, "[a]s a group, we are able to discuss matters to its conclusion." In other words, in the SGB at School A, the positive relationships between the teachers, parents and principal appeared to enable an SGB that is able to communicate but that may also be inactive at times as evidenced by their lack of feedback to the school's staff and parents annually (see section 4.2).

Parent B felt that there was a lack of teamwork in the SGB of School B because "[p]arent and teacher relationships are not great because there is very little communication. Only a few teachers on the SGB are actually interested in what the parents have to say." Parent B also shared that she felt alone, and described the SGB as inactive. From the interview with Parent B, it became apparent

that there was a disconnection between what Principal B discussed with me, and what actually happened amongst the SGB members, as described by Parent B. While Principal B attempted to create an impression that the SGB was functioning well despite the absence of core documents and policies, Parent B was of the opinion that the SGB was barely functioning due to poor inter-personal relationships. As the interview progressed with Parent B, it became more and more evident that the breakdown in communication was not only among SGB members and the principal, but also between the SGB and teachers.

Parent C stated that he "leads from the front as a role model". It would appear that this leadership style has worked for cultivating teamwork in this SGB because the principal replied, "the SGB really responds to the chairperson". Parent C further stated that there were "excellent relationships between the teachers and parents on the SGB. This is the best SGB I have served on so far". It is unclear how many other SGBs he had previously served on. The strength amongst these SGB members, according to Parent C, helped in cultivating teamwork and being productive. Additionally, they seemed to operate much like a family where everyone is always accessible and is also willing to help. Parent C had taken much of what he had learnt from his career as a leader, and used it in the SGB as the chairperson to foster a spirit of camaraderie and companionship and to create a space where everyone shared a common purpose. This was confirmed in an interview with Principal C who stated that he did not need to play a huge role in the SGB as the chairperson was very active.

A similar nature of teamwork was found in School D when it came to the inclusion and involvement of all its members. Parent D stated that this SGB was "accepting and cordial. Once they know and understand their role and relationship, the reception is better. Knowing that we don't want to tell them how to do their jobs, rather to improve governance at the school." In other words, at School D, everyone understood their duty, which enabled them to work together as a team and to be functional as the parent component of the SGB. The SGB members of School D appeared to get along. The only time that disagreement seemed to arise, according to Parent D, was when matters concerning learner discipline were discussed. Parents, in particular, had very different views on the types of discipline that needed to be practiced at the school. For School C and D, the motive for being productive was that their relationships were positive. According to

Parent C and D, every member understood his or her role, every member was helpful and every member wanted to do what was best for the learners. Having all the SGB members at School D understand their role made for positive relationships between the teachers, parents and the principal.

4.3.4.   Parental involvement and the functionality of the SGB

It appeared that the parent involvement in the SGB at School A was minimal, as reported by Parent A. This, according to Parent A, was predominantly due to the lack of communication among parents, and their seeming disinterest in being actively involved in the school, even though they were in the SGB and reported by Parent A to be able to discuss matters, it is clear now that not all matters are able to be discussed. Despite Parent A's concerns about the lack of active involvement of other parents on the SGB she was positive about those who did make an effort and who gave of their time, and maintained that "the SGB gives the school direction". She believed that the SGB might play a more meaningful role at the school "[b]y involving more parents in the school's business and culture".

Although Parent B shared the same concerns as Parent A regarding more active involvement from parents, Parent B was of the view that parents on the SGB did not influence the functionality of the SGB because "[t]he parents don't visit the school, they don't know what is going on, and the parents don't show." Parent B made the point "[h]ow can the parents serve on the SGB and they don't work?" She described the parents as not being involved at all, and had little to do with how the SGB functioned, or what roles it fulfilled. She maintained that the SGB would carry on with or without parents being involved.

Parent C reported that the role of the parents on the SGB was "vital because they represent the schooling community". As such, it was thought that each parent could give the community a voice when considering decisions that would affect the parents of the learners at the school. In the SGB of School C, each parent member had a specific portfolio to fulfil, such as uniform policy, code of conduct, finance, fundraising and the school prom. Although these parents might not have possessed the professional qualification to fulfil these portfolios, they were eager to assist because they had such a strong sense of teamwork, reported Parent C. Parent C stated that as the parent

component of the SGB, "we are involved in the school and are always looking for ways to become better at what we do for the school. Everyone helps, everyone contributes and plays their part." Thus, the parent component of this SGB appeared to make a rich contribution to the growth of the school. Parent C also stated, "[w]e treat the SGB like family and we do a lot of team building." According to Parent C, the school had many team building activities, which included the SGB, and which ensured that everyone felt included and valued.

Parent D shared that the parents on the SGB definitely had an influence on the functionality of the SGB. According to him, "currently, the SGB is entrenched in the functioning of the school and assists wherever possible". Unlike at Schools A and B, the parents on the SGB of School D were regarded as equals. In this SGB, as at School C, the parents were involved and their contributions and opinions were valued, taken into consideration and acted upon. The SGB at School D was functional because the portfolios that each member was required to fulfil appealed to their individual strengths and interests. For example, a civil engineer was responsible for the maintenance of the school building, a financier was the treasurer, a principal (of a different school) was the chairperson, and an electronic engineer tended to the computer lab. As a result, this SGB was functional.

4.3.5. Summary of parent interviews

The parent interviews revealed a number of interesting findings, which include the following:

- Poor understandings of what is required of the SGB, as stipulated in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Only one parent had any understanding of what was actually required from the SGB – Parent D, but this was because he was a school principal at another school.
- Parents fulfilled minimal roles on the SGB, and had very little idea of what was actually happening in their respective schools.
- Involvement on the SGB was measured in terms of being present at school, and attending meetings. There was no sense of any strategic decision-making in relation to developing and improving the school.
- Not one parent mentioned being involved in teacher appointments.
- Parents' decision to become involved in the SGB are often shaped by their own desires and interests, and most importantly, to keep an eye on their own child.

- Poor communication was cited as a prime reason for poor involvement from parents.

- A lack of activity from some SGB members might thwart the productivity and functionality of the SGB.

- On the other hand, strong relationships between SGB members, and where teamwork was a priority, made for a highly functional SGB – as was the case with School D

4.4. Interviews with principals

4.4.1. How and why parents become involved in the SGB

When the question in this regard was posed to the principals, there was consensus that parents serve on the SGB in order to cultivate democracy by allowing the parents of the schooling community a voice in the functioning of the school. For example, Principal A stated that parents became involved in the SGB in order to "assist management and governance". Principal B stated that parents become involved in the SGB in order to "contribute to the school and to come from the learners' perspective". Principal C stated that parents become involved in the SGB in order to "assist the school in moving forward". Principal D stated that parents became involved in the SGB in order to represent the parents from the community, to cater for the parents' needs and the needs of the learners".

All four principals reported that they had approached specific parents to run for the SGB elections by nominating themselves. The method of approaching specific parents to serve on the SGB related to the skills, expertise or connections the potential parent member might possess. However, this did not mean that these principals excluded anyone from becoming an SGB member. All principals ensured that the process to nominate and elect an SGB member was done fairly, openly and democratically. None of the principals considered approaching parents directly as problematic or undermining of the democratic process. They did not think that directly approaching certain parents, excluded others, as, according to them, parents were reluctant to get involved in the first place. And, if parents were to ask to become involved, they would find a way to secure their involvement.

4.4.2. Roles and relationships of parents on the SGB

When asked about the types of roles and responsibilities that parents fulfil, there were many different opinions. Principal A said that, although the SGB parent members did not have any skills or qualifications that allowed them to contribute effectively to the SGB, they were eager to learn and take the school forward. These parents were motivated to give the learners, and therefore their children who attend the school, a better schooling environment. Additionally, most of the SGB parents from School A attended this school as learners and wanted to invest in it.

Principal B said that the parent members of the SGB were not qualified to be on the SGB, but they had attended SGB training as provided by the WCED. Additionally, to support these parents as many of them did not possess adequate skills to serve on the SGB, they were given a file at the beginning of their term. This file was filled with information that they needed in order to tend to matters such as the code of conduct, finance, fundraising and other school policies. This information contradicts the earlier finding that School B did not have any record of an SGB Constitution, Code of Conduct for the SGB, and records of minutes of SGB meetings. When asked about this, Principal B responded that he had ensured that all SGB members receive the necessary training and information. He could not be held responsible if they were not fulfilling what was required of them. He further stated that he could not be held responsible for managing parents.

Principal C observed that the SGB did not possess the adequate skills to fulfil the responsibilities of governance. For example, when asked whether the SGB was equipped to govern the school, Principal C's response was, "[t]hey have the right spirit and they are willing to learn." Most of the parents serving on the SGB of School C were unemployed and as such did not possess a trade or knowledge to fulfil certain functions, such as creating a budget or developing school policy. Due to the lack of skills amongst the SGB members, many of the responsibilities that the SGB members were supposed to fulfil were fulfilled by the SMT. The SGB did the best they could, but Principal C believed that, due to the lack of skills amongst the parents of the SGB, "the school should rather not have an SGB". It became evident that although Principal C attempted to be positive about parents on the SGB, he viewed their involvement as a burden, rather than an advantage. He reported that their lack of skills and understanding of how a school functions, meant that they could not make any substantial contributions.

According to Principal D, the SGB was equipped to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. As mentioned before, this SGB had a civil engineer maintaining their school building, an electronics engineer tending to the computer lab, a financier as their treasurer, and another school principal as their chairperson. A composite of skills such as these makes for for an established and functional SGB. At this school, it was evident that Principal D was able to let the SGB serve with minimal guidance and involvement from himself. Principal D considered the SGB as an entirely positive group, who made a meaningful contribution to the school. He valued the input of parents, and used their skills to the advantage of the school.

4.4.3. Interaction with the teachers and principal regarding the parents function on the SGB

When the four principals were asked about the interactions between their SGB members and the way this affected the functioning of their SGB, many different opinions emerged. Principal A stated that there existed a "balanced approached in the SGB, lots of consultation between parents and the teachers". Due to the communication that was evident amongst these SGB members, they appeared to be functional; consequently, the principal did not have to do much himself.

Principal B stated:

> In the past, there was some animosity between the school staff and the rest of the SGB because of the SGB not bringing their part. Also, the fact that parents on the SGB may not have fulfilled their role, would upset the teachers. Currently, some SGB members want to help and work, but it is not always practical and able to implement. The school staff sometimes can't understand this. The parents and the staff of the SGB understand each other about 70% of the time.

Principal B went on to say that the animosity between the SGB members and teachers sometimes caused the SGB to be slow or "unproductive". When I consider what Parent B had said, and what Principal B had said, there appeared to be a high degree of dysfunctionality on this SGB – not only because of what was revealed by both Parent B and Principal B, but because of the inconsistency that became evident through the interviews.

Principal C stated that in his SGB, there were "very good relationships. For example, three of the current SGB members were learners at the school, and have now returned to give back to the community." Upon engagement with Principal C, it appeared that he trusted the chairperson of the SGB and could take a back seat with regard to certain issues such as discipline.

Principal D stated that in his SGB:

> [There is not] conflict between members. As long as we fight for what is right and not our own agendas, and not for personal gain. As long as we fight for what is in the best interest of the children. We always discuss issues and vote to reach a compromise. As long as the decision is in the best interest of the learners.

At School D, it would appear that the communication and clarity of duties enabled them to be a very functional SGB. Since the chairperson of the SGB at School D was the principal of a different school, Principal D also did not need to intervene a lot either. Principal D had the confidence of knowing that Parent D's involvement practically meant the support of another principal.

4.4.4. Parental involvement affecting the functioning of the SGB

As previously discussed (see Chapter 2), the establishment of the SGB, in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), is viewed as the cultivation of schools as democratic spaces of engagement (Van Wyk, 2004: 49). In this respect, the specific involvement and participation of parents on the SGB in the day-to-day management of a school, not only secures community support, but also responsibility and accountability. The governance responsibilities of parents are far-reaching, and hold extensive implications not only for the levels of community influence on schools, but certainly also on how a school is governed and managed. In its function as a key role player – whether in relation to policy design, deciding on school fees, or the appointment of teachers – the SGB fulfils a particular democratic mandate of inclusivity, active participation, deliberation and accountability to both the school and its community. In the discussion that follows, I present the findings on how parents understood their role and responsibilities as governors, and whether their involvement enhanced or curtailed democratic practices at their respective schools – from the perspective of the principals.

Principal A reported that while some of the parents were actively involved in the SGB, others were not. As a result, all the parents did not participate in key decisions relating to the daily functioning of the school, thereby leaving the overall governance to a few parents, and mostly the principal and teachers. Principal A was, therefore, of the opinion that parents did not really have a say in the school – in spite of what the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) required. He cited numerous examples in which parents were simply not involved due to a lack of knowledge – such as designing policies, making financial decisions, or assisting in the implementation of strategic decisions. He went on to state that he does not believe that the SGB at his school was an adequate example of democratic governance, as all role-players were not involved, and ultimately key decision were made by the SMT and him. In fact, it became evident during the interview that in many instances Principal A saw the parents on the SGB as a hindrance, that required additional management, rather than as an additional support structure to overall leadership and management for the school. Although he recognised, that many of the challenges he was experiencing with the respective parents on the SGB were due to poor skills and a lack of knowledge, he did not consider it as his responsibility to address or remedy this.

According to Principal B, one of the major problems and constraints pertaining to parent involvement on the SGB, was that "[t]here is not enough time in the SGB term for parents to become acquainted with their role and implement it." Principal B was of the opinion that, "three years is too short a term for novice SGB members". He maintained that by the time parents began to understand what was required of them as governors, their term of office had ended. Most parents, according to him, did not opt to stand for a second term. Like Parent B, Principal B, pointed out that most parents on the SGB were not actively involved. The implications of this, was that parents could not really have a big influence on the SGB. He added, because parents often lacked the skills and knowledge in order to fulfil their roles on the SGB, they found being on the SGB quite frustrating, and as a result, could not make a meaningful contribution, Principal B was of the opinion that parents did not really play a role in cultivating a democratic school, where they are a part of the decision-making processes. Instead, parents spent most of their time just trying to figure out what they needed to do. According to Principal B, the involvement of parents on the SGB was limited to their attendance at meetings. They had no say or involvement in designing

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policies, such as admission, uniform, or codes of conduct. Their roles in the appointment of staff was also limited to mere observation, rather than being actively involved in the interview process. He did not believe that they played any role in cultivating a democratic environment at the school, as they were not involved in decision-making processes, and depended on him, as the principal to make any key leadership decisions. Like Principal A, he did not believe that he could remedy or improve the involvement of parents on the SGB.

Sharing the views of Parent C, Principal C stated that the SGB was functioning well due to their chairperson, "[v]ery functional, the chairperson is a natural leader and the people respond to him well. Do what is expected. They do their job well." According to Principal C, the parents were involved in the day-to-day management of the school, and they played a key role in important decisions. In his opinion, the parents, through their participation, ensured that more opinions were taken into account. The principal believed that the parents played a significant role in cultivating a democratic atmosphere at the school, since they participated in policy design – such as admissions, the school budget, uniform, as well as the codes of conduct for learners and teachers. Principal C also indicated that he could rely on the SGB to make the right decisions for the school, which made him feel supported.

Principal D had many qualified SGB members and because of their skills and professional qualifications, as mentioned earlier, they were able to function well. This SGB also managed to function well because all of the members understood their roles and responsibilities. Since these SGB members were already qualified to fulfil their designated portfolios, fostering democracy was "less of a chore". According to the principal, the parents all engaged with respect and regard for the other, and there was a real sense of teamwork on the SGB. And because all the SGB members had a clear idea of their respective roles and responsibilities, they did not infringe on each other's roles and responsibilities. According to Principal D, the SGB was a positive structure, and the parents played a vital role in continuously improving the school.

Cultivating democracy would appear to be challenging in an SGB where the members are not all active and where there is poor communication between the members. However, fostering democracy would appear to be possible and active where the parent members of the SGB are

present and involved, and where they fulfil their duties. It would thus appear that a lack of parent involvement in an SGB results in a poorer functioning SGB than what would be possible had the parental component of the SGB been active. Moreover, where SGBs, such as at School B, are not functioning as they should, the SGB does not play a role in creating a democratic space of consultative participation and decision-making.

4.4.5. Summary of interviews with principals

The interviews with the principals revealed two distinctively different governance contexts. While Principals C and D enjoyed the support of highly involved parents on the SGB, Principals A and B saw the parents on the SGB as more of a presence, than an active participation. It also became evident that the discrepancies between these two sets of experiences could largely be assigned to a lack of knowledge and skills of parents at Schools A and B. And although all the principals reported that their respective SGBs had indeed received SGB training, it was clear from the interviews with parents that this training was either inadequate, or that the parents lacked the necessary baseline skills in order to make sense of, and absorb the training. Equally apparent from the interviews with Principals A and B were their levels of frustration at not being able to enjoy the benefits of an optimally functioning SGB. Because the parents could not fulfil most of the roles, as expected of them in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), these became the responsibility of the respective principals and SMT. Consequently, the SGBs at Schools A and B, are seen as an unnecessary burden, who are in no position to fulfil what is expected of an SGB. Principals A and B see the election and process of appointing the SGB as a mere technical process, in which they have no say, and have no impact on the functioning of their respective schools. By contrast, where the SGB has a strong leader, as in School D and C, the SGB is able to have a clearly defined focus. This provides the principal with much needed support, and as is the case with Principal D, is able to rely upon and trust the SGB. Finally, a strong sense of teamwork and positive relationships between various members on the SGB not only helps to foster democracy amongst the SGB members, but it also enables the SGB to be positive, and feel motivated to fulfil their mandate.

CHAPTER 5

Research analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the research findings, as discussed in Chapter 4. This analysis is guided by the central focus of this study, which is to understand the nature of parental involvement in SGBs by looking at four public primary schools in the Western Cape. As discussed in Chapter 4, the interviews yielded a number of interesting findings in relation to the following:

- Why parents decide to serve on the SGB;
- The roles and responsibilities of parent governors serving on the SGB;
- The interaction between the SGB and the parents and the way this affects the functionality of the SGB; and
- The way the presence of the parent governors affects the functioning on the SGB, and as such, the democratic governance of the school.

In this regard, perspectives were gained from the four respective school principals, as well as the four parents from each of the four respective SGBs.

By using the qualitative research lens as presented in Chapter 3, and by considering the literature review, I now offer an analysis of the main research findings.

5.2. Analysis of documents

The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) requires the SGB to have meetings with its members at least once a term and to have meetings with the school staff and parents at least once a year. The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) also requires that the SGB possesses minutes of these meetings and that these minutes are available for inspection by the Head of Department. Additionally, according to the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the SGB is also required to have its own code of conduct that enables the improvement of the school, allows the Head of Department to suspend or terminate a member's membership should they breach this code of conduct and that the code of conduct allows members to appeal to the Executive Council when necessary. The code of conduct should therefore act in the best interest of the SGB members. The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) also

stipulates that a copy of the SGBs constitution be submitted to the Head of Department within 90 days of its election.

The interviews with Principal A and Parent A revealed that even though the SGB at School A possessed all the documents - that is, a Constitution and a Code of Conduct for the SGB – it was not implemented at School A. In other words, the SGB of School A does not employ the stipulations of these documents. It would appear that a lack of understanding and engagement with the purpose, role and responsibility of the SGB, has contributed to the poor functionality of the SGB at school A. This was evident in Parent A's interview in which she shared that she was unaware of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), and equally unaware of what was required of her as an SGB member. Since the SGB at School A does not practice the workings of its stipulated documentation, as prescribed by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the SGB does not promote the improvement of the school's environment, the members of the SGB are not protected against ill will, no disciplinary action can be taken against any SGB member and no platform is provided for the SGB members to appeal to the Executive Council. In essence, School A appears to be failing in cultivating an environment for both participatory and deliberative democracy. That is, not only are parents not deliberating on key policy issues and decisions, but they are not participating in the day-to-day management of the schools. Instead their only presence at school is when they are required to attend SGB meetings. Furthermore the lack of functionality of the SGB at School A can also be due to the fact that sometimes the SGB at School A has nothing to report back to the staff and parents of the school once a year. Thus, although the SGB at School A may possess the necessary documentation to be able to function effectively, it is evident that these documents are not implemented by the SGB at School A.

Like School A, the SGB at School B appears to be equally low-functioning – and for the same reasons. Parents do not have a clear idea of what they are supposed to do, and because of Principal B's own frustration, he does not make the time to address or clarify the situation. As was the case with Principal A, Principal B could produce all the documentation, as required for the functionality of the SGB. However, the roles and responsibilities expected from parents on the SGB, were not being fulfilled – thereby presenting a clear disjuncture between policy and practice. Interviews with both Parent B and Principal B revealed very little contact, and no real involvement, between

the principal and the SGB. In turn, this meant, very little, if any, opportunities and spaces for practices of participation and deliberation. The poor relationship between the principal and the SGB had particular implications for communication and interaction with the school community. Because the principal perceived the SGB as non-functioning, he did not see the community as having any involvement in the school, and seemingly felt less accountable to them.

The SGBs at Schools C and D were different to those at Schools A and B, and seemed to enact what is required of them in terms of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Notably, the SGBs from Schools C and D possessed all of the documentation, as prescribed for SGBs by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), and implemented these, as required. It appears that the stipulations of these documents have enabled these two SGBs to function effectively – specifically in relation to creating environments conducive to both participatory and deliberative democracy. Very clear from both schools, as pointed out by Cooke (2000: 949), is that deliberative democracy has the power to generate a sense of community. Because of this sense of community, the SGBs at Schools C and D not only acted in consultation with their respective school communities, but saw their roles as representative of larger communities. They felt both responsible for, and accountable to the communities, which they were serving. As such, the two SGBs exhibited a confidence in their right to participate in the day-to-day management of the school, and to deliberate on matters of importance to the overall wellbeing of the school.

In summary, on the one hand, it is evident that SGBs need particular guidelines and policies in order to fulfil their mandate. On the other hand, however, possession of these guidelines and policies do not imply a functional SGB – as was clearly the case at Schools A and B.

5.3. How and why parents become involved in the SGB

According to the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the SGB was introduced in order to cultivate democracy in schools by allowing parents to be involved in the day-to-day management of the school. However, upon interviewing the participating parents, it was evident that none of the parents became involved in the SGB to cultivate democracy directly – that is, they did not have an understanding of the SGB as fulfilling a democratic mandate. While Parents A and B revealed no

understanding of the SA Schools Act, Parent C revealed a very limited understanding, and since Parent D was a principal of another school by profession, he displayed a clear understanding of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). It was equally surprising to find that Principals A, B and C also did not have a good understanding of the SA Schools Act in relation to school governance. The parents' decisions to join the SGB were motivated by their own personal agendas, which included;

- Helping the school in any capacity they could offer;
- Taking the school forward
- Being a role model for the learners in the community;
- Helping with school fundraising; as well as
- Being involved in the SGB because they were asked to do so due to a unique skill that they could offer the school.

Although parents on the SGB of School C and D had particular skills, which were of value to the SGB, this was not the case at School A and B. For example, Parent A was not equipped to fulfil the role of treasurer on the SGB, even though she was appointed as such. Parent B was an unemployed parent who was offered employment as the school librarian. For Parent B, being on the school premises meant that she could be involved in discipline and other daily functions. She also felt very strongly about being able to be amongst the learners in order for her to make a practical contribution to the school even though she did not possess the appropriate qualification. Parent B reminds one of Parker and Leithwood's (2000: 38) assertion that decisions about school governance should be made by the parents as they are the closest to the learners. Parents C and D were both leaders by profession and both served as the chairpersons of their SGB. Parent C was also involved in the community, and these two parents fulfilled what Johnson and Christenson (2000: 180) refer to when they argue that the needs for each school are best determined at local level, as each community and therefore the school, have distinct needs.

Although the parents become involved in the SGB for various reasons, many of the parents did not yet notice the correlation between what the schools needed, by way of governance, and why they were being approached to serve on the SGB. They did however recognise that they had a role to play in terms of fulfilling certain responsibilities, and providing particular skills, but they did not

comprehend the role of governance in terms of advancing the democratic agenda of their respective schools. Clearly, the mere presence of parents on school premises cannot be assumed to be practices of participatory and deliberative democracy. Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60), for example, contend that participatory democracy requires all members of society to participate in decision-making processes within institutions, organisations and societal and government structures. This was certainly not the case at Schools A and B, where parents did not have a say in key decision-making processes – due to their lack of knowledge of what is required of them as governors. The experiences at Schools C and D were different in that Parents C and D, as well as Principals C and D reported a sense of collective decision-making, and echoed Cooke's (2000: 949) argument, 'deliberative processes impose a certain reflexivity on individual preferences and opinions forcing participants to adopt an enlarged mentality'

5.4. Roles and responsibilities of parents of the SGB

The SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) mandates that parents who are serving on the SGB have to fulfil numerous roles and responsibilities in order to cultivate democracy from within SA public schools. These functions of the SGB are listed in sections 20 and 21 of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

Upon interviewing the participating parents, it became apparent, as established earlier in this chapter (see section 5.3.1), that these parents were not aware of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) and therefore they were also unaware of the roles and responsibilities they had to fulfil as members of the SGB as stipulated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Apart from Parents C and D who were leaders by profession, Parents A and B were unaware of the responsibility they had towards the school as parent governors of the SGB. It appeared that their lack of knowledge about the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) and subsequently its roles and responsibilities, left them feeling very vulnerable. The capacity of parents to fulfil their respective roles and responsibilities on the SGB was largely dependent on their own knowledge of the basic functionality and requirements of a school. The findings of this research echo those of Van Wyk (2007: 134) and Xaba (2011: 206), who found that many parents misunderstand their roles and responsibilities; they either did not do what was required at all, or they performed their task incorrectly.

Parents A and B reported feeling uncertain as to what was required of them, and as such, had no real sense of what they should be doing. As a result, they were perceived by Principals A and B, respectively, as doing nothing. Stated differently, the incapacity of parents to fulfil the stipulated requirements of school governance, was interpreted as an additional burden placed onto the principal.

While Principals C and D could rely on their respective SGBs to fulfil their governance function, and hence support the leadership and management structures of the school, this was not the case at Schools A and B. In not fully understanding what was expected of her, Parent B, for example, considered being employed at the school, as best serving her function on the SGB. She enjoyed keeping an eye on things, and engaging with learners, and assumed this as a governance function. As expected, the incapacity of parents to assume their full responsibilities in terms of participating on policy design, financial management, or fundraising, meant that these responsibilities fell onto the shoulders of the principal and SMT. A similar finding was made by Karlsson (2002), who reported that where parents share their misunderstandings, confusion or general sense of discomfort, the principal often simply assumed any responsibilities which the parents might have had. By implication, the principal, in addition to holding leadership and management responsibilities, also becomes responsible for governance functions. Similar to the findings of Van Wyk's (2007) study, this study found that parents are reluctant to ask for help from the principal or teachers on the SGB, as they fear exposing themselves, and being asked to leave. Adding to the frustration of Principal A and B – as revealed through the interviews – is having to manage the parents on the SGB, while knowing that their positions on the SGB are of no value. This scenario not only undermines the very purpose of the SGB, which is to cultivate schools as democratic sites, but creates unnecessary tension between the principal and parents.

5.5. Interaction with the principal in relation to his or her function in the SGB

The interviews revealed the critical role of communication between the principal and the SGB. On the one hand, Parent A and B did not feel comfortable in communicating with the principal, or with other members of the SGB, as they did not feel capacitated to do so. Another reason could be that they feared being exposed as being inadequate – although this was not articulated by either

Parent A or B. On the other hand, Principals A and B reported a reluctance to engage with the parents on the SGB, as they did not think it would yield any positive results, as they (the principals) considered the parents' lack of knowledge and skills as a factor, which could not be remedied by them. Discussions with both Principals A and B revealed that they did not consider the parents on their SGBs as being suitably qualified to fulfil a function of governance. Again, this finding echoes that of Van Wyk (2007), who found that parent representation on the SGB remains unequal and problematic at historically disadvantaged schools. The lack of communication has led to a further breakdown in relation to the functionality of the respective SGBs, as well as the principals' trust in the SGBs to fulfil their mandates. The end result, though, at both Schools A and B, are poorly functioning SGBs, where the principal presumably feels justified in assuming the responsibilities of the SGB. This finding ties in with Heystek's (2011) contention that since the situation in poor schools is such that parents lack the minimum skills to function as effective SGB members, where responsibilities such as drafting policy and reading legislation are concerned, those principals have no choice but to take control and fulfil those responsibilities.

Notably, the situations as Schools C and D were entirely different to that at Schools A and B. Because the parents on the SGBs of Schools C and D were more qualified, and perceivably had a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities, Principals C and D felt secure in trusting the SGB in their roles. Both principals reported enjoying great support and fewer responsibilities, because of the high levels of expertise on the SGB. As a result the interactions between these two principals and their respective SGBs were positive, which, in turn, led to greater patterns of engagement and the cultivation of democratic processes of participation and deliberation, not only within the school, but between the school and the parent community.

5.6. Parental involvement affecting the functionality of the SGB

In Chapter 2, it was established that the purpose of the SGB is to contribute to creating an open and democratic schooling environment. However, when one considers the findings of Schools A and B, in particular, it becomes apparent that the existence of the SGB does not necessarily imply the fulfilment of a governance function, or the cultivation of a democratic agenda.

During the interviews with the participating parents and the participating principals, it became evident that the parental involvement in the SGB has a significant and noticeable influence on the quality of the functioning of the SGB. As discussed before, the parent governors constitute the majority of the SGB members and hence have the potential to affect the functioning of the SGB significantly.

As discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, the expectation placed on SGBs by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) is for SGBs to orientate schools towards democracy through the involvement of parents in school governance. In order to orientate the school towards democracy, the SGB needs to employ the workings of participatory democracy while implementing the functions of deliberative democracy as stipulated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). In other words, the SGB is heavily reliant on the participation of its parent governors in fulfilling the democratic mandate of the SGB. Based on this study, it is therefore my view that it is essential for an SGB to consider and use the conceptions of participatory democracy, as described by Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60) – specifically, that "In other words, according to Smit and Oosthuizen (2011: 60), the participatory model of democracy is such that when power is shared within an organisation, it involves joint decision-making and participation practiced in both management and governance". Similarly, when the SGB is employing the workings of participatory democracy, which is evidenced in the SGB being inclusive amongst themselves, the SGB also has to employ deliberative democracy as it enables decision-making, as propagated by Gutmann and Thompson (2004: 3). Thus, Floridia (2013: 4) says that when an SGB employs deliberative democracy secondarily to participatory democracy, the SGB is being inclusive amongst themselves, involving all of its members and giving each member equal opportunity while respecting the views and opinions of each other. In other words, SGB members have to employ participatory democracy amongst themselves by collaborating on initiative and achieving goals regarding school governance together.

Zittle and Fuchs (2007: 45) say that using participatory democracy amongst the members of the SGB also means that every SGB member participates in orientating the school towards democracy and that every SGB member is included in decision-making processes regarding school governance. This participation should occur through a process of deliberation by the SGB

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members engaging with each other, as Principal D stated, "as long as we fight about the right things", to employ the workings of deliberative democracy. When the SGB employs deliberative democracy amongst themselves it means that they are all involved in the decision-making process that demand their participation regarding school governance. Similarly, if SGBs were to employ participatory democracy, as they should, it would be evident in the commitment SGBs display in making decisions together. In other words, Cooke (2000: 949) says that the SGB should be inclusive amongst themselves, embark on collective deliberation so that all members made a contribution, and in this way set the tone for democratic governance.

However, when I consider the SGBs at Schools A and B, it becomes apparent that practices of participation and deliberation are not forthcoming, which has had a dire impact on the functionality of the SGB, and hence, the school. The lack of functionality in Schools A and B was evidenced by:

- A lack of communication between participating parents and participating principals;
- A lack of interaction between SGB members and the principal;
- A lack of knowledge and understanding by parents about their roles and responsibilities as a governing body;
- A lack of knowledge about why they were approached to join the SGB, or why they opted to be on the SGB; and
- A reluctance by Principals A and B to address the inadequacies evident in their respective SGBs.

Underscoring the findings above is clear evidence that the parents at all four schools did not have a clear understanding of the purpose and function of the SGB prior to them becoming involved. Although Parents C and D had better qualifications, and were better capacitated to take on responsibilities of school governors, they did not necessarily have a better understanding of the stated purpose of an SGB, as contained within the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Because of the knowledge set, they were, however, better equipped to understand the SGB training, and to respond to what was required of them. By contrast, the lack of qualifications, knowledge and skills prevented Parents A and B from fully understanding their roles and responsibilities, and inspite of attending training, they were not able to internalize what they had been taught. Consequently,

Parents A and B did not participate in their roles as parent governors, and merely presented themselves at meetings. It would seem that their perceived lack of involvement and silence was interpreted as a lack of interest by the parents, which served to further justify their reluctance to secure more involvement from parents on the SGB.

School governance, as defined in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), requires a high level set of skills, all geared towards what is in the best interest of the school. In addition to policy design, and financial management, these include supporting the principal, the teachers and other members of staff in the performance of their professional functions; administration of school property and resources; and the appointment of staff. By any account, these responsibilities would require knowledge and skills within any context. Despite SGB training, as evidenced by Parents A and B, and supported by studies by Mabasa and Themane (2002), parents are unfamiliar with meeting procedures, they have a problem with the language used in meetings, they have difficulty in managing large volumes of paper work, they do not know how to contribute, they do not know the appropriate legislation, they feel intimidated by other members who are more knowledgeable and they endorse exactly what others have already decided due to feelings of inadequacy. Yet, in spite of these concerns, parents continue to occupy very powerful positions on the SGB, by virtue of their roles and responsibilities. It is therefore reason for concern to find, as this study has, that the establishment of SGBs is not necessarily an indication of the cultivation or extension of the democratic agenda within schools.

Being involved in the governance of the school effectively means that the SGB should employ the workings of participatory democracy in that members of the society or organisation need to be involved in decision-making processes within the SGB (Smit and Oosthuizen, 2011: 60). Moreover, Cooke (2000: 949) states that the culture of active decision-making should lead the SGB to become their own community. In turn, employing the workings of participatory and deliberative democracy means that there exists a strong sense of belonging, deliberation and participation, supports Eriksen and Weigard (2003: 128). Upon interviewing the principals and parents from Schools A and B, none of these essential concepts, such as inclusion, engagement and deliberation appeared to be evidenced within these two SGBs, which contributed to these SGBs not functioning as effectively as they should. Since participatory democracy and deliberative

democracy do not exist prominently within the SGBs of School A and B, these SGBs did not promote an atmosphere of democracy and governance within the school and its community. In fact, it became evident that while the parents viewed their roles with scepticism, due to a lack of understanding, the principals had little trust in the SGB to play a meaningful role. In this regard, what should have been a promotion of democratic engagement, descended into a climate of disengagement and mistrust.

By contrast, Principals C and D, and Parents C and D reported healthy levels of communication and engagement. At Schools C and D, the parent governors were active, involved, willing and available and the schools appeared to grow with the surrounding community. The SGB members of Schools C and D understood that the decisions they make as a governing body would affect them directly as the parents of the learners. The surrounding communities of Schools C and D were also involved in the school, its development and its contribution to the community. The parents reported a high incidence of participation in key decision-making processes, and a sense of validation in having their input taken into account in the overall leading and managing of the school. It also became evident through the interviews that both schools enjoyed a sense of collective decision-making, and felt a joint sense of responsibility in taking care of their respective schools, because they engaged in deliberative encounters in maintaining the school. This is confirmed by Cooke (2000: 948-953), who argues that deliberative democracy involves and emphasizes public reasoning; contributes constructively to the practical rationality of democratic outcomes; and improves the fairness of democratic outcomes.

Following the above, parental involvement in the SGB is of vital importance as a lack of such involvement could have negative implications for the SGB. Where the SGB does not stimulate democracy at the school, it does not serve its learners and the community. In other words, if the parent governors of the SGB are not actively involved, it is highly likely that the SGB will not function optimally. On the other hand, if the parent governors of the SGB are active and willing to govern, and are under effective leadership, the SGB will function optimally. Since parents constitute the majority of members of the SGB, their active involvement or lack of active involvement will have an effect on the SGB. Additionally, if the parent component of the SGB is

not active and uninvolved, the mandate of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) cannot be achieved because the SGB has not orientated the school on the way to democracy.

5.7. Summary

It appears that the workings of the stipulated documentation for SGBs by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) has a significant effect on the functioning of the SGB in relation to the school and community. Similarly, the nature of parental involvement in SGBs also has a significant effect on the functioning of a school. The SGB severely influences the orientation of the school towards democracy as well as advancing the school and the schooling community in achieving the mandate of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

The presence of a Code of Conduct and Constitution in an SGB that does not imply that the SGB employs the workings of the Code of Conduct and Constitution. Moreover, the technical functionality of an SGB is affected by the implementation of the documents which the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) requires SGBs to possess and employ. The use of these documents enables the SGB to connect with the school and also to connect the school with the community. Notably, when these documents do not exist within an SGB, or are not employed by the SGB, the functionality of the SGB suffers which further burdens the school's leadership and management with SGB roles and responsibilities, and which also does not orientate the school towards democracy.

Although the participating parents did not become members of the SGB to cultivate democracy, they did however become involved in the SGB for reasons such as helping the school achieve its goals and improving the school for their children. Even though the parents displayed a very limited view of the purpose of the SGB, some of them were involved in the daily functioning of the school, while other parents were not. The lack of involvement by parent governors negatively affected the functionality of the SGB, whereas deliberate involvement by the parent governors enabled the SGB to function effectively. It also appeared that some of the participating parents were unaware of the roles and responsibilities that the SGB has to fulfil as stipulated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

The interaction between school principals and parents on the SGB greatly affected the functioning of the SGB. The quality and communication that existed amongst the members of the SGB influenced the working relationships amongst SGB members, which in turn influenced the quality of the functionality of the SGB. In the cases of Schools A and B, the negative relationship between the principals and the SGB parents resulted in a poorly functioning SGB. In turn, where positive relationships existed between the principal and the SGB parents – as was the case at Schools C and D – the SGB could fulfil its mandate in advancing the democratic agenda of the school. It needs to be noted, however, that the poor relationships between the principals and parents at Schools A and B, respectively, did not emanate from any particular incident or conflict. It seemingly emanated from, on the one hand, a lack of capacity and skills as experienced by the parent governors, and on the other hand, a perception by the two principals that the parent governors were not equipped to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, and were therefore an unnecessary burden.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

In spite of deep-seated political changes and subsequent reform in education, South African society remains a widely disparate one, which is especially evident in South African public schools (see Bhorat, 2012). Although schools have been desegregated and the demographics of learners have shifted at a number of schools, Bhorat (2012: 1) says that the overwhelming majority of historically disadvantaged schools continue to be affected by impoverished, and at times, deeply troubled communities. Furthermore, as was the focus of this research, SGBs in historically disadvantaged communities face tremendous and unrecorded challenges, as they struggle to fulfil the governance function at schools, largely because of the incapacities of the parent body (Heystek, 2011: 458. See also section 2.8.3 of this study). Due to the lack of skills, knowledge, understanding, qualifications and experience of historically disadvantaged parents, they have very little to offer the roles and functioning of an SGB. Since parents as SGB members constitute the majority on SGBs, a lack of skills among parents has a negative influence on the functioning of the governance of the school. Moreover, the lack of skills among the parent component of the SGB makes it impossible to devolve some of the leadership and managerial responsibilities of the school to the SGB.

I embarked on this research in order to explore the nature of parental involvement in SGBs. In this regard, I sought to address four sub-research questions:

- How and why do parents become involved in SGBs?
- Which type of roles and responsibilities do parents fulfil on the SGB?
- How do parents interact and work with teachers and principals in relation to their functions on the SGB?
- How does parental involvement affect the functioning of the SGB and hence the democratic governance of the school?

In this chapter, I present a summary of the main research findings. By drawing on the main findings of my research, I will consider the implications for SGBs. Next, I will consider the significance and potential contribution of this research, while I also take into account the limitation of the research. I conclude by making particular recommendations for further research considerations.

6.2. Summary of main findings

In this research, it was revealed that parents become involved in SGBs for reasons that do not necessarily align with how the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) conceives governance – in particular, how parental involvement is conceived as extending the democratic agenda and character of a school. Instead, as my findings revealed, parents become involved for their own personal reasons, such as being a role model for the learners in the community, being available and accessible for the SGB, and contributing a unique skill the participating parents had to offer the SGB.

Participating parents reported becoming involved in the SGB for various reasons. For example, Parent A became involved in the SGB to have a positive influence in her child's schooling career. Parent B became involved in the SGB because she found employment with the school. Thus, since Parent B was physically present on the school premises every day, she had the opportunity to contribute to the daily running of the school. Parent C was a prominent figure in the community, and chose to serve on the SGB in order to be a role model for the learners in the school. Parent D had a unique skill (i.e. leadership) to contribute to the SGB, and as a result, he was approached to join the SGB.

In sum, parents had very little, if any, understanding of how their role as school governors is supposed to run parallel to and in support of the leadership and management functions of their respective schools which was evidenced by the parent participants' lack of knowledge about the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). They were also unclear about the fact that their participation and representation were supposed to cultivate the democratic agenda of parents in the day-to-day management of the school. Stated differently, the majority of parents did not have a broad understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and were therefore not in a position to play a meaningful role, specifically in promoting greater parental involvement and participation.

When we consider the types of roles and responsibilities parent governors fulfil, it becomes apparent that some of the participating parents were unaware of the roles and responsibilities they were mandated to fulfil. Parent A fulfilled the role of treasurer of the SGB as she had attended the necessary training. Parent B did not have a specific role to fulfil and preferred helping where she could, especially with fundraising. Parent C was a police officer by profession and fulfilled the role of chairperson of the SGB, which allowed him to transfer his leadership qualities from the nature of his career to his role as chairperson. Parent D was the principal of another primary school and transferred his leadership skills to being the chairperson of the SGB at School D. It is unclear why parents did not attend the required training for newly established SGBs – parents provided very vague responses. It would appear, however, that neither the respective school principals nor the parents viewed training as a priority. In turn, there might be different reasons for this lack of importance. It could be that in light of the poor qualifications of the parents or a lack of qualifications, they were reluctant to attend, because they feared that they would not understand and could potentially embarrass themselves. It could also be that the necessary support was simply not provided by the respective schools in order for them to attend, given that most of the parents did not have their own transport. Or it could simply be a matter of apathy on both the part of the principal as well as the SGB parent members.

Secondly, the existence of particular policies pertaining to the functioning of the SGB did not necessarily ensure that these policies were being implemented or adhered to by the SGB. In fact, none of the four principals or parents could provide adequate understandings of the governance function of the SGB, as contained in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). Thirdly, the level of communication and interaction between the principals and parent governors are critical to the optimal functioning of the SGB. Where parent governors feel supported and have a sense of belonging at their respective schools, they felt encouraged to act in the best interest of the school. In contrast, where principals and parent governors fail to communicate with each other, the entire functionality of the SGB is compromised. This breakdown has particular implications for the purpose of the SGB in relation to cultivating the school as a democratic site.

Fourthly, it was found that it is possible for schools, as envisioned in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) to cultivate a democratic agenda, by ensuring participation from, and deliberation with, parents. Participatory and deliberative democracy are realized and nurtured when parent governors understand their roles and responsibilities, when they believe that they have an equal voice in the decision-making processes of the school, and where there is a collective sense of belonging.

6.3. Implication for SGBs

The findings of this study are specific to the experience of and the challenges at historically disadvantaged schools, and cannot necessarily be extended to experiences at other schools. SGBs at historically disadvantaged schools draw on a very different set of parents, skills and knowledge to that of parents at historically advantaged schools.

As the findings reveal, when parents do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to participate actively and to deliberate on the SGB, there are particular implications for these SGBs and whether or not they are able to fulfil their mandates.

Parent governors make up the largest component of the SGB, thus, what the parent governors contribute has a significant effect on the functionality of the SGB. When parent governors are unable to fulfil their responsibilities – due to a lack of qualifications, poor skills, or inadequate training – it has particular implications on the overall functioning of the SGB, and hence the school. When the governance function of a school is not being fulfilled by the SGB, it impacts upon the leadership (principal) and management (SMT) structures. In other words, when parent governors are not capacitated to fulfil a particular function, then that function becomes the responsibility of someone else, or another structure's. In the case of this study, because the SGB of Schools A and B are not functioning optimally, it becomes the respective principals' responsibility to take care of that function. This added responsibility not only impacts on his load as a principal, but has two additional implications. On the one hand, the failure of governance to fulfil its mandate impacts on the efficiency of the decentralization of power, as manifested through school-based management. On the other hand, the failure of the governance brings into contestation the idea and purpose of the SGB as cultivating democracy within schools. To this end, the implications of poor parental governance is not limited to the SGB structure, but has ripple effects within the structures

of the school. Furthermore, when parent governors are not capacitated to effectively represent the parent body (the electorate), who nominated and voted them onto the SGB, then there are particular implications for the school community or communities. Ineffective parent governors means that the concerns and voices of their represented communities are not heard, which means that the opinions and needs of the community are not reflected within the school.

6.4. Implications for schools

Principals should ensure that parents who serve on the SGB have skills to offer the SGB to avoid a dysfunctional SGB because, in historically disadvantaged schools, parent governors who lack skills cause the SGB to lack in functionality too. In other words, although the school principal cannot control who is voted onto the SGB to serve, he or she could, like Principals C and D, encourage certain members to serve on the SGB. In other words, Edge (2000) argues that an SGB which lacks in skills will compromise the integrity of the school leadership and management as the principal and SMT will have to take on some of the SGB's responsibilities. Schools should also ensure that potential SGB members are available and accessible to aide in the day-to-day management of the school. There is no reason to develop and establish an SGB in historically disadvantaged schools as it appears that the principal and the SMT take on the responsibilities of the SGB regardless of the presence of an SGB or not.

Since the SGB's term of office is only three years (see Xaba, 2001: 210), it might be beneficial for potential SGB parent members to go for training before their term of office officially starts. Currently, SGB training occurs during the term of office of SGB members. This may not be as helpful as the Education Department thinks. All participants whom I interviewed said that the three year term of office was too short to learn everything, because by the time they had learnt what was necessary, the term was nearly done. Thus, the DoE should rethink the time of the training and the time at which new members of the SGB are instated to serve. By attending SGB training before their term of office officially starts, the SGB might be able to avoid some of the potential challenges they are currently facing with members who cannot contribute anything to the SGB. Moreover, attending SGB training before-hand would benefit historically disadvantaged schools because the lack of skills is great amongst parent members of SGBs.

Principals should also maintain open channels of communication with all potential SGB members in order for effective communication with the SGB to take place. Schools should also discuss the roles and responsibilities of SGBs with SGB members, in accordance with the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), in order to ensure that all members understand what is expected of an SGB. Since SGB members only become knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities when commencing their SGB term of office, being knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of the SGB after they have started their term of office may waste valuable time that could have been spent on improving the school and its democratic culture, instead of learning their duties.

6.5. Significance and contribution of this research

The research revealed that the nature of parental involvement in the SGB has the potential to affect the functioning of the SGB. The presence of an SGB at a school does not necessarily imply that the SGB is active, functional and fostering democracy at the school. The research also revealed that parents from historically disadvantaged schools stifle the functionality of the SGB, unless they are guided by effective leadership. Moreover, parent governors do not know why the SGB was established, and some participating SGB members from historically disadvantaged schools were unaware of the duties they had to fulfil. The study also revealed the significance of having parents serving on the SGB who possessed a skill that was useful to the SGB. The research further revealed the importance of effective communication between SGB members. An active and functional SGB is needed in order to involve the parents of a school in the day-to-day management of the school. However, if the members of the SGB are uninvolved and inactive, such as those parent governors at Schools A and B, the risk is that the SGB will not function optimally. Such SGBs will not enable a school to grow and reach the community by fostering a culture of democracy from within the school. However, when the SGB is active and involved in the school, the school and its community are able to make progress, and a culture of democracy will be fostered.

The findings from the current study have the potential to be of value to the parent governors of SGBs and the principals of historically disadvantaged schools, because these findings may help in identifying potential challenges, potentially encountered at historically disadvantaged schools. This research study could therefore assist SGBs and principals in avoiding these challenges. Principals may be able to use this study in order to shape their SGB and be aware of potential areas

where an SGB may be lacking. Principals could also use this information to equip their SGBs with the knowledge of the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), and educate the SGB members on what their roles and responsibilities are. Schools with inactive SGBs, such as those from historically disadvantaged schools, seem to put greater pressure on the management and leadership of the school. However, in schools with active SGBs, such as those at Schools C and D, the SGB encourages the growth of the school and its surrounding community.

6.6. Recommendations

Before committing to the SGB, potential SGB parent members need to be made aware of the roles and responsibilities of the SGB, why they are joining the SGB, and how they can use their already existing knowledge, skills and understanding in the SGB so that they can play a meaningful role in the school, and hence, the community. It is also recommended that the chairperson of the SGB have leadership qualities that can be transferred from his or her personal life or career to the SGB. Each member of the SGB should understand his or her role and fulfil it without infringing on the duties of another member. SGB members need to be made aware of the purpose of the SGB and be trained before starting their term of office on the SGB.

The DoE may need to revisit the time scheduled and allocated for SGB training, especially in the case of parents from historically disadvantaged schools. Many parents serving on the SGB of historically disadvantaged schools do not necessarily benefit the SGB and school when only learning their roles and responsibilities during their term of office. It might be more beneficial for potential SGB parent governors to attend training sessions before their term of office commences. The DoE would then be able to decrease the number and nature of potential SGB challenges at historically disadvantaged schools. The DoE should also provide support to SGB parent governors during their term of office so that these parent governors stay available, involved in the SGB and empowered to foster the culture of democracy at the school.

When parent governors are serving on the SGB without much to offer the SGB by way of skills, the school and its community do not benefit from the SGB. A historically disadvantaged school is further disadvantaged when parent governors are unable to serve the SGB effectively. The SGB then does not foster a democratic culture at the school and it does not involve the school in its

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community. Therefore, schools should be aware of why the SGB was established, and parent governors should strive to serve the SGB, the school and the community, in accordance with the mandate of the SGB as stipulated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996).

6.7. Recommendations for further research

Further research is needed on how to ensure that potential parent members of the SGB have sufficient training to serve the SGB effectively. Potential and current SGB members should also be well versed in the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) in order to be clear of their motive for joining the SGB and to understand what their responsibilities are towards the SGB. The quality of the functioning of the SGB is compromised when parents are serving in the SGB, but have little or nothing to contribute. This research revealed the importance of parental involvement in the SGB and the way the skills of the parent governors affects the functioning of the SGB. Research is needed regarding whom schooling communities nominate as the parents to serve on their behalf on the SGB. Since the nomination process is mandated by the SA Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), principals are unable to change it. The SGB nomination process for gaining parent governors should therefore be revisited in order to ensure that parents with valuable skills to the benefit the SGB serve on the SGB.

6.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, SGBs were established in order to assist the management and leadership of the school. The SGB also introduced school governance into SA public schools as a means to involve parents in school governance. By involving parents and the school community in school governance, a culture of democracy could be fostered primarily in schools and then into the surrounding community. However, when SGB members are inactive and unavailable, the SGB does not function optimally and the efficacy of the SMT and school principal is compromised. Schools in SA continue to face immense challenges, not only in terms of maintaining the academic program, but also in terms of managing and responding to the increasing number of social ills that impact on their daily functioning. It cannot be the responsibility of teachers alone to ensure the smooth-running of schools. Schools need the support of their communities and parents to be safe, and to respond to the needs of their learners. SGBs offer a fertile space for parents to be closely involved in the day-to-day management of the school; it allows parents a space to make sure that

their voices are heard and taken into account. However, the national Department of Basic Education, cannot continue to ignore the reality of the contexts of the overwhelming majority of historically disadvantaged schools – which is, that they simply do not have a qualified and skilled parent base from which to draw support. This reality plays a huge role in the growing disparities between historically advantaged schools and historically disadvantaged schools. SGBs can only fulfil their stipulated mandates, if they are capacitated and supported in their responsibilities.

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Appendix A

Consent letter for parents

Attention to the Parent

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The nature or parental involvement in School Governing Bodies: A comparative case study of four primary school in the Western Cape.

- **Parent**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Ilse Baker, MEd**, from the **Education Faculty** at Stellenbosch University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you **are a parent.**

1. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study is designed to discover and understand how parent SGB members affect the functioning of the SGB.

2. **PROCEDURES**

- **To interview parents collectively.**
- **Answer honestly and in as much detail as possible.**
- **To spend between 20 – 30 minutes answering, and discussing, the questions.**
- **The interviews with each parent will take place at a time and place at their convenience.**

3. **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

- **Participants may feel reluctant to answer, for this, we may skip the question.**

4. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

- **The participant will not benefit from the study directly, but they will be contributing to existing knowledge about the role of parents on a School Governing Body.**

5. **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

- **The subject will not receive payment for participating.**

6. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

Attention to the Parent

- **Confidentiality of the participants will be kept.**
- **In the study, the first school I interview will be called school A and the each group will be group 1, 2 or three.**
- **Any and all data is kept on my laptop where only I have access to it.**
- **None of the data will be disclosed to anyone.**
- **Interviews will be recorded for the researchers own purpose, to listen to should I feel that I have missed anything, or recorded something inaccurately.**

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so,

- **Since participants are taking part in the research study voluntarily, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time.**

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Ilse Baker on 074 664 6114. Also you may contact her supervisor Dr Davids, on nur@sun.ac.za.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to **me** by **Ilse Baker** in **English** and **I am the researcher** in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to **me. The researcher** was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to **my** satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Subject/Participant

_____
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative   **Date**

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Attention to the Parent

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [*He*/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   **Date**

Appendix B

Consent letter for principals

Attention to the Principal

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The nature or parental involvement in School Governing Bodies: A comparative case study of four primary school in the Western Cape.

- **Principal**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Ilse Baker, MEd**, from the **Education Faculty** at Stellenbosch University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you **are a principal.**

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to discover and understand how parent SGB members affect the functioning of the SGB.

2. PROCEDURES

- **To interview principals individually.**
- **Answer honestly and in as much detail as possible.**
- **To spend between 20 – 30 minutes answering, and discussing, the questions.**
- **The interviews with each principal would be done at their place of work and would occur only once.**

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

- **Participants may feel reluctant to answer, for this, we may skip the question.**

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

- **The participant will not benefit from the study directly, but they will be contributing to existing knowledge about the role of parents on a School Governing Body.**

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

- **The subject will not receive payment for participating.**

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

Attention to the Principal

- **Confidentiality of the participants will be kept.**
- **In the study, the first school I interview will be called school A and the each group will be group 1, 2 or three.**
- **Any and all data is kept on my laptop where only I have access to it.**
- **None of the data will be disclosed to anyone.**
- **Interviews will be recorded for the researchers own purpose, to listen to should I feel that I have missed anything, or recorded something inaccurately.**

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so,

- **Since participants are taking part in the research study voluntarily, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time.**

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Ilse Baker on 074 664 6114. Also you may contact her supervisor Dr Davids, on nur@sun.ac.za.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to **me** by **Ilse Baker** in **English** and **I am the researcher** in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to **me**. **The researcher** was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to **my** satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Subject/Participant

_____
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____   _____
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative   **Date**

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Attention to the Principal

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. *[He*/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   **Date**

Appendix C

Approval letter

Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za
tel: +27 021 467 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

Western Cape Government
Education

REFERENCE: 20161124 –6424
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Ilse Baker
7 Fish Eagle Way
Zeekoevlei
7641

Dear Ilse Baker

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE NATURE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 March 2017 till 30 September 2017**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

  The Director: Research Services
  Western Cape Education Department
  Private Bag X9114
  CAPE TOWN
  8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 24 November 2016

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272   fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

Appendix D

Ethical clearance

Approval Notice
New Application

27-Aug-2017
Baker, Ilse IP

Proposal #: SU-HSD-004056

Title: **The nature of parental involvement in School Governing Bodies: A comparative case study of four primary schools in the Western Cape**

Dear Miss Ilse Baker,

Your **New Application** received on **11-Apr-2017**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **19-Apr-2017 -18-Apr-2018**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**SU-HSD-004056**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:
DESC Report
REC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Appendix E

Interview questions for parents

1. What does the SGB mean to you?
2. How did you become involved in the SGB and why?
3. Why did you become involved in the SGB?
4. How would you describe the relationships and interactions between parents and teachers on the SGB?
5. What is your role/responsibility on the SGB?
6. Do you feel equipped to fulfil your role on the SGB?
7. How would you describe the role of parents on the SGB?
8. Do you think it is important for parents to be involved in the SGB?
9. Do you think the SGB plays any role in the functioning of your school?
10. How might the SGB play a more meaningful role at your school?
11. What do you know about the SASA
12. Which SGB functions do you actually participate in?
13. What causes you to participate and what causes you to not want to participate?
14. How much of what you participate in is related to your knowledge of your responsibilities on the SGB?

Appendix F

Interview questions for principals

1. What is the function of an SGB?
2. How would you describe the role and contribution of the SGB at your school?
3. How would you describe your interactions and relationships with parents on the SGB?
4. Do you intentionally identify and invite parents to serve on the SGB?
5. Do you value the input and role of parents on the SGB? Do they assist you in the governance of your school?
6. Do you feel that the parents are equipped to govern the school?