

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF STUDENTS
IN DECISION MAKING IN THE MANAGEMENT AND
ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS :
A CASE STUDY

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION
(EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT)
of Rhodes University

by

DHANASAGREN CHINSAMY

January 1995

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of complete references.

D. Chinsamy

Durban

January 1995

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late mother

KARNAGIE MUTHEN CHINSAMY

*who was selflessly committed to the rights of children and
saw in every child the spirit of leadership.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to record his indebtedness to the following individuals:

1. Mr. Clive Smith, the Supervisor of this dissertation, for his deep and patient interest, critical guidance and encouragement.
2. My wife, Joy, and children, Tasanya Nomaliso and Duane Bheki, for their invaluable support, patience and encouragement without which this study would not have been possible. Joy had to endure numerous progress reports on revised drafts and made valuable contributions that influenced the study.
3. Revd. Alex Bhiman for his interest, support and encouragement and the many hours of fruitful debate and discussion.
4. My father Sigamoney, brother Colin and my in-laws, Joe, Miriam, Treasa, Baby, Bentley, and Dr. Mervyn Bhiman for their support during the course of my study.
5. My friends Rogers Govender, Revd. Dean Chris Reddy and Crisis Care for their willing assistance in providing printing resources and technical advice.
6. Basil Moonsamy for his kindness in the loan of his computer.
7. Grace, Cynthia, Rani, Nellie, Leeanne, Michelle, Janet and Valencia for their assistance in the transcriptions.
8. The principals, teachers, students and parents involved in this study whose co-operation made this study possible.

ABSTRACT

As South Africa prepares to reconstruct its education system for a post-apartheid, democratic society, many facets of educational life will of necessity come under re-examination. One such area is that of school governance which traditionally was the domain of principals, teachers and more recently parents, with little, if any, input by students. After 1985, however, with the formation of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), backed by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC), the demand for student participation in the management of schools began to gain momentum. Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA's), although not recognised by the education authorities, were established in many black schools throughout the country. They afforded students the opportunity to become involved, as equal partners with teachers and parents, in decision-making in the management of secondary schools. During the past decade, however, the question of student participation in decision-making in the management of schools has become a point of controversy.

The aim of this study was to investigate the potential role of students in decision-making in the administration and management of secondary schools. For this purpose case studies were conducted in two schools with active student participation in joint decision-making. The schools were selected after a preliminary investigation of the state of PTSA's in schools in the greater Durban area. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with teacher, parent and student representatives and principals and non-participant observation of PTSA meetings, workshops and social functions were used to survey attitudes and opinions pertinent to this study.

The results of the study indicate that student participation in the management of schools is crucial for the creation of a climate of learning and teaching and that it is seen in itself as an integral part of the process of students' development. The study also points to the dilemma that students face in participating jointly with parents and teachers in decision-making while maintaining their autonomy.

The recommendations that emerge from the study include the involvement of students as equal partners in decision-making in secondary schools, the establishment of Internal Disciplinary Committees in which students participate, the appointment of a member of staff as a liaison officer for student affairs with the task of establishing a Students' Representative Council (SRC) and the implementation of training programmes that would assist students in joint decision-making. The study acknowledges the existence of conflict between the participants but proposes that such conflict can be constructively addressed through "creative consensus" that would benefit both the participants and the school.

The researcher recommends that for the present, students should not be involved in any discussions of teacher misconduct and that students should not be entrusted with handling the finances of the school without teacher or parent supervision. However, in keeping with the developmental approach adopted in the study, it is envisaged that when the element of trust is developed between students and teachers, students would be allowed to participate in these sensitive areas of decision-making.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of originality	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context	1
1.2. Aim of the Study	4
1.3. Motivation for the Study	4
1.4. Definition of Terms	5
1.4.1. Potential role	5
1.4.2. Students	5
1.4.3. Administration and Management	5
1.4.4. Secondary Schools	6
1.4.5. Participation	6
1.5. Direction of the Study	7

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction	8
2.2. Children's Rights of Participation	9
2.2.1. Introduction	9
2.2.2. Traditional views on Children's rights	9
2.2.3. Traditional views under attack	14
2.2.4. Summary	20
2.3. A Developmental Conception of Democracy	21
2.3.1. Introduction	21

2.3.2. Models of Democracy	21
2.3.3. A Developmental Conception of Democracy	23
2.3.4. Direct Participation versus Community	25
2.3.5. Creative Consensus	25
2.3.6. Summary	26
2.4. Approaches to school management and administration	26
2.5. Democratic schools with Student Participation in Decision-making	28
2.5.1. Introduction	28
2.5.2. Dewey's Laboratory School	28
2.5.3. A.S.Neill's Summerhill	29
2.5.4. Leicestershire Comprehensive	31
2.5.5. Brookline's School-Within-A-School	32
2.5.6. The Schaefer School in Tappan	33
2.5.7. The Catholic Boys' High School	34
2.5.8. Summary	35
2.6. Student participation in decision-making in South Africa - a historical perspective	36
2.6.1. Introduction	36
2.6.2. The rise of Youth militancy in Black Schools	36
2.6.3. The Birth of PTSA's	37
2.6.4. The Reaction of the State	37
2.6.5. The Dilemma of democratic participation	37
2.6.6. Reactions of the Democratic Movement	39
2.7. Summary	40

CHAPTER 3 : METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction	41
3.2. Qualitative Methodology	41
3.2.1. Introduction	41
3.2.2. Why qualitative methodology for this study	42

3.2.3. Some problems and weaknesses	43
3.3 Techniques employed in the Research Process	44
3.3.1. Introduction	44
3.3.2. Questionnaires	44
3.3.2.1. Principal's Questionnaire	44
3.3.2.2. Parent/Teacher Questionnaire	45
3.3.2.3. Student Questionnaire	45
3.3.3. Interviews	46
3.3.4. Non-participant observation	46
3.4. The Research Process	47
3.5. The Analysis of Data	49
3.6. The Question of Validation	50
3.6.1. Introduction	50
3.6.2. Credibility	50
3.6.3. Transferability	51
3.6.4. Dependability	52
3.6.5. Confirmability	52
3.7. Summary	52

CHAPTER 4 : ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction	53
4.2. Participants Understanding of the Concepts	
Management and Administration	54
4.3. Why Student Participation in Decision-making	55
4.4. Problems of Participation and its Disadvantages	59
4.5. Students in PTSA Meetings	61
4.5.1. Students' Knowledge of Meeting Procedures and Formalities	61
4.5.2. Students' Interest in Issues and their Contribution to the Meetings	63
4.5.3. The Influence of Adult Authority and its Impact on the Contributions of Students at Meetings	64

4.5.3.1. The Influence of the Principal	64
4.5.3.2. The Influence of Parents and Teachers	66
4.5.4. The Influence of Threats and Intimidation	69
4.6. Sensitive Areas of Decision-making	72
4.6.1. Student Discipline	72
4.6.2. Teacher Misconduct	74
4.6.3. Financial Management of the School	76
4.6.4. Joint Decision-making Versus the Autonomy of the SRC	78
4.7. Seeking Alliances	82
4.8. Leadership Qualities Necessary for Decision-makers as Identified by Students	84
4.9. Conclusion	85

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction	86
5.2. Conclusions	87
5.3. Recommendations	90
5.3.1. General Recommendations	90
5.3.2. Recommendations in respect of sensitive areas of student involvement	91
5.3.2.1. Discipline	91
5.3.2.2. Teacher Misconduct	91
5.3.2.3. Finance	92
5.3.3. Recommendations for Teachers	92
5.3.4. Recommendations for Students	93
5.3.5. Recommendations for the School	93
5.4. Recommendations for Further Research	95
5.5. Conclusion	95

REFERENCES	97
-------------------	-----------

APPENDICES	109
APPENDIX 1 : Letter to Schools' PTSA Requesting Permission to Conduct Research	109
APPENDIX 2 : Response by PTSA Authorising Research	110
APPENDIX 3 : Letters Accompanying Questionnaires	111
APPENDIX 4 : Principals' Questionnaire	112
APPENDIX 5 : Teachers' and Parents' Questionnaire	116
APPENDIX 6 : Students' Questionnaire	120
APPENDIX 7 : 1993 SRC Students' Interview Guide	125
APPENDIX 8 : Principals' Interview Guide	127
APPENDIX 9 : 1994 SRC Students' Interview Guide	131
APPENDIX 10 : Teachers' and Parents' Interview Guide	135
APPENDIX 11 : SRC Constitution - Dadoo Memorial	137
APPENDIX 12 : PTSA Constitution - Dadoo Memorial	142
APPENDIX 13 : A Review of the Methodology Employed in This Study	148

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context

As South Africa prepares to move into a new dispensation, from apartheid to democracy, many policies and practices of the old education system are being re-examined. Traditional notions of school decision-making, characterised by hierarchy and bureaucracy, have become the subject of debate in the attempt by educationists to present policy options that would guide the administration and management of education in general and schools in particular (National Education Policy Investigation 1992; Edupol 1993). These debates and subsequent policy options have been influenced by significant historical events of the last two decades, beginning with the June 1976 Soweto Uprising. The principal, who traditionally held the reins of management in schools, faced increasing challenges from teachers, parents and students, all wanting a say in decision-making. While the issue of teachers and parents involvement in decision-making in the management of schools has been addressed with minimal controversy, the involvement of students has raised much debate and discussion.

The idea of students becoming involved in the management of schools arose out of the struggle by black people for better education. Students since 1976 have been insisting that their involvement with parents and teachers was necessary to address the crisis facing Black education so that successful schooling could take place. Led by the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), students became involved in Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA) which took over management of schools in a number of areas in South Africa in the mid and late eighties. The last few years, however, has seen a wilting of the PTSA's and a steady decline in the activities of students in decision-making. There are a number of factors that have led to this state of affairs (Education Policy Unit 1993). However despite the waning of student participation in PTSA's, student organisations like the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), civic organisations, and the NECC still espouse student participation in decision-making in the management of schools. The situation in South Africa is such that the student sector, by virtue of its high degree of politicisation, is a sector whose

interests cannot be overlooked. We overlook them at the expense of education and political stability.

Internationally, the question of student participation and student power has, over the last two decades, received increasing attention as part of the worldwide changes in social, economic, political and technological relationships dubbed by Alvin Toffler (1980) as "the third wave" and by Naisbitt (1982) as "megatrends" (Swanson 1989:271). Traditional schools, in an effort to meet the narrow demands of a corporate economy, are for the most part, structured in a fixed hierarchy and system of technical control which encourages student isolation, passivity, and conformity (Apple 1979; Giroux and Penna 1977). Traditional education is dominated by a language of management and control (Apple 1979; Giroux 1988). Critics of traditional schooling have argued that the time has come for institutional structures and practices to be established in schools in ways that promote, what Goodman (1989) referred to as, "critical democracy." By this she meant not only "participatory involvement by citizens that reaches well beyond the political actions found in most liberal, Western democracies ie. voting" but the participatory involvement of all, including students, in decision-making (Goodman 1989:39). This view seems to be finding increasing support amongst contemporary philosophers of education (Harber 1988; Evans and Haffenden 1988; Polan 1989; Maxcy 1985; Johnston 1992).

Through the eighties, the demand for the democratisation of school management found partial realisation in the many reforms towards participatory school governance which saw the inclusion of parents and teachers in school management committees, school boards, Parent - Teacher Associations and the like in Britain, Canada, Australia, France, New Zealand and United States of America. The participation of students, however, in school government, still remained an unresolved question. There were a few attempts in this direction in Britain and USA, but those were exceptions. The Young Peoples' Forum in Geneva in 1971 pointed out that traditional education was failing to adapt itself to the needs of a growing number of people and that it must be recreated, not by the administration and the officials in education but by the peoples affected by education who know their own needs and aspirations best (Van den Heever 1987).

The question of student participation in decision-making in the management of schools is linked closely to the rights of children. Although Thomas Paine in 1791 argued that the rights of the child are as necessary as the rights of the aged (1942:217), much of the international law on education has been concerned with protecting the right of the parent to maintain a degree of control against the state rather than with developing the autonomous rights of the child (Van Bueren 1992). This traditional approach is now being challenged by the international community, which recognises that children have the right not only to an education but also to participate in educational decisions.

While the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924 omitted any express reference to education, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) first established children's rights to an education. However, neither of these declarations addressed the question of children's rights of participation in decision-making concerning their education. It was the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) that gave children participatory rights to decisions that affect them (Miljeteig-Olssen 1992). However, since some cultures are not happy with the idea of children as free and independent individuals, the convention stated that parents have the prime responsibility to guide their children and that such guidance should be given in accordance "with the evolving capacities of the child" (Article 5 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, as cited by Van Bueren 1992).

Van Halen pointed out that children are becoming adult much earlier than used to be the case, but are staying on longer and longer as dependent students (1991:74). Cameron made the following observation:

The consequences of the expansion of the student role, and the action-poverty it implies for the young, has been an increased restiveness among the young. They are shielded from responsibility, and they become irresponsible; they are held in dependent status, and they act as dependents; they are kept away from productive work, and they become unproductive (Cited by Van Halen 1991:74).

This constitutes a telling indictment of the opportunities that students are afforded in their

development as young people who would be able to practise and value participation in a democracy.

1.2. Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to identify the potential role of students in decision making in secondary school management and administration through an enquiry into the perspectives of key players currently involved in school management structures.

1.3. Motivation for the study

Harber, in his paper on Schools and Political Socialisation in Africa (1988) suggested various directions for future work in politics and education in Africa. One such area is the need for greater emphasis on qualitative research that studies the attributes and behaviour of the key participants in education - students, teachers, administrators and parents- in order to create educational and political reality at school level (1988:201). According to Shechtman, schools transmit political education eg. rights and obligations of citizens but its impact on shaping political attitudes and behaviour has been minor (1993:128). She quotes Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) that the school should function as a "laboratory for the empowerment of democratic values" (Shechtman 1993:127). This study is an attempt in that direction with the specific focus on the role of students in the management of secondary schools.

W.H.Kilpatrick provided further motivation for such a study when he commented,

If we are to make democracy work, our schools must remake themselves and this consciously shared effort at decision and executing is an essential part of the remaking. Practice in the intelligent pursuit of group purposes is our key to the future (as cited in Perry 1967:81).

The new education ministry in South Africa, in attempting to redress the grievances arising from the past apartheid system, and propose changes that would complement the spirit of democracy that presently characterises South African life, cannot ignore the issue of student

participation. However, the potential they (students) have in making decisions, the limitations and constraints, and the consequences of their participation on key issues like efficiency, access, quality and accountability, are still the subject of debate. This study attempts to contribute to that debate.

1.4. Definition of terms

1.4.1. Potential role

The use of the term "potential" in the research question implies a bias, on the part of the researcher, that students do have a role to play in decision-making in the management of schools. Thus the thrust of the study is an exploration of this potential through case studies of two schools in which student decision-making is being experimented with.

1.4.2. Students

The term "students" has been used by South African writers to refer to both tertiary students as well as pupils from secondary schools. In this study, the term is used to refer only to secondary school pupils, many of whom are well into their adolescence. The terms "youth" and "young adult" could be used as alternate terms in describing the student.

1.4.3. Administration and Management

Although the terms "administration" and "management" are used interchangeably by many contemporary writers, there is a slight, but significant difference.

Administration implies the running of a business with the emphasis on maintaining the processes involved. It remains a purely technical function.

Management, on the other hand, while it involves the running of a business, focuses much more on objectives that have to be achieved than the processes that have to be maintained. There is a greater emphasis on getting the key results achieved through people (Adair 1988).

In this study, both terms are used to highlight the roles of administering and managing that students can become involved in. The terms "governance" and "management" in this study are used broadly in terms of decision-making in schools.

1.4.4. Secondary Schools

There are basically five phases that children go through in their years of schooling as presented in the following table.

- i. Pre-school
- ii. Junior Primary (Class 1 - Std 1)
- iii. Senior Primary (Std 2 - Std 4)
- iv. Junior Secondary (Std 5 - Std 7)
- v. Senior Secondary (Std 8 - Std 10)

The first three phases are generally referred to as the primary school phase, while the last two, from Std 5 - Std 10, make up the secondary School phase. The secondary schools referred to in this study include the last two phases.

1.4.5. Participation

The term "participation" as used in this study, refers to an educational approach that challenges students to be active decision-makers about and within their education and their lives - a broad concept of developing participation **through** school. Student participation takes various forms and it involves three arenas viz. Participation in formal decision making bodies eg. PTSA's\ School Councils, participation in student-owned bodies eg. Student representative councils, and participation in classroom-based curriculum decision-making and implementation. Holdsworth made the valid point that it is the interaction and balance between these three arenas that creates an exciting and challenging vision of teaching and learning (1991:62). However for the purposes of this study, I will be looking closely at one arena, and that is the participation of students in formal decision-making bodies.

1.5. Direction of the study

In this chapter, the background to the study was presented which attempted to locate the research question in context. The aim of, and motivation for, the study were outlined and the terms central to the investigation were defined.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on the participation of students in decision-making in schools. It begins with a premise that this question has to be located within the discussion of children's rights of participation. Models of democracy, in which student participation would most likely occur, are touched on and a developmental conception of democracy is outlined as the basis for this study. Approaches to school management and administration are then briefly surveyed. This chapter also presents the experiences of student participation in a sample of democratic schools in Britain, America and Australia. The chapter ends with a historical perspective of student participation in school management in South Africa.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in this investigation. The chapter starts with the motivation for the use of qualitative research for this study and highlights some problems and weaknesses of this approach. The techniques employed in the research process, the method of analysis and the question of validation are then discussed.

Chapter 4 records the views of the participants involved in the study on the various aspects of the participation of students in decision-making and presents an analysis which forms the basis of the recommendations that are made.

Conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study are set out in Chapter 5. Recommendations for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature on student participation in decision-making in management and administration of secondary schools is scarce. It arises from the fact that the notion of student participation has only recently been taken seriously by education authorities. There have been a few attempts at student self-governance in Britain and America, and these have been recorded. In South Africa, as will be elaborated later, student participation in decision-making in schools emerged as a result of the struggle of students for a better education system (Hartshorne 1992). This struggle was linked to the political struggle against the apartheid system which legislated and implemented racially segregated and inferior education for Black people (Hartshorne 1992).

The issue of student participation is related directly to the discussion of children's rights, especially their rights of participation in decisions that affect them (Wringe 1984). It is also related to the conception of democracy that holds sway in society and the kind of decision-making that flows from it.

This chapter is structured in the following way. First, the various viewpoints on the aspect of children's rights and democracy will be presented. Then a review of the approaches to management and administration of schools will follow, with a specific emphasis on its link with student participation. The chapter will then focus on a historical perspective of student participation in "democratic schools" in Britain, America and Australia, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of student participation and lessons that these experiences offer for any future consideration on the issue. Finally, a review of the development of student participation in South Africa will be presented.

2.2. Children's Rights

2.2.1. Introduction

The idea of student participation in school management has been linked to the discussion of children's rights, more especially, their rights of participation in decision-making processes that affect them.

Kim pointed out that in most Western societies and those of the less developed countries, while human rights of adults are vindicated, children are effectively denied any rights. In the widespread practice of initiation rights in less-developed countries, children are subjected to various physical and psychological abuses in order to destroy them as children and initiate them in the adult world (1990:235). Education in effect, maintained Kim, is a lengthy initiation rite for eventual entrance into adulthood in Western societies (1990:235).

2.2.2. Traditional Views on Children's Rights

The most commonly advanced justifications in the western world for not according children rights is that children are not mature and thus incapable of any form of independence. According to this argument, the child is a being requiring protection rather than an agent capable of associating with adults and other children on equal footings. This traditional view derived from the philosophies of Hobbes, Locke and Mill.

Thomas Hobbes, in the seventeenth century, assigned children a position of complete dependence on their fathers who he believed had the power of life and death over them (Gauthier 1965:118). Hobbes equated rights with powers. It follows that children cannot be granted rights, for the logic of the primary relationship between father and child does not permit it (Gauthier 1965:118).

John Locke took a somewhat different position. He asserted that children were to be under the jurisdiction of their parents "till they can shift for themselves" (Locke, as cited in Worsfold 1974:144). Until that time, maintained Locke, the child lacks understanding and therefore cannot exert his or her will. He went on to imply that children can cast off their

dependency when they become adults and are rational enough to understand the principles by which they are governed (Worsfold 1974:144).

In both Hobbes's and Locke's views there was a clear demand that parents control the lives of children according to preconceived notions of the children's future welfare. In Hobbes's view, this notion was that children are instruments, and must serve their parents in order to survive. In Locke's view, there is an emphasis on the emergent freedoms and responsibilities of the child.

John Stuart Mill believed firmly that an individual was sovereign over herself and that the individual was the best judge about things related to her own happiness. Because of this, said Mill, no authority can justifiably interfere with her conduct. The individual, stated Mill, "cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will make him happier, because in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right" (1963:135).

However, Mill was of the view that such rights are possessed only by individuals who are mature in their faculties and thus he excludes children (1963:135). A child's immaturity of faculties means that it is unable to make proper judgements on its own and others' happiness and must therefore rely upon the authority of adults (1963:136). Mill also argued the case against children's rights to free choice from a strictly utilitarian standpoint. For society's overall goodness, children, unlike adults, should not be permitted to interpret their own good, for fear they will not act in accordance with the public good (1963:136). Paternalism, then, to Mill is acceptable in the case of children because they are incapable of deciding what is in their own and society's best interest.

This view of children's rights is found in the discourses of a number of contemporary philosophers of education. R.S.Peters argued that "education consists essentially in the initiation of members of a society into a form of life that is thought (by the society) to be worthwhile" (Peters, as cited in Kim 1990:235). Kim was of the view that while the more dramatic and grosser initiation rites referred to above are no longer resorted to, the child is still subject to an initiation process connected with education, health, safety, all of which are designed to effect a change from one state to another, and all of which involve the denial of

rights to the child (Kim 1990:235).

Philosophers of Education, influenced largely by the ideas of Locke, Hobbes and Mill have presented a number of arguments against the participation of children in decision-making in general and in education in particular. There are those who feel that in the interest of efficiency and good order, a totalitarian rather than a democratic form of school management is best. It is argued on economic grounds that participation of students in decision-making is inefficient in terms of time, money and resources, increasing administrative costs and demanding additional structures to be established for the communication of necessary information. Such persons take the view that since children are immature and inexperienced, it will be disastrous to give them any real share in their government (Wringe 1984, 1981; Dunlop 1979; Ruddick 1979; Peters 1966).

The fear of teachers for their own status and self respect is also a major obstacle to the development of student participation. Wringe cites Buckley's observation that a majority of English teachers feared the establishment of student self-government "not because they doubt the resulting good but because they cannot face the change in their traditional position" (Buckley, as cited in Wringe 1984:37).

According to Gutmann (1987), professionalism of teachers serves as a safeguard against repression and discrimination, but, she also agrees, professionalism erects an obstacle to democratic education. The professional autonomy of teachers stands in tension with democratic education to the extent that teachers invoke their professional competence to deny students any influence in shaping the form and content of their own education. Gutmann is of the view that the solution to this problem cannot be to give students equal control over the conditions of their schooling. Students, she believes, lack the competence necessary to share equally in making many decisions (Gutmann 1987:88).

The concern for competence was also highlighted by Scrimshaw who, while believing firmly in the right to a voice in decision-making of all individuals, conceded that in the interests of competence, authority in schools might be best left to teachers and principals (Scrimshaw 1975:62). Strike also supported this view in the emphasis he placed on the teacher's

"competence" and "intellectual expertise" as determining factors in excluding students from authoritative decision-making. He maintained that virtually all decisions in school are "intellectually rooted" and therefore must belong to teachers (Strike 1982:49).

Wringe presented a number of other arguments against student participation in decision-making. With limited experience and limited reasoning powers, students not only risk choosing trivial or misguided ends for themselves, but may be hopelessly injudicious in their choice of means. Children, while they are young, he said, have a right to have certain choices made for them and to receive guidance, support and co-ercion necessary to achieve ends they would choose for themselves if they were fully rational. Wringe also presented the view that to participate in joint control and joint decision-making is to choose ends and means not only for oneself but also for others. Adults, who are considered fully rational beings, may find that their own preferred courses of action may sometimes be over-ruled. Their purposes might be frustrated by the votes of children who because they are not fully rational are likely to be swayed by demagoguery, momentary enthusiasm or mere whim (Wringe 1984:77).

Wringe also made reference to the argument of the unequal and asymmetrical relationship between teachers and students. Students cannot fully grasp the nature of the educational goals and standards that are set before one. Students, then, the argument concludes, are in no position to choose the means and processes by which they are to be achieved, or to judge the competence of those who teach them (Wringe 1984:77).

Callan has challenged Wringe's "very bleak and unflattering picture of childhood" (Callan 1988:129). He believed that it does not do justice to the immense internal diversity of the student body in contemporary schooling. While acknowledging that many students lack stable purposes, experience of the world or developed powers of reasoning, Callan insisted that others have durable and realistic purposes. They are already involved in making important decisions about their lives and can reason as ably as most adults on matters which bear on their decisions. Between these two extremes is where most who attend school (including many teachers and administrators) are to be placed. Callan was adamant that Wringe's caricature of childhood cannot justify denying children any substantial voice in the authority

structure of schooling, much less the adolescents and young adults who may also be students (Callan 1988:130).

White has written prolifically on liberal education and democratic practices in education. She raised three objections to students' participation in school management. Firstly, she maintained that allowing students to participate neglects the point that politics is about power, that political skills whether exercised in a democratic framework or not are predominantly those that enable one to impose one's own view on others, and get one's own policy translated into corporate action. The love of power and the competition of rival factions are typical of any political activity. Therefore, the argument goes, democratic participation in schools is likely to whet the appetite for power and intrigue (Dunlop, as cited in White 1983:97). There is no reason, she felt, why the school should necessarily emphasise power-sharing, thus whetting the appetite for power, rather than a concern to do what is right in the context of the whole community.

Secondly White is of the view that as part of students' political education, a school must ensure that they appreciate that the school has to have some decision-making structure. They must come to understand the particular one which has been devised for their school, whatever form it takes. They must finally grasp that as a democratic structure it is not fixed for all time. It can be changed in all kinds of ways.

Thirdly, maintained White, although it might be desirable to have schools run democratically, she feels it is not possible because the staff (teaching and non-teaching) might find it difficult to cope with the experience of being questioned by children, having to justify school policies and so on (White 1983:97-99).

White (1991) examined how democratic values of respect for persons, personal autonomy, justice and free enquiry can be promoted in schools. She makes mention of teachers and support staff, parents and higher education authorities becoming involved in the formulation of policies. Students, however were excluded. She went only as far as saying that students need to live in an institution which enshrines these values; she makes no mention of their participation. "The organisation," she concluded, "will guide school students in actually

living by these values," which have been formulated by adults (White 1991:207).

There has also been the objection that, because of their short-lived role within the government of schooling, students cannot be expected to use authority competently (Flew 1976:104). Flew implied that brevity of participation disables students from learning enough about the institutional context of decision-making and would militate against efficiency by generating frequent changes in policy.

Dunlop stressed the point that even when students can govern well, time and energy devoted to that end would detract from educational purposes.

All experience shows that if there is to be a discussion of everything that affects people, an enormous amount of time has to be set aside for meetings. How schools could ever find time for this extra claim for time-table space (even if it were thought worthwhile) altogether escapes me (Dunlop 1979:47).

Callan agreed that it would be madness for anyone to advocate an authority structure in which "everything that affects people" is determined through collective choice. He made the point that if student participation in the government of schooling is just an interruption in their education, then this will count against their participation if the goal is maximum educational success (Callan 1988:144).

2.2.3. Traditional Views under attack

These views on children's rights have been challenged. Traditionally, people have used the arguments that children are dependent on adults and that they are incompetent to decide for themselves. Both of these arguments employ the concept of immaturity. Rodham made the point that this presumption of incompetence has significance not just because children are reliant on adults to exercise their rights for them, but because a child denied the opportunity to exercise responsibilities is effectively denied the opportunity to mature into a responsible adult (Rodham as cited by Kim 1990:236). The child is denied the rights to maturity because, ironically, it is not mature.

Children possess rights, not because the rights contribute to the children's or society's utility, but because the children, albeit not mature, are also human beings.

Many advocates of children's rights, while opposing paternalism, take for granted that children are not mature and need adult protection. But it is to be noted that to say children are not mature is not always the same as to say that they are incompetent. Children, said Kim, are capable in some domains of life, as they are not in others, although the capabilities differ according to their native abilities and experience. It is when we use the concept of maturity not as a criterion for disqualifying children's rights but as part of a larger, comprehensive frame of reference in which the child is qualified as an independent person that we will see children in terms of their capacities rather than their incapacities (Kim 1990:242-243).

The question of whether the currently accepted discrimination against children manifest in paternalistic restrictions on their rights, has any moral basis, has been examined by Rosenak (1982:89-96). Paternalistic restrictions on children are usually based on claims that children are most likely to harm themselves and less likely to promote their own interests because of their cognitive and moral deficiencies. Through a logical analysis Rosenak showed that children are more competent than is generally thought in the relevant aspects and that adults are less so. She maintained that neither in their ability to make reasoned choices, nor in their tendency to make bad choices, are the majority of children clearly inferior to many adults (1982:96).

Colin Wringer, in his authoritative work Children's Rights, agreed that it is true that children do not contribute to the community's material wealth either financially or directly by their labour. Nevertheless, he maintained, they do contribute in one way to the well-being of the community not only through what they are but also through what they do. They take over our concerns. They make considerable efforts to learn what is necessary for them to know in order to be able to take over our concerns. In this respect they may be said to have and to accept considerable responsibilities in respect of the well-being of the community as a whole (Wringer 1982:119).

Arguments for student participation in decision-making in schools have been put forward both as objections to arguments presented against such participation and as valid reasons for participation. These arguments also fall into two categories viz. those that claim education benefits for it and those that claim students have a right to have a say in matters that concern them.

Although Wringe was emphatically against the idea of extending authority to children on any substantial level (as indicated above), he did offer some hesitant approval for limited student involvement in decision-making. He afforded students the right to consult with teachers or a right to decide on matters of slight importance. He argued that the case for some degree of school participation cannot be denied. Young people are allowed to marry at the age of sixteen; they are allowed to vote in parliamentary and local elections at the age of eighteen and make legal, binding contracts. Wringe finds it very difficult to see how they can be regarded as totally lacking powers of rational deliberation as they approach those ages (Wringe 1984:78).

White shared this view in her recognition of student participation as part of a child's political education (White 1983:94). She presented three reasons why the experience of participation is an essential part of political education. First, she mentioned the acquisition of political attitudes which do not develop overnight. Students need to learn, for example, that citizens should be critical of authorities, tolerant of others' viewpoints, willing to have their mistakes pointed out and rectify them, especially if they are wielding power. But, maintained White, they need political experience to learn how to do these things in context. White suggested that in our society it is the school which can provide such practice in participation in decision-making if it shapes school organisation with that end in mind (White 1983:95). Secondly, White was of the opinion that providing such experience in school would allow people to develop the abilities and social confidence to permit them to participate in other groups outside school. Thirdly, White believed that guided experience in decision-making would also provide a yardstick later to measure the authority structure of the work place and it would enable people to make some contribution to the organisation of work places on democratic lines (White 1983:96).

Snauwaert argued for participation of students in decision-making on the grounds that preparation for life in the "polis" must be the objective of the school. Given that the school is "the primary polis" of the student, critical analysis of the social relations of the school and their connection to the larger society would be a part of the political education of the student. This would be directly enhanced, said Snauwaert, by the direct participation of students in the affairs of the school, including its governance (Snauwaert 1993:8).

Snauwaert cites Harold Howe's (1991) and Wendell Berry's (1987) observation that the gap between adults and young people has widened significantly to the detriment of the development of maturity, judgement, and responsibility of children and youth. A participatory system of school governance, according to Snauwaert, could be one way of increasing meaningful interaction between adults and students. Students would be exposed to and engaged with adults in a meaningful and important activity, a crying contemporary need (Snauwaert 1993:10).

Wringe is of the view that having different experiences, children are likely to see different and unfamiliar aspects of a situation. To allow children to participate in the making of the decisions that affect them may not only lead to the formulation of rules which are sympathetically observed, but to rules which are more in keeping with the situation which has to be legislated for. When rule-making involves all interested parties, maintained Wringe, there seems a greater likelihood that they will be more relevant to the situation and the children will have an interest in rule-keeping than rule-breaking. There will thus be a greater respect for rules which are discussed democratically (Wringe 1982:47).

This implies that children would better observe rules if they understood their purpose as a result of democratically participating in their formulation.

This view is supported by Walker in his paper on accountability. Accountability, he maintained, needs to be understood in relation to the basic principle of democratic theory - that those with legitimate direct interests in a decision should have majority representation with respect to that decision (Walker 1990:93). Students, said Walker, have legitimate direct interests in their own education.

Educational philosophers and educational management theorists have argued that members' self-respect and self-esteem are the most important goals of any democratic society (White 1987; Scheffler 1985; Rawls 1973; Kilpatrick 1967). White equated self-respect to one's dignity as a person. She maintained that when one's moral or political rights are impugned (and here she includes degrading one, humiliating one and even patronising one), then one's self-respect and self-esteem are adversely affected. The presumption she made was that members of an institution should participate in its decision-making processes since in this way they can directly bear the moral responsibility for institutional arrangements and policies (White 1987:88).

Scheffler argued that policy-makers must avoid imposing their own values on others as well as simply promoting the values of others (1985:101-103). Kilpatrick believed that freedom to purpose is essential to the building of self-respect and if properly directed it builds not only self-respect, but also the ability to choose wisely and accept responsibility (Perry 1967:81).

From a sociological perspective, the idea of "authentic empowerment for children" has been emerging (Lindsey 1993:81-84; Fox 1984:319-328). Lindsey was of the view that what we need to do is "give up some of our own power so that children can have what we already enjoy" and he believed that empowering children will "add to the political and moral wealth of the nation" (Lindsey 1993:84).

In a footnote Lindsey (1993) pointed out that child development research and theory suggested that at about 12 years of age young people develop formal thought processes which would provide them the thinking skills needed to analyse political issues. He also referred to the empirical research of Inhelder and Piaget (1958) who maintained that at the onset of adolescence (about 12 years), the cognitive capacity of formal operations or the capability to think about things, oneself and the relationships about them emerges. Peel's (1971) experimental research has found that during the period between thirteen and fifteen years of age there is a rapid acceleration in the powers to offer explanations and make judgements (Lindsey 1993:83).

Melton (1983) was of the view that denial of powers to minors based upon assumptions of their incompetence finds no support in current psychological research. He also maintained that current psychological literature provides no evidence that adolescents aged 14 to 15 years are distinguishable from adults with respect to standards of competence in decision-making processes and outcome (Melton 1983:100-101).

This view was supported by Callan (1988) who maintained that it would be unreasonable to suppose that there could be a great disparity between teachers and students with respect to the quality of authoritative decision-making in the latter years (Callan 1988:148).

Darling (1992) examined why in the face of so many radical changes in education that would have been thought impossible a few years ago, the area of democratic participation of students in decision-making has been neglected (Darling 1992). The basic problem, suggested Darling, may be that the principle is too much of a challenge to our fundamental assumptions about the education of the young.

Darling proposed that mainstream schooling has adopted (to a greater or lesser extent) those ideas of the early educational progressives which are compatible with the maintenance of pedagogical power. The kind of child-centred educational theory that has proved acceptable to schools is derived from Rousseau, Piaget and others who stress the limitations of children's understanding. This fits in with the perception endemic in our culture of children as rather silly and immature, unfit to be given responsibility. Yet, maintained Darling, such a view is clearly in danger of becoming self-confirming for where children are seen as silly and immature they will not be given responsibility; and where they are not given responsibility, they are likely to remain silly and immature. He noted further that, particularly we in education have the (often unrecognised) power to create children who will confirm our own prejudices about them. To an extent at least, children are how we treat them and, more fundamentally how we see them. Children are themselves likely to acquire the view of children which prevails in society (Darling 1992).

Darling makes the added point that because society has low-level expectations of what is possible, it treats children with an enveloping paternalism which in turn fosters the condition

of "immature" children. From this stems much of the scepticism surrounding democracy in schools.

To challenge this scepticism, Darling referred to an argument suggested by Eamonn Callan (1988). For the purposes of the argument he considered two possible, if extreme positions. First there is a positive and optimistic view: children are wise and realistic. On this view there can be no good grounds for failing to include them in the decision-making process. The second possibility is to claim that children are generally lacking in good sense, and to conclude that schooling should proceed undemocratically as before. But if this dismal condition is generally true of students in schools, then surely Callan argued, there must be something radically wrong with the schooling process as traditionally conceived: is it not likely that the cause of students' lack of good sense lies in their endless subjection to other people's well-meant decisions? If so paternalism should be replaced by democracy. In Callan's fork, suggests Darling, whichever premise you start from, you finish up with the same conclusion (Darling 1992).

Callan very interestingly relied on an interpretation of Aristotle's theory of how the development of virtues is tied to their exercise (1988:144). He said that the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them eg. men become builders by building. Virtues are acquired by practising them. But how can we practise what we do not already have? Callan found agreement with Aristotle that virtues, like other educational ends, are intimated and realised within the process through which we pursue them. He applied this thinking to the question of the development and exercise of autonomy and concluded that a schooling system devoted to the end of cultivating autonomy must be concerned with ensuring ample scope for its exercise. Callan thus favoured authority structures which give students maximum scope for the exercise of autonomy in the government of schooling (Callan 1988:146).

2.2.4. Summary

In this section, I have presented the views of the two schools of thought on the issue of student participation in decision-making and the arguments for and against. While classical

philosophers like Mill, Hobbes and Locke saw very little need for according students participatory rights in decision-making, modern writers seem to take a more flexible stance on the issue.

The issue of student participation in decision-making has been looked at from extremes as an either/or option. Educational philosophers have pointed to the difficulties of direct student participation (Gutmann 1987; Wringe 1984, 1982; White 1983;). At the same time there is a substantial body of opinion that the rights of children with respect to participation in decision-making should not be compromised (Lindsey 1993; Snauwaert 1993; Darling 1992; White 1991; Walker 1990; Scheffler 1985; Fox 1984; Wringe 1982; Worsfold 1974).

With this "Catch 22" situation in mind educational philosophers have been articulating a more accommodating idea of providing maximum opportunities for student preferences to be made known directly by their democratically elected representatives to the authorities. It is also felt that students need not be involved in every decision regarding the management of a school. What is important is their participation through representative democracy in decision-making that affects them directly (Snauwaert 1993; Walker 1990; White 1987; Wringe 1982).

2.3. A Developmental Conception of Democracy as a Conceptual Framework

2.3.1. Introduction

Democracy is more often taken to be a form of political organisation and an arrangement for government than it is viewed as a way of life. It is both but for the purposes of this thesis my emphasis will be on democracy as a form of life. It is within this framework of democratic life that the question of student participation in decision-making processes will be examined. However the concept of democracy is wide and vague and needs to be clarified for the purpose of this study.

2.3.2. Models of Democracy

MacPherson, in his book, The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy (1974), sketches the

historical evolution of three models of liberal democracy.

Bentham and James Mill's model of "protective democracy", was a form of social contract democracy whose main purpose was to protect the rights and properties of men and to protect them from oppressive government. It fitted well with the prevalent capitalist, economic view of life dominant then. However, while it supplied a basic framework to protect the freedom of all, it did not offer much of a vision of what would hold people together in a democratic community beyond their own economic self-interest.

"Developmental democracy" as a model, inspired by John Stewart Mill, followed the idea of protective democracy. It took the main purpose of democracy to be the provision of opportunities for individuals to develop their capacities to the fullest and so develop their society. Freedom was put in the service of individual development which took precedence over that of the community.

The third, twentieth century model, MacPherson calls the "equilibrium model" which puts aside the moral view of democracy that would benefit the community for one that fits the amoral, consumer-oriented, acquisitive societies that exist in today's democratic countries (MacPherson 1974:78). In this model, democracy is centred on

a cadre of professional politicians (who) are the "entrepreneurs" who sell themselves to the voter consumers for a term of office wherein they, not the citizens, make decisions and maintain an equilibrium in the distribution of political, economic and social goods. The people are then free of political responsibility and go their own way in pursuit of their own interests, material needs and wants while being governed by professionals" (Soltis 1993:151).

Radical democrats, like Dewey (1948) and more recently Habermas (1972), while still adhering to the developmental, democratic tradition have gone beyond Mill. They have championed the idea of community and communication as essential to the growth and development not only of the individual, but also of society itself. This modern version of developmental democracy, which Snauwaert amplified, is the conceptual framework within which this study is located.

2.3.3. A Developmental Conception of Democracy

Snauwaert in his recent publication, Democracy, Education, and Governance: A Developmental Conception (1993), presents a view of school governance and student participation that is located within the framework of a developmental conception of democracy. (This stance also finds support in White 1987; 1983; Scheffler 1985). He attributes this conception as arising from the political thoughts of Mill, Rousseau, Marx, Dewey and Gandhi. The common thread running through their thoughts, he says, is that they all maintain that human development (rather than efficiency) should be our guiding value in exercising choice over the kind of society we would like to have. The realisation of the developmental ideal, he goes on, is contingent upon participation in the policy-making processes of the social institutions one is a member of. It is within this field of thinking that my examination of the potential role of secondary school students in decision-making in the management of schools is made.

It would be useful to briefly examine the ideas of the above-mentioned philosophers as they pertain to participation and decision-making.

According to **Rousseau's** educational plan, the individual through participation, would be able to discriminate amongst those personal impulses that are and are not in accordance with the commonly shared interest of the society. In terms of the decision-making process itself, every member would directly participate in the decision-making process and each would have equal decision-making power. A legitimate decision would be that on which there is unanimity (Snauwaert 1993:40).

Marx (1983) highlighted the idea of the separation of the conception and execution of decision-making. When individuals have to execute the decisions of others rather than their own, their labour power becomes alienated from their nature as human beings (Marx 1983:140). Therefore, to develop as a human being, an individual must actively participate in making decisions that will bear on personal action, if not fully decide them. Thus in Marx's view, self-determination via participation in decision-making processes is a necessary condition for human development. Within Marx's conception, individuals participate directly

and with equal power in the decisions that affect their lives in order to develop as human beings (Marx 1983).

John Dewey maintained that optimal human development can only take place through free and extensive communication and participation in the decision-making processes of group life. Participation, according to Dewey, requires self-reflection, clarity of thought, imagination, and a sensitivity towards others, greatly enlarging the experience of the participant. It also develops an awareness of the common interests that underpin community life. With such an awareness, experience is not limited to individual wishes and desires but extends to the community. Dewey observed that "full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he /she belongs" (Dewey 1948:209).

For **Gandhi**, the enforcement of decisions upon others implied coercion and this meant violence (Chatterjee 1984:71). He concluded that "democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village" (cited by Bhardwaj 1980:11).

A fundamental notion in Gandhi's political system is consensual decision-making (rather than majority rule). Conflicts of interests must be resolved before consensus can be reached for he believed that partial truth exists on both sides of a conflict. For Gandhi, development is the moral substance of democracy, for it is through democratic participation that optimal human development is achieved (Snauwaert 1993:58).

In **summary**, then, Rousseau, Marx, Dewey and Gandhi have argued that "human development" should be the guiding value in designing systems of governance, that development is contingent upon full participation and that development is the "moral substance of democracy" (Snauwaert 1993:60).

2.3.4. Direct Participation versus Community

There is the potential conflict between the claim for full and direct participation on developmental grounds and the claim for expert control on the grounds of competence and efficiency. From a developmental perspective, argues Snauwaert, participation does not have to be subordinate to competence. Rather, they may be complementary. This is explained by the democratic use of expertise in which those making the decision may consult and delegate certain decisions to experts (Snauwaert 1993:64).

The fundamental issue concerning developmental decision-making structures is the conflict between participation and community - giving all individuals the right to decision-making while at the same time preserving the collective interest of the entire group or the public interest.

2.3.5. Creative Consensus

Snauwaert sees consensus as opposed to majority rule as being consistent with the developmental ideal (Snauwaert 1993:76). In terms of conflict resolution, Barber (1989) favours strong democracy as compared to authoritative, juridical, pluralist or unitary modes. He maintains that strong democracy resolves conflict through a participatory process which aims to transform conflict rather than suppress it. Barber refers to this as "creative consensus" (Barber 1989).

In a decision-making process, each individual brings with her private interests which would result in inevitable conflict. This conflict, according to Snauwaert, is transformed through dialogue which he views as constituting a search for some common ground, some common principle upon which all participants can agree (Snauwaert 1993:76).

However Snauwaert reminds us that participation and consensual decision-making do not occur in isolation but are embedded in the larger social structure which is unequal. The conception of participation in consensual decision-making is premised upon an equality of decision-making authority. The existence of stratification (race, class, gender) threatens to

insert unequal power into the decision-making process, thereby undermining its developmental potential. In the case of the school, the traditional authority that teachers enjoy over students by virtue of their position can very easily turn into an unequal power relationship and so threaten the developmental conception (Snauwaert 1993:81).

Domination, manifest in various forms of power relations, prevents the liberation of human potential. Snauwaert refers to Freire's (1989:24) concept of "dialogue" as key to a developmental consensual process. Through dialogue the inherent differences between individuals can be bridged. The key to ensuring consensual decision-making is to create the conditions under which dialogue can take place (1993:82).

2.3.6. Summary

This then will constitute the conceptual framework within which my examination of the potential role of students in decision-making will be conducted. It conceives of democracy, and the democratic participation of students in decision-making, in a developmental way. It is only in this way, I believe, that the growing divide between the aims of education viz. the conflict between participation and efficiency - giving all individuals the right to decision-making while at the same time preserving the collective interest of the entire group or the public interest - can be bridged. A developmental conception of democracy, with the facilities of "dialogue" and "creative consensus" as the cornerstones, will, I believe, serve as an appropriate framework for this study of the role that students can play in decision-making in the management and administration of secondary schools.

2.4. Approaches to School Management

Most of the literature on school organisation and educational administration falls within a functionalist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan as cited by Angus 1986). Writers such as Bates (1983) and Greenfield (1983) have argued for some time that dominant approaches to educational administration and school organisation have uncritically transferred from the study of business management and behavioural sciences a preoccupation with control, efficiency and regulation (Angus 1986:5-17). There appears to be a deep entrenchment of

systems thinking in educational administrators.

Angus is of the view that the result of this is that educational concerns are reduced to matters of school organisation which are the preserve of school managers. With this technology of control, teachers, much less pupils, are regarded as objects upon which school managers can practise leadership, evaluation, co-ordination and delegation. Those being led (teachers) and those being taught (students) seem hardly to feature in the organisation of the school (Angus 1986:5-17).

In contrast to the systems theory and behavioural science views, scholars such as Greenfield (1983) and Bates (1983) argue that schools, like other organisations, consist of people - individuals acting upon and being acted upon by other individuals in a complex network of relationships. Recognising this, several writers have argued for the democratisation of the social relations within schools so that administrators may recognise that a part is played by all school participants in creating the organisation of the school (Bates 1983; Foster 1983; Watkins 1983).

The result has been a new approach to school management viz. site-based management (especially in the US) with participatory shared decision-making between principals, parents, teachers and community members. The primary strategy, according to Lange, was to allow those closest to the problem to provide direct input into the solution (Lange 1993:98-106).

While Snauwaert considers site-based management a significant shift towards a democratic system of school governance, he maintains it does not go far enough in terms of democratic empowerment (Snauwaert 1993:100). There is a tendency, he says, to favour either the professionalisation of the teacher or community empowerment, one at the expense of the other. What is needed, according to Snauwaert, is a balanced system of governance that increases professionalisation while simultaneously empowering the community (1993:101). Community here, according to Snauwaert, includes the students. Dunlap and Goldman (1991:5-29) offer a different dimension to power relationships in school viz. facilitative power, in which administrators' time and energies are focused on facilitation of others' knowledge, talents and expertise instead of control. Again, according to Dunlap and Goldman

(1991) the "others" is inclusive of students.

What system of governance we choose will be determined by what we value. If we value efficiency over all then bureaucracy and elite control will remain a prominent part of our institutional lives. However if we value human development as the ideal of formal schooling, then the principles of participation, communication, association and community should define our system of school governance (Snauwaert 1993:102).

2.5. Democratic schools with Student Participation in Decision-making

2.5.1. Introduction

This section of the literature review will focus on a sweep of democratic schools that have experimented with student participation in decision-making largely in Britain and North America. The objective of this exercise is to note the success and/or failure, strengths and weaknesses, and possibilities and difficulties of student participation in these schools.

2.5.2. Dewey's Laboratory School

The Laboratory School at the University of Chicago under Dewey's leadership from 1896-1903 resulted from Dewey's conception of an ideal, democratic school as a "miniature community, an embryonic society" (Dewey as cited by Gutmann 1987:93). Students were encouraged to engage in far more collective deliberation and decision-making than is common in most schools. Classes at the Lab School often began with "Council Meetings" in which teachers discussed past work and planned future work with students. The youngest students were given the daily responsibility of collectively distributing and carrying out important tasks.

While the Lab school did not treat students as the political or intellectual equals of its teachers, it was an embryonic democratic society because it elicited a commitment to learning and cultivated democratic virtues among its students.

In the Laboratory School, Dewey tried to balance the participatory and disciplinary purposes

of education, leaving some significant educational decisions, such as the content of the curriculum and the standards for promotion, largely to the determination of teachers and administrators (Gutmann 1987:92).

Although the teachers had more authority, both formal and informal, than democratic legislators should ideally have, the Lab School came close to living up to the educational standard dictated by democratic values: "democratise schools to the extent necessary to cultivate the participatory along with the disciplinary virtues of democratic character" (Gutmann 1987:94).

2.5.3. A.S. Neill's Summerhill

A.S.Neill's venture into school governance (in England in the 1920's) with direct student participation, is one of the often quoted experience by educational philosophers. Neill established his school, Summerhill, in Suffolk with the theme of "freedom, real freedom, not the sham thing so often called democracy" (Neill 1972:12) after becoming disillusioned with existing public schooling.

The view that Neill propounded was that children have rights in exactly the same way as adults: there is the same obligation to respect the rights of children as there is to respect the rights of adults. He believed that childhood affects neither the right nor the obligation to respect the right.

Neill accepted that authority has a legitimate place, albeit a restricted one. But what kind of authority is appropriate? Neill saw the job of education as the production of happiness. He believed that happiness in adult life was dependent on a happy childhood. Traditional approaches to education and child-rearing induced unhappiness, and these had to be reversed. Centrally this involved rejection of adult authority.

Neill saw adult control and direction of children's lives as having a debilitating effect: instead of empowering children, it makes them less capable of making their own decisions. The absence of adult authority at Summerhill, in Neill's view, meant that pupils learned how to

handle freedom and how to take responsibility for their conduct and their learning.

If Neill accepted the need for authority but rejected the authority of adults then what was his alternative? In Summerhill authority was exercised by the community through weekly meetings of the whole school; hence Neill's description of the school as "Democratic". Pupils and teachers had one vote each. These meetings had two functions: one was to formulate rules governing social behaviour; the other was to consider complaints about those who transgressed the rules. The conducting of these meetings by a different chairperson each week developed pupils' administrative skills, provided experience in public speaking, and compelled people to see the other person's view. Films made of such meetings suggest a high level of participation.

Neill stressed equal rights for children and adults and equal participation for pupils and staff in law making. But Darling makes the point that even among those who did have a vote, power was unequally distributed (Darling 1992:50). Teachers, after all, are not just older and more experienced than children; they are highly educated. It would be reasonable to suppose that in discussion they would be more articulate and that they could be more subtly persuasive than most pupils.

On the issue of time-tabling arrangements and appointment of teachers, Neill exercised his influence and power solely. One recent argument in favour of pupils making such appointments suggests that if pupils were to make a mistake they would just have to rectify it (Callan 1988:330). In mainstream schools this would not be easily accomplished, since even the poorest teachers generally manage to stay in a post once appointed. Also, the increasing unionisation of teachers and the access to the courts of law makes it virtually impossible to fire teachers on the turn.

Equal voting rights do not entail equal power. The most significant limitation of Summerhill democracy lay in Neill's power to determine the extent of the school meetings competence. While it was true that the powers enjoyed by the Summerhill community totally eclipsed the trivial level of decision-making entrusted to pupil committees in some mainstream schools, Neill nevertheless remained Summerhill's proprietor and acted as such. It would have been

reasonable for the community to have appointed the staff. If there had been real democratic power the community would have demanded the right to make such appointments. After all, the appointment of new teachers affects everyone's interest.

While Neill could be criticised for giving children more freedom and power than they could reasonably be expected to handle, he hatched a vital idea: that being given the right to participate in community government is for the pupil both an educationally profitable experience and an important display of adult trust and confidence.

While Summerhill democracy may have been flawed, at least there was a real attempt to institute democratic decision-making.

2.5.4. Leicestershire Comprehensive

Few schools have attempted instituting democratic decision-making seriously. One documented exception in the British State system is a Comprehensive secondary school in Leicestershire which succeeded in developing democratic structures in the early 1970's (Gordon:1986).

The supreme policy making body was the moot, open to all in the school, including non-teaching staff and students. All who attended had one vote each and anyone was eligible to call a moot. The moot set up various committees. The Standing Committee met every fortnight. Membership was open to students, and two from each team could be registered as having voting rights. Student participation was dependent on their initiative. The moot operated by consensus, not by simple majority.

In general, student participation was minimal and often confined to a small number of sixth form students. Yet at times, students participated in moots en masse, when they felt that the issues directly concerned them, and when the moots were publicised and took place during school time rather than after school.

Students themselves were divided on their views on democracy and participation in

democratic processes. Although the majority were of the opinion that participation was important, some felt that participation should have been limited. Many students also felt that the sort of decisions they were asked to make were not really serious ones. Others felt that teachers should make the decisions and that students should be consulted (Gordon 1986:63).

If students felt participation was important then why did they not attend moots more often? Students noted the lack of sufficient information and the way in which formal procedures confuse and mystify, the intimidation they experienced in large meetings with complicated procedures and the intellectual communication of the teachers which students found difficulty in following. They also referred to students' apathy and lack of interest which were related to a lack of positive commitment to it, and a sense of detachment (Gordon 1986:120).

Leicestershire Comprehensive ran down its democratic procedures in 1985. In an internal school document, the principal affirmed the need for "tight control at the centre" (Gordon 1986:244). After the suspension of formal democracy in 1985 the participation of students has not been a significant issue. Students were integrated into the proposals of the executive only superficially. However, the experiences of democratic decision-making in the school while it existed, were significant in highlighting areas of strengths and weaknesses of student participation.

2.5.5. Brookline High School

Sarah L. Lightfoot (1983) made an indepth case study of Brookline High School, in Massachusetts, USA. The information and observations recorded here are drawn from her work. Brookline High has initiated a new system of governance in the form of the "Town Meeting" which has become the major decision-making body in the school. It comprises 80 representatives from all parts of the school community - students and teachers who would have the authority to govern Brookline High School with legal constraints set by Massachusetts and in concert with the headmaster and the School Committee. This was a real attempt, according to Lightfoot, to change deeply rooted patterns of power and decision-making - from a hierarchical relationship in school to one that gives participating members (students included) an equal voice.

Brookline High has a "Fairness Committee" to deal with disciplinary problems. Students and teachers sit on this committee and their recommendations for action made to the administration are binding. The Fairness Committee is being projected as the judicial arm of the school, not merely responding to incidents of crises, but also creating policy. This concept is very similar to the "Judicial Committee" responsible for handling discipline at the Sudbury Valley School which is also in Massachusetts (Gray and Chanoff 1986:189). This committee, which is made up of a chronological cross section of the school, both teachers and students, and drawn by lot, changes monthly, so everyone serves from time to time.

At Brookline, students share authority with teachers over a remarkably wide range of decisions, from disciplinary to curriculum matters. Lightfoot viewed it as a "school in visible transition ... experimenting with new and unconventional arrangements of power and responsibility" (1983:218). An interesting observation that Lightfoot made, however, is that the risk taking, the unusual openness to change and the responsiveness to the community was possible only because of a long history of security (1983:218).

2.5.6. The Schaefer School in Tappan, New York

In the Schaefer School in New York, principal, Dr. JoAnne Shaheen, created a school structure, as well as an atmosphere in which children thrived (Kuhmerker 1989). Class Meetings, meeting a minimum of once a week, deal with problems that arise within the individual classroom. At a class meeting early each year, nominations and elections are held for representatives to the Student Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC exists so that children can help the principal to make the school better. SAC has bi-monthly meetings. Since representatives to the SAC are delegates, they must bring information about the SAC meetings back to their classrooms for discussion and must bring the fruit of classroom discussion to subsequent SAC meetings.

Despite democratic decision-making procedures, there will always be instances when students fall foul of the rules. At Schaefer, there are specific school structures for dealing with this problem. Students help resolve student problems through "Due Process" or "Fairness" committees which are staffed by students on the same grade. This committee allows students'

peers to look for reasons behind misbehaviour. In this way the Due Process becomes not only an introduction to society's legal system but also an instrument for social support and personal growth (Kuhmerker 1989:34-41).

However, Kuhmerker pointed out that the success of democratic school governance in the Schaefer School depended much on the commitment of the staff. She stated that the staff at the school had to adjust schedules and relocate priorities to create time when students could participate in the decision-making process of democratic school governance (1989:41).

The Schaefer School experience has pointed to two very important issues. One is the need to facilitate greater opportunities for the development of empathy, respect and friendship among children. Kuhmerker suggests that the participation of students in decision-making in school through the SCA's and the different committees sets the climate that can realise the above. The other is the involvement of students in matters of discipline, which is a very contentious issue, in school.

2.5.7. The Catholic Boys High School

Angus (1986) observed the behaviour of a group of year 11 pupils in a Catholic Boys High School in Victoria, Australia. Co-operating only selectively with their teachers, these "unacceptable" students (they were referred to as "Sweathogs"), had a counter-school culture. They lay emphasis on sport, alcohol, sex and lacked ability in school but saw themselves as more sociable than other students. Their unco-operative behaviour was usually regarded as being in conflict with the school's formal structure. Riffel, however, argued that the impact of such pupils is actually an intrinsic part of the school as an organisation - the Sweathogs, like other pupils, teachers, administrators, parents and community members, contribute to the "moral order" that is the school (Riffel as cited in Angus 1986:8).

Although the focus of the experience at the Catholic Boys High School is the social organisation of the children in school, I use it as an example of how "unacceptable" students can become involved in the decision-making in the management of their school lives. A counter-school culture, not unlike that described above, is increasingly becoming the norm

in many South African schools.

The research with the "Sweathogs" in the Catholic Boys High School has indicated, according to Angus, that despite the silence regarding school students in texts of educational administration and school organisation, the actions of pupils, collectively and individually, impinge upon what is regarded as the formal structure of the school (Angus 1986:14).

Angus is of the view that pupils should not be excluded from school organisation. He suggests that "the dominant approach to educational administration, by stressing the precedence of organisational patterns over individual involvement in schools, encourages an uncritical acceptance of the dominance of pre-existing structures" (1986:15). The pupils are expected to act out roles that they have not shaped. Angus believes that it is within the power of administrators to be sensitive to recognise that relationships among school participants need to be changed so that all, including students, may contribute to a more democratic organisation (Angus 1986:15).

2.5.8. Summary

This section of the literature review attempted to present the experiences of a few of the better known "democratic schools" which experimented with the idea of allowing students the opportunity of participating in decision-making in the management of schools. The primary reason for this exercise was to examine the success and/or failure of student participation and to assess the reasons for its success and failure. Conditions and circumstances are understandably different when one considers the South African situation, but the fundamental principles are nevertheless applicable.

The next part of this chapter will focus on a historical perspective of student participation in South Africa.

2.6. Student Participation in Decision-making in South Africa - a historical perspective

2.6.1. Introduction

The history of struggle and resistance in South Africa is punctuated with the participation of students over various issues ranging from local internal school issues to wider political issues such as the control of power in the country. This was especially marked after the Soweto uprising in June 1976 which symbolised a turning point in student involvement both in the educational and political activism of students.

2.6.2. The Rise of Youth Militancy in Black Schools

The 1980's saw the emergence of youth militancy in black schools and a general upsurge of student power, linked to heightened community consciousness and worker organisation and accompanied by a new wave of incursions by banned political movements. It marked the beginning of a new era of resistance to apartheid (Kallaway 1984). After 1980, a similar kind of thinking as that in Western countries concerning student participation began to emerge. In South Africa, it was with much vigour because the struggle for a democratic education system was tied intrinsically to the political struggle for a new democratic order in the country. Schools were located as sites of struggle for the transformation of the system from within (Kulati 1992).

The basis of this struggle was the demand for the development of a democratic education system which would benefit all South Africans irrespective of race and in which all who were involved would have the opportunity to determine its content and the way in which it was to be administered. This demand, embodied centrally in the resolution on People's Education, called for parents, teachers, students and workers to participate in both the implementation and management of People's Education in schools (National Education Crisis Committee, NECC 1985). This included among other relevant aspects the idea of administration and control which became a tactical demand for black people. Taking control of the administration of the school would ensure that People's Education was realised (Kallaway 1984).

2.6.3. The Birth of PTSA's

The period after 1985 thus saw the emergence and mushrooming of Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA's) in a number of communities nationally, loosely co-ordinated by the NECC. By the 1990's, PTSA's were increasingly being seen as alternative structures of school governance, not only in Department of Education and Training (DET) schools but also in schools under the control of the Tri-cameral educational departments. In the Southern Natal region the schools under the control of the House of Delegates (HOD) and Kwa-zulu Department of Education and Culture (KDEC) were particularly enthusiastic about setting up these structures (NECC S.NATAL Minutes 1989). Students, themselves, have been steadfast to the point of militancy in their demand for participation in the decision making processes and the control and administration of their schooling. This demand was linked closely with the demand for the recognition of democratic and autonomous Student Representative Councils (SRC's) through which students could claim a right to determine how their education was conducted (Perry 1992).

2.6.4. Reaction of the State

While there was increasing support by black parents, teachers and students for the wider participation of the community as well as that of the students in school governance, the state education authorities though conceding to the former in the form of greater parental involvement, refused to entertain the latter (ie. student involvement). Where it did, it ascribed it mere observer status at the discretion of parents and teachers (Education Renewal Strategy, 1992). Almost all PTSA's were refused recognition by the authorities because, among other fundamental reasons, most of these bodies gave equal status to students in decision making (NECC 1989).

2.6.5. The Dilemma of Democratic Participation

The crisis around student participation was further aggravated when organised parent structures (Association of School Education Committees, 1990; Natal Association of Parents, 1993) and teachers, many of whom by now were unionised into the South African

Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), began to question the status of students as equal partners in decision-making. The ambiguity of students' roles arising from their participation in joint decision-making on the one hand, while simultaneously maintaining their autonomy over and above that decision on the other, clearly complicates the issue.

Over the last three years the disruption of teaching and learning by both pupils and teachers over issues concerning unilateral restructuring, rationalisation and cutbacks by the state, school conditions, text books, examination fees, conditions of service and higher wages for teachers, have exposed the tensions inherent in PTSA's. It has pointed to the need for greater clarity concerning the functions of bodies in which parents, teachers and students meet to make joint decisions (National Education Crisis Conference, May 1993). It has also thrown up a number of crucial questions that need to be considered. How far can school government be democratised? What form should this democratisation really take? How feasible is participation by all those with an interest in school government? How can participation be realised? Is it vital that students be brought into the decision-making process and if they are, must they be given equal status to the other stake-holders?

There is a basic dilemma, a possible incompatibility, between preparing young people for democracy and democratic decision-making, and their actual participation in democratic decision-making in the school situation. The debate still centres on issues of age, experience, knowledge, judgement and the like - whether young people, even at the secondary school level, without some preparation, are ready to participate in democratic processes within the school (Morrow 1989). Research into these questions is crucial for any system of school governance that is going to probably be introduced by a new government in the new dispensation. The crisis in black education is escalating with almost complete breakdown of schooling in many parts of the country. What is urgently needed, in my opinion, is a revival of the culture of learning and teaching. I am of the view that part of the solution to this dilemma lies in the answering of the questions of student participation in school governance (Unterhalter 1991; Frith & Corrigan 1977; Young & Whitty 1977).

2.6.6. Reactions of the Democratic Movement

In South Africa the NECC has been the chief advocate of student participation (NECC, 1985,1986,1989) and in its commissioned research, active student participation is favoured in the options offered (National Education Policy Investigation - NEPI - Governance and Administration 1992).

The ANC has also indicated wide support for student participation and has pledged to realise this in the post-April 27 dispensation (A Policy framework for Education & Training 1994). However, in its Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) published immediately after it won the first democratic elections in April 1994, the ANC seems to have compromised the issue. While it acknowledges that our human resources must be developed to the full and requires that democratic school governance structures be set up which involve democratically elected parents and teacher representatives, it provides for "student participation at a consultative level" (RDP 1994:60).

The recent White Paper on Education (23/11/94) has actually endorsed this:

In secondary schools, the main stakeholders for purposes of governance comprise at least the following groups: parents, teachers, students, and representatives of the broader community served by the school. It is recognised that students should not participate in some categories of school business (1994:52).

The new government's proposals on school governance, especially with regard to the participation of students, has come under criticism by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). Zwe Hulane, national publicity secretary of COSAS, making an input at the public hearing on the White Paper in Pietermaritzburg, stated that COSAS "disagreed with ...the proposal that pupil participation in the running of schools should be limited" (The Daily News, November 1, 1994).

It is in this context, then, that this study of the potential role of students in the control and administration of secondary schools in Durban was conducted.

2.6.7. Summary

This chapter has focused on the practice of student participation in school governance through a review of the related literature. Arguments for and against student participation in decision-making were presented from the viewpoints of traditional and contemporary philosophers on the rights of children. This led to a review of the models of democracy that guided philosophers' thinking on school governance. What emerged through the literature review was a conception of democracy that was developmental. It is this conception of democracy that forms the conceptual framework that underpins this study. A supporting leg of this framework is the theories of management and administration rooted in the democratic, participative paradigm.

A study of the practice of involving students in decision-making at various levels in selected schools in Britain, America and Australia has indicated several strengths and weaknesses, and these will be considered when recommendations are made at the end of the study. Finally, a historical perspective of student participation in school management in South Africa was presented in an attempt to locate the South African experience in the international context.

In the next chapter, the methodology employed in the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The question of the participation of students in school governance is a relatively recent one in South Africa. It has not been a subject that has been readily delved into by researchers and subsequently, not much has been written on it. In my very early investigation of the kind of study that would answer the questions I was grappling with, I found that there were few schools with student participation in school governance. The only schools where there was some measure of joint participation in decision-making were those that fell under the former House of Delegates (HOD), catering largely for "Indian" students and an independent, semi-private school that was seeking affiliation to the Department of Education and Training (DET).

Given then the very haphazard nature of student participation in school governance, and the constraints posed by the scope of the research, an exploratory study of joint decision-making in existing structures seemed expedient.

In this chapter I will discuss the methodology I used, highlighting the reasons for its selection and some of the problems and weaknesses related to this kind of methodology for the present study. I will then discuss briefly the techniques employed in gathering data. The next section will deal with the research process itself, followed by a discussion on the method of data analysis I employed in this study. Finally, this chapter will look at the question of validation of the research process, both in the methods of data collection and data analysis.

3.2. Qualitative Methodology

3.2.1. Introduction

According to Van Maanen, qualitative methodology represents " a mixture of the rational,

serendipitous, and intuitive in which the personal experiences of the organisational researcher are often key events to be understood and analysed as data" (1979:10). He goes on to say that qualitative researchers tend to describe the unfolding of social processes rather than the social structures. They also seek to derive "contextual understanding" which cannot be achieved without direct, first-hand and intimate knowledge of a research setting (Van Maanen 1979:10).

Miles says of qualitative data that they are "rich, full, earthy, holistic, 'real'; their face value seems unimpeachable; they preserve chronological flow where that is important; they tend to reduce a researcher's trained incapacity, bias, narrowness and arrogance" (1979:117).

3.2.2. Why Qualitative Methodology for this Study

The lack of serious study of student participation in school governance, and the very inconsistent nature of the present school governance structures in schools involving student participation, have pointed to the advantage of locating this study in the paradigm of qualitative research. But, there are other reasons for the decision on the choice of research method.

In order to investigate the potential role students can play in decision-making in the governance of the school, I had to be in a position both to observe behaviour (of students and others that they relate to in decision-making) in its natural setting and to elicit from the people observed the structures of meaning which have informed and textured behaviour. The case study seemed to offer this opportunity. My unit of analysis being the Parent-Teacher-Student-Association (PTSA), I needed, in a thorough-going process of enquiry, to discover what was going on.

Firstly, I had to try to set aside my own preconceptions about what was going on and to explore the setting as it was viewed and constructed by its participants. Secondly, to understand why things took place the way they did, why decisions were made the way they were, I had to look at the relationship between the SRC and the PTSA as a whole, and the relationship between student representatives and teachers, parents and the administrators of

the school. Through the case study then, I was attempting to combine the views of insiders with that of an outsider to describe and explain a social, dynamic setting.

The case study was preferred as a method because of its unique strength in its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence - documents (eg. minutes of PTSA meetings, constitutions, mission statements and financial statements), interviews and observations (Yin 1984:14).

3.2.3. Some Problems and Weaknesses

While qualitative data and qualitative research are attractive, and for this investigation, apt, they have serious weaknesses and problems. I had to keep these in mind during the course of the research process. In fact Miles refers to it as "an attractive nuisance" (Miles 1979:117). He reminds the researcher that collecting and analysing data is a labour intensive task.

One of the problems of qualitative studies, and this applies to this study, is the question of sampling involved and the generalizability of qualitatively derived findings. Given the fact that qualitative research works largely with words which are ambiguous symbols, rather than fixed numbers, the possibility of researcher bias is always present.

The most serious difficulty with qualitative data is that the methods of analysis are not well formulated (as compared with quantitative data). Miles calls it a "mysterious, half-formulated art" (Miles 1979:122). The analyst, faced with a mass of qualitative data, has very few guidelines for protection against self delusion and presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions. Also, the lack of a common language in analysing and writing makes for much ambiguity. Under such circumstances, researchers have pointed out, the validity of qualitatively derived findings is seriously in doubt (here Miles and Huberman (1984) quote Dawson, LeCompte and Goetz).

However, these weaknesses and problems, rather than discouraging the process of qualitative research, have instead indicated to the need for explicit, systematic methods for drawing conclusions, and for testing them carefully. I have attempted to visit these issues frequently

in the course of the write-up of my research and its findings.

3.3. Techniques employed in the Research Process

3.3.1. Introduction

Consistent with the aim of this study, the focus of attention was on the attitudes of parents and teachers towards the participation of students in decision-making in the management of schools, and the capacity of students themselves to participate in organs of school governance. Accordingly, the research design leaned towards one that was exploratory in nature. The techniques employed in the research process were questionnaires with open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. The use of the first two "techniques" seem incongruent with the qualitative approach adopted. I have reviewed this at the end of the study (Appendix 13).

3.3.2. Questionnaires

The conceptual framework (derived from theories of children's rights of participation) within which this study was conducted, actually informed the choice of questions that were posed in the questionnaires. Different questionnaires were drawn for each of the different components of the PTSA (which was my unit of analysis) viz. parents, teachers and students.

Arising from the fact that this study was exploratory in nature, the questions in the questionnaire were largely open-ended so as to allow the respondents to raise issues that could be followed up in the subsequent interviews. Where closed questions were used, especially in measuring the attitude of respondents, the 5 point Likert rating scale was employed (Robson 1993:256). This assisted also in obtaining a degree of validity as I will later elaborate on.

3.3.2.1. Principal's Questionnaire

The questionnaire given to the principal was designed to obtain basic information about the school and the PTSA. Some of the aspects covered were:

- (a) student and staff population at school;
- (b) the composition of the students' representative body and the manner of their election;
- (c) the support the above body enjoys from the general student population;
- (d) the principal's view of the effectiveness of the SRC in representing student concerns to the management of the school;
- (e) details about the composition of the PTSA and its effectiveness in addressing the problems of the school.

3.3.2.2. Parent\Teacher Questionnaire

As there was no reason to categorise separately the responses of teachers and parents, the same questionnaire was given to both groups. The various items in the questionnaire sought to elicit the perceptions, attitudes and views of parents and teachers on:

- (a) students' knowledge of general school issues;
- (b) the ability of student representatives to present student concerns in a meeting;
- (c) the effect of their presence on student participation in meetings;
- (d) the status of students in PTSA meetings;
- (e) the allocation of office-bearer positions to students;
- (f) the allocation of "sensitive" tasks eg. financial responsibilities to students and
- (g) the involvement of students in discussions concerning teacher misconduct.

3.3.2.3. Student Questionnaires

The student questionnaires attempted to elicit responses to the following concerns:

- (a) their perceptions of why they were elected to leadership positions in school;
- (b) their success in getting their points across in PTSA meetings;
- (c) the degree of seriousness parents and teachers accorded their contributions in PTSA meetings;
- (d) the amount of time they spend in participating in decision-making meetings;
- (e) the kind of tasks that they are allocated on the PTSA generally, the kind of tasks denied them and the kind of tasks/responsibilities they would prefer to be given;

- (f) their perceptions of the PTSA meetings - their value for them, their interest in the issues discussed, the form of the meeting etc. and,
- (g) their training needs for effectiveness in decision-making in PTSA meetings.

3.3.3. Interviews

After an initial analysis of the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principal, parents, teachers and students. The use of semi-structured interviews arises out of the exploratory nature of the study.

Thus, instead of the traditional interview schedule, the interviews were conducted on the basis of an interview guide which had a few lead questions and areas for exploration. The interviews afforded the opportunity to make cross references from the different questionnaires, to find some common areas to explore and areas of disagreement to investigate further. It also helped to clarify contradictions, coming to an understanding of terms eg. the meaning of management, administration and governance and in exploring attitudes. All interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed. Respondents preferred remaining anonymous and subsequently fictitious names were given to both schools and respondents.

While the interviews with the principal, teachers and parents were conducted individually, those with the students were conducted in a group. This was done on the basis of my experience with student groups in interview sessions. They tend to be more confident in a group.

3.3.4. Non-participant Observation

The conceptual framework I used to understand the units and their links (based on the participatory rights of children in a society that sees democracy as a developmental conception) informed the choice of research questions. The research question in turn informed the sampling frame: where do I go to get my answers, with whom do I talk, what do I observe? It turned out that an ideal place to get answers to most of my questions was

the PTSA meeting in which students were participating. These meetings brought students together with parents and teachers in a forum of discussion and decision-making. They revealed attitudes of teachers and parents and the principal, they exposed the strengths and weaknesses of students' contributions and arguments, they pointed out clearly the interests of students in attending such meetings and indicated the capacity of students to take part jointly in decision-making and follow-up. And so observing the PTSA meetings as a non-participant became an indispensable part of the research process.

As a non-participant observer, without becoming part of the proceedings, I attempted to observe things as they happened, naturally, and as undisturbed by my presence as possible. Non-participant observation avoids to a large extent the dangers inherent in fully participant observation. This was especially significant in my case as I was known as the chairperson of the local Education Co-ordinating Committee which was very instrumental in setting up PTSA's and running workshops for SRC's and PTSA's. It was in the best interest of the study that I adopted this non-participant kind of observation.

However, as Woods pointed out, there is a sense in which one is always participating even as a non-participant observer (Woods 1986:39). I found it extremely difficult not to have an effect on the situation under observation. My request to conduct the study was discussed in a full PTSA meeting and all members knew exactly the focus of my research. I had the feeling that this resulted in the personal doctoring of responses by participants, although it did not significantly affect the findings I arrived at.

It also became very difficult to avoid becoming involved in some way in the life of the PTSA and indeed the school, especially since I was in and out of the school. (I was inadvertently not informed of a meeting and the secretary was taken to task for it. The minutes of the meeting carried the note that I was to be informed of all the meetings.) I eventually became part of the fete that the PTSA had organised, sharing duties at stalls and doing an item on the programme for the day.

3.4. The Research Process

After initial telephonic enquiries with the relevant education departments in Durban and the Southern Natal Region of the National Education Coordinating Committee, two schools were selected for the study viz. Tambo High (DET) and Dadoo Memorial Secondary (HOD). (The use of pseudonyms became necessary for the schools and the participants because of the sensitive nature of the comments made). The former was the only black secondary school in the greater Durban area that had students participating in a formal decision-making Parent-Teacher-Student Association. Dadoo Memorial was one of the few secondary schools served by the HOD which had a PTSA that was meeting regularly and in which students were participating as equal partners in the decision-making process.

The questionnaires were pre-tested to identify any major difficulties or weaknesses in the instrument. The pre-test sample of five each of parents, teachers and students and a principal was selected from outside the survey sample. All those involved in the pre-test had some experience of involvement in decision-making in a PTSA. On the basis of the pre-test the questionnaires were revised.

A written request for permission was made to the PTSA's for the study to be conducted (Appendix 1) and a favourable response was communicated to me (Appendix 2) after the request was discussed at a PTSA meeting. The principals were given their questionnaires (Appendix 4), and the three teachers and three parents from each school were asked to complete theirs (Appendix 5). These were hand delivered and collected personally by the writer. I learned that the PTSA of Dadoo Memorial had just had fresh elections and that the student component elected by the student body to serve on the PTSA was new and thus was not in a position to respond to the questionnaire as yet. Through the school, contact was established with members of the previous SRC delegation on the PTSA who agreed to participate in the study. This group of students were given the questionnaires to complete (Appendix 6). Thus while there was only one group of teachers and one group of parents for each school in the study, there were two groups of students (1993 SRC and the present SRC) from Dadoo Memorial and one group of students from Tambo High. The full study was conducted with all groups.

I was invited to attend all PTSA meetings as an observer from the end of May 1994. PTSA

meetings at Dadoo Memorial were normally scheduled for once monthly but because of the planned activities, one of them being the School Fete, these increased to fortnightly and eventually weekly meetings until early September after the completion of the fete. I managed a good mix of pre-designed and open-ended instrumentation corresponding to the demands of the different research questions. The pre-designed instrumentation included devices for observing and recording events, albeit very loose eg. general notes on discussion of agenda points, physical layout of room, seating arrangements, seating position of the principal, teachers, parents and students, attendance figures, times of starting and terminating, notes on frequency and nature of student inputs. Other data collection activities included listening to the gist and flow of the conversation, jotting down points that appeared important, mysterious, worth following up or frequently mentioned (Miles and Huberman 1984:45).

After each PTSA meeting a summary sheet containing the most important data and leads for investigation and exploration in the interviews were noted (Miles and Huberman 1984:50).

There was a hundred percent response return of the questionnaires. The 1993 SRC group from Dadoo Memorial was interviewed first on the basis of an interview guide (Appendix 7) derived from their responses to the questionnaires. Thereafter the principals of both schools were interviewed (Appendix 8). In mid September the 1994 SRC groups from both schools were interviewed (Appendix 9) after which individual interviews with the parent and teacher representatives followed (Appendix 10). Finally, the chairpersons of the PTSA's were interviewed.

3.5. The Analysis of Data

The point was made earlier that analysing case study evidence, or qualitative data for that matter, is especially difficult because the strategies and techniques have not been well defined (Miles and Huberman 1984; Yin 1984; Miles 1979).

Strauss and Corbin refer to the importance of analytic procedures such as giving rigour to the research process and helping the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions he brings to, and that can develop during, the research process (1990:57).

Yin sees it as important to have a general analytic strategy in which the ultimate goal is to treat the evidence fairly and to produce compelling analytic conclusions (1984:100).

In the analysis of the data in this study, I have relied on the model suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). They consider that analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. This would include various analytic techniques viz.:

- * putting information into different arrays;
- * making a matrix of categories and placing the evidence within such categories;
- * creating data displays - flow charts and other devices - for examining the data;
- * tabulating the frequency of different events;
- * putting information in chronological order.

Added to this list of analytic techniques is Yin's modes of analysis viz. pattern matching, explanation- building and time-series analysis (Yin 1984). The analysis of data began very early in the study and it continued through the course of the study since I believed, like Glaser, that analysis should not be separated from data collection (Glaser 1978).

3.6. The Question of Validation

3.6.1. Introduction

Qualitative research often faces the criticism that it is unreliable, invalid and generally "unworthy of admission into the magic circle of science" (Robson 1993:402). As indicated above, the heavy reliance on the human instrument increases the potential for bias. There are also problems with the questions of representativeness, availability and weighting.

Lincoln and Guba suggest that qualitative research should undergo the tests of credibility (the parallel to internal validity), transferability (external validity or generalizability), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (construct validity) (1985:294-301).

3.6.2. Credibility

As far as the credibility of the present research process is concerned, there have been methods employed to realise this. Prolonged involvement, persistent observation, triangulation and getting feedback from informants are ways suggested by Robson (1993:404) to check for credibility.

(a) My involvement with the respondents spanned a period of eight months, during which time I attended all meetings and engaged in all activities of the PTSA. I was able to "learn the culture", test for misinformation and build trust. This was important for arriving at credible responses from the participants.

(b) The use of methods from different sources and of different methods of collecting data viz. observation, questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis, was an attempt to enhance the credibility of the study.

(c) After the interviews were transcribed, the respondents were allowed to read through them and confirm the content before analysis. This proved immensely useful in establishing credibility.

(d) Cross referencing from responses made in the questionnaires during the course of interviews for clarity and explanation became a cornerstone of the interviewing and this helped to arrive at more credible findings.

3.6.3. Transferability

It is understood that while the findings of this study cannot be generalised on account of its sample size, the provision of a data base that makes transferability judgements possible by future appliers is of immeasurable significance (Robson 1993:405). This research has attempted to carry much detail in the form of narrative to enable the reader to appreciate its findings. Also, given the direction that many secondary schools are moving in, as far as school governance is concerned, it is likely that this study will be of interest to them.

To determine the extent of the transferability of the case, I have detailed the theoretical framework on which this study is based. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), and supported by Yin (1983), this helps the reader to see how this research ties into a body of theory and helps those designing studies or making policy within that framework to determine whether or not this case can be transferred to other settings.

3.6.4. Dependability

Guba is of the view that a study that is shown to be credible is also dependable, hence reliable (1981). Triangulation, which I have employed in this research, is a means of helping ensure dependability.

3.6.5. Confirmability

Confirmability, or construct validity, is an important aspect of the process of validation. Yin (1983) suggested three ways of increasing construct validity viz.

- (a) the use of multiple sources of evidence in a manner of encouraging convergent lines of inquiry during data collection; (This study is based on data collected from three main sources - open-ended questionnaires, interviews and non-participant observation.)
- (b) establishing a chain of evidence;
- (c) have the draft case study report reviewed by key informants. (Transcripts were given to all participants to read and provide feedback about any ambiguity contained in them.)

I have attempted to use these tests during the course of the study and to a large extent it has resulted in a high degree of confirmability.

3.7. Summary

In this chapter I have attempted to present the approach and methodology I used in the course of this study. I indicated the motivation for this study being located in the qualitative camp but also referred to the problems and weaknesses of this kind of approach. In an attempt to address these problems and weaknesses, much time has been devoted to the process of validation so that this study could be of interest in the future by those wanting to design other studies or formulate policies with regard to the participation of students in decision-making in the management of schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the data that has been collected via the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation of PTSA meetings and workshops of both schools in the study and the fete that was organised by the PTSA of Dadoo Memorial Secondary. I have decided to let the respondents speak for themselves as far as possible. However, in an attempt to derive some meaning in this huge mass of utterances, I have categorised the comments and observations made under common threads or themes that I discovered during the process of analysis. I have punctuated this narrative with my own comments and criticism in an effort to make possible the drawing of conclusions and recommendations.

The chapter begins with an attempt to capture the participants' understanding of the concepts management and administration. This is followed by the presentation of the participants' views on the need for student participation in decision-making in the management of schools. In most cases student participation was received favourably by all respondents. However, respondents spoke about the problems arising from student participation and its disadvantages. These problems are mentioned so that a more balanced picture of the issue under discussion is presented. The next section in this chapter is an analysis of the level of participation of students in PTSA meetings, from the observations made by parents, teachers, principals, the students themselves and my non-participant observations of PTSA meetings. This section touches on students' knowledge of meeting procedures and formalities, their interest in issues and their contributions to meetings, the influence of adult authority and its impact on the contributions of students at meetings and sensitive areas of decision-making viz. student discipline, teacher misconduct and financial governance of the school. It also focuses on the dilemma that students face in participating in joint decision-making while ensuring their autonomy as a student body. The chapter closes with an analysis of the kinds

of alliances that are made at PTSA meetings between the various participants and the leadership qualities that students identified as important for decision-makers in PTSA meetings.

4.2. Participants' understanding of the concepts management and administration

The concepts of management and administration, especially in the context of the school, have of late become blurred largely because of the new dimensions added after crises in schools. What is construed as management at one moment in time, in one school, in one locality, may be very different from another. Thus, it was important to elicit from pupils, teachers, parents and principals involved in the study their understanding of the concept.

Although students were unanimous about the need for their participation in decision-making with parents and teachers in the management of schools, they were not in a position to say exactly what this entailed. Bheki stated:

It's the head office of the school, so it controls everything, in other words it's an umbrella. The head office of the school sees what is going on in the school. We fall under this umbrella so whatever they are trying to do at the head I think they must contact us.

Tsepo was of the view that:

students should be involved in the running of the school and things such as making laws at school. Laws should not be imposed on students but must be negotiated by the students and all other sectors of the school.

Vimal added:

We're sort of mediators between the pupils and the administration.

It is evident that the students understood their participation in management and administration as, in the words of Selvy, "...having a say in the way our lives are governed."

Parents and teachers used somewhat similar terminology in their understanding of what the concepts of administration and management meant. All of them spoke of students having "full participation in terms of the day to day running of the school," which included taking decisions about their curriculum, standards, discipline and fund - raising.

Both principals saw management as a policy making process. Mr. Bruce of Tambo High said:

Officially, through the PTSA and the executive, students can help frame policy directions and decisions for the school. The principal will only implement them.

4.3. Why student participation in decision-making

All three sectors viz. students, teachers and parents, made reference to the need to have students as decision-makers in school. A common theme that ran through their comments was the value of having students (as opposed to teachers or parents) articulate their concerns and needs in a forum that would have the power to address these needs. As Logan put it:

...teachers cannot always see exactly what students want, exactly what the students would be happy with. Therefore we must give the students a chance to express their views and their desires.

The principals also seem to adopt a similar attitude. Mr. Bruce is of the view that:

...it is important that we listen and understand where, how, what positions they (students) are occupying, how they are thinking, and what they would like to see themselves as. (Emphasis mine)

The idea of observing the laid-down rules featured prominently in the study. There was general agreement that schools needed rules and regulations by which they can be managed. However what emerged was that those rules would only be effective if they were drawn up by all constituents. Selvy said:

Teachers go ahead and do what they feel is best and it is not necessarily what students think is best. If they were willing to discuss these rules with us our people would be more willing to follow these rules.

Anita added:

If students were allowed to see how teachers went about making the decisions, they would be willing to follow. Most people don't like rules to be forced down on them. Once you understand what the situation is like, you would be surprised how much agreement there is between teachers and students.

Linked to the aspect of rules and regulations was the concern participants had for the existence of harmonious relations in schools. The principals, as would have been expected, placed this high on their agendas. Both Mr. Bruce and Mr. Maharaj saw students' participation in determining laws and regulations in the school as crucial for the existence of a learning environment for both teachers and students. Mr. Maharaj referred to it as "an ameliorating factor."

Almost all comments made by students referred to the desire for harmonious relations in school through either conflict avoidance or constructive conflict resolution. Vusi said:

...I think this reduces conflict between the school sectors. The students even before striking will be given the opportunity to sit down and discuss their problems.

Vimal saw the SRC in the PTSA as:

...sort of mediators between the pupils and the administration,

while Roy believed that:

...it is imperative that we endorse positive peer pressure.

He went on to say that students are more likely to listen to them than to teachers. "It's sort of like they trust us more."

Both principals (Mr. Maharaj and Mr. Bruce) spoke of similar advantages of having students participate in decision-making. Mr. Maharaj stated that:

...where students involve themselves, it helps in the overall arrangements and organisation.

He referred to "the initiatives coming from them (students) ... helps in getting things done at a much better rate," and results in "contented students."

Mr. Bruce, in referring to the students as a "component hub of a wheel," believes that in the aspect of school governance "they have something to offer." He spoke of students being part of management "to prick balloons ... even my balloons..."

Both principals see the participation of students as a learning process, both for the students and for the adults present. Mr. Maharaj, on many occasions in the PTSA meetings which I observed, referred to the fact that "we are all on a learning curve." He commented:

... we must teach the children all the time, teach the students about procedures, protocol, and this must be a living experience for them, so that when they leave school and they have to enter the arena in which they have to function in this way, they will be prepared.

Mr. Bruce too believes that:

...teachers should never stop thinking that they've stopped learning. To think you can't learn from your own students is ...fallacious.

He also believes that it is very important for students "to get into understanding operations of governance, politics and civics," because

... they are in the fabric, a smaller fabric of the larger fabric of life that will come after - learning how to take up positions, learning how to argue issues, why things are contradictory, understanding the processes and the procedures - that's terribly important for them.

Parents and teachers also placed a certain degree of emphasis on the development of the student. Mr. Chetty, a parent, expressed concern at the gap that was developing between the students in high school and adults and summarised the sentiments of the parents when he said:

High school ... is the second stage of development... on the brink of adulthood. I think adulthood starts too late in the development of our leaders of tomorrow. I'm saying it should start early high school and student participation in decision-making in the governance of the school is the ideal training ground.

To most of the participants interviewed, the link between the changes in the political order and the expected changes in education seemed logical. Concepts such as "democracy", "participation", "determination of our own destinies" became part of the vocabulary that participants were using.

Vusi made a connection between the status quo of non-participation by students and the "days of apartheid when the laws were imposed on us and we did not have a right to make laws." Mr. Naicker, a parent, spoke about "a whole new exercise and a whole new culture."

In summary, then, the general view that emerged from the participants in the study, was that the participation of students in decision-making was very advantageous to the administration of the school for all players. There was general agreement that it was a learning process for all involved with the generally accepted aims of recognising the rights of children as far as participation in decision-making was concerned and equipping them to take their places in society when they leave school.

4.4. Problems of participation and its disadvantages

Participants in the study mentioned a number of problems that they encountered by bringing students into the decision-making processes in school. These were identified by principals, teachers and parents.

A common problem centred on the issues brought to PTSA meetings- by student representatives. It was generally felt that students "tended to raise issues that were of a personal nature in a public forum," and that students "tended to give vent to their personal problems rather than problems that were of a collective nature affecting students in general." Both principals allude to the fact that this "hampers progress" at the meeting. In fact I sensed irritation on the part of parents and teachers when such issues were raised at PTSA meetings.

Allied to the problem of the nature of issues that were raised for discussion was the question of time. The feeling amongst teachers and parents was that the participation of students in decision-making at PTSA meetings "makes the meeting longer". This arose, it seemed, from students' inexperience of meeting procedure and their lack of knowledge of issues related to administration and management generally. However, teachers and parents did not view this problem as a serious difficulty. They believed it was a learning process.

The principals and teachers mentioned the fact that involving students in decision-making "takes a lot of time out of the classroom by student representatives." Students too noted this, as Busisiwe pointed out:

It takes up our time. When there is an urgent problem, or when the sub-committees meet, you have to be taken out of the class. You find yourself losing out in the class.

Another problem that was identified by teachers and parents especially, was that concerning the reporting of sensitive discussions from the PTSA by the SRC representatives back to the students. It was felt that reports, incidents and comments made at the meeting by parents,

teachers and the principal could very easily be "misconstrued and misreported, outside the context of the activity." Mr. Naicker, a parent observed that:

...teachers sometimes say a little less than they want to say in terms of the fact that their role in the school is now more open and transparent and they don't want the students present to go back to the greater student population and say so and so is actually hindering some of the things that would happen ... So I feel teachers also feel intimidated and they think twice about what they are going to say so that it won't be misinterpreted at some later stage.

However, students, when confronted with this difficulty, spoke about the fact that they too faced the same predicament as it was possible that their comments could be misinterpreted by teachers to the general staff.

A final problem has to do with the quality of the system - its structure and administration. Mr. Bruce pointed out that if the agreed upon system is faulty (and here he cites the example of the Internal Disciplinary Committee, IDC, of his school which should have met every fortnight but didn't), then:

...as a consequence, students realise the cat's away so they can play and get away with it... They are saying this is governance. I have my rights now, I can start to explore and be adventurous and go over-board. So, if the system doesn't work, or it is latched for a while, it can lead to abuse.

The main problems of student participation in the decision-making processes revolve around the three cardinal issues viz. the handling of sensitive matters and its reporting while protecting the professionalism of the teachers, the imposing of time constraints for both adults and students and the conduct of students at the PTSA meetings with respect to relevant and collective discussion.

4.5. Students in PTSA meetings

4.5.1. Students' knowledge of meeting procedures and formalities

Principals, teachers and parents noted the point that students lacked a knowledge of meeting procedures and formalities. At Dadoo Memorial Secondary, students had to be reminded that apologies needed to be sent in if they were not attending a meeting especially if a report that was due was tabled for discussion.

When students reported back to the PTSA on various matters or tasks that they were entrusted with, it was done in a very casual and flippant manner. The reports themselves were very scanty and indicated to the teacher and parent representatives that the students were not too thorough in their follow up of tasks that they assumed responsibility for. This resulted in comments such as:

"We are dragging our feet."

"We are moving at a very slow pace."

"You guys (students) are not getting professional."

After the third meeting when students had still not finalised arrangements, the PTSA decided to hand the responsibilities over to teachers and parents. One parent commented:

Pupils don't seem to take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, on the fete issue, they were eager to take on responsibility but when it comes to feedback and so on, in a very haphazard way they seem to say it's being attended to, but they don't seem to see the need to have facts and figures and say it's being done in this particular way, at this time, on this date, by this particular person etc ..."

Mr. Pillay, a teacher, alluded to the same view of students:

... there are other students who treat the PTSA as a joke. You ask them to do certain things and they are not interested eg. tabling a report. He comes to the meeting and says he did not do it for some reason. I know he was lying. So it's not worth having students there that are playing fools because the parents and teachers are pulling their weight.

Another important thread that run through the views of teachers and parents revolved around the concerns they had about the relative inexperience of students and their narrow outlook on issues. Mr. Adam, a teacher, was of the view that:

...in decision - making students tend to be selfishly inclined. They don't see the broader ramifications, the total picture of education."

However, while this was the case generally, parents and teachers were quick to point out that this process was new and that students had not been exposed to these kinds of responsibilities before. They acknowledged that it was a learning process. The dilemma was aptly summed up by a parent:

We are relating to new developments in terms of old experiences.

I also observed that students attended meetings with no writing material. Only one student was making notes occasionally. Parents and teachers were visibly irritated by the laxity on the part of students. The chair commented:

When you students come to a meeting, you should have something written down. You shouldn't think here.

On numerous occasions and in many meetings, the chairperson had to call the students to order as they were becoming rowdy and talking amongst themselves while the meeting was in progress. It was evident to the teachers and parents that students needed to be informed of meeting procedure. When questioned about this matter in an interview that followed, students revealed the gap that existed between the two groups in their understanding of communication processes.

I think it's human nature. When you are in a large group and there is only one way in which you are supposed to communicate, and that is through the chair, one person at a time... it can become frustrating. So automatically human nature will tell you that people won't wait for the chairperson. They will start discussing it among themselves.

4.5.2. Students' interest in issues and their contribution to the meeting

There was a general feeling that despite the point made earlier about the kind of issues students raised for discussion at meetings, student representatives were able to articulate the concerns of the student body "quite well." It was felt that the contribution they made was "significant."

However, it was noted by teachers that while students contributed substantially to decisions on extra-curricular, sporting and social matters (one parent referred to it as "basic stuff"), their actual participation in the "academic part of the running of the school" was minimal. It was felt that at the level of general policy formulation and curriculum matters, students were "less vocal." This seemed to have also been the case in purely administrative decisions, as a teacher at Tambo High pointed out:

As decisions become more technical and administrative in nature, student participation becomes less vital and students generally elect not to take up their seats in these lower order committees eg. the Schedule Committee.

In Dadoo Memorial Secondary, on the issue of teacher shortages and the appointment of a locum tenens teacher, students failed to make any significant contribution in either expressing the students' views on the matter or suggesting a course of action. The same was true as far as the problem of discipline was concerned. The issue was raised by a student representative but students found it difficult contributing to the discussion. Teachers and parents were generally of the view that where matters didn't directly interest the students, their (the students') contribution was lacking in depth. I confirmed that in my observation of PTSA meetings at Dadoo Memorial Secondary and the workshop on a mission statement held by Tambo High. One could virtually count the number of comments made by student representatives.

4.5.3. The influence of adult authority and its impact on the contribution of students in meetings

Almost all participants in the study alluded to the fact that students' contribution to decision-making was influenced by factors outside their control to a large degree. These related to the influences of the principal, parents and teachers, and the establishment of the school. However, over and above this, Mr. Adam, a teacher, saw it more fundamentally as:

...the attitude of adults as a whole. It's the whole question of the way students have been brought up, their education... right through they were taught to accept, not to question. It becomes ingrained and part of life. Much of our culture is such that the basis of it is :Don't question your adults; what they tell you is the truth; they know better; accept it quietly and go away with it.

Mr. Chetty, a parent held a similar stance:

... it's also the culture that's been entrenched in our students' way of thinking where they haven't been exposed to participation at this level and they feel very inhibited. Suddenly they find themselves sitting across the table to the head of the school and saying, "We are equal partners here and I can express myself as equally as you can."

As evidence of this, Selvy, a pupil at Dadoo Memorial Secondary, recalled the following:

Some of the times the teachers will be talking and you want to say something - but they are older than you and you've got to wait until they finish and you forget your point and they pass that point and you just don't get what you want to say across.

4.5.3.1. The influence of the principal

While both principals maintained that students didn't feel intimidated at all by their or the teachers' presence at the meetings, parents and students told another story. They referred to the impact of the formal meeting on their participation.

Anita observed:

When the three of us sat there together, it was tense, there was a distinct separation. It was too formal... To pluck up your courage and say one thing, we had to wait and wait and wait and then suddenly you just got to say it - it's a big hurdle.

And Fazila on the presence of the principal:

...he said a few things, but his presence... He'll sit and listen to you and when you say something he'll laugh at you and when you see him looking at you, you just want to stop and say "never mind forget it."

The influence the presence of the principal had on the this particular group of student representatives was captured by Anita:

I don't know whether it's possible in the PTSA not to get the principal involved. In that way we'll be so much more comfortable.

This group of student representatives had been involved in a few unpleasant situations with the principal during the period of the teacher strikes. The conflict between them and the principal revolved around the alleged use of violence by teachers on students who had become violent and abusive themselves. It seems, according to the principal, that the manner in which the student representatives confronted the issue (by calling up a parent meeting on their own and by submitting a memorandum to the principal), created wide rifts between the students and the teachers that affected relationships within the PTSA.

This influential position of the principal that the students were articulating, manifested itself in the PTSA meetings. It was quite noticeable, for example, that the chairperson of the PTSA, a parent, would often look at and to the principal for direction over a particular issue eg. when the resignation letter of one of the parents was read at the meeting. It was also interesting that when clarification was sought about an issue, it was the principal, rather than the chairperson, that was addressed in most cases. Such was the case when a teacher

representative enquired about the constitutional right of the SRC to open a private bank account. These actions of the teachers, parents and the chairperson were unconsciously done but it revealed the extent of the influence the principal wielded over the committee by virtue of his position as head of the school.

It became evident that decisions taken at the PTSA meeting were taken against the backdrop of the principal's acceptance or rejection. This was the case when the students suggested a dance to raise funds. Although the parents had no problems with the idea, the dissenting voice of the principal swayed the decision.

4.5.3.2. The influence of the parents and teachers

The general feeling that came through in the study, was that despite the changing attitudes in most parent and teacher representatives towards student participation, there was still a tremendous degree of scepticism, suspicion and circumspection on their part. Parents and teachers did attempt to reduce the extent of their influence in the PTSA meetings so that students could be afforded a space to make their contributions. In fact, in the meetings I attended, it was very evident that the student voice was being given a deliberate chance, at least as far as expression of that voice was concerned.

The very election of a student as the PTSA treasurer in Dadoo Memorial Secondary, a position moved and endorsed by a parent and teacher, was a very bold step. The position of treasurer, traditionally in schools, is a key position and would normally have gone to an adult who knows about the keeping of books. Furthermore, it was common knowledge that the SRC in the past had been guilty of mismanagement of funds. Despite this, it seemed, the parents and teachers were still willing to give the students a chance of office-bearer status.

On numerous occasions, teachers and parent representatives made reference to the PTSA as "a learning curve" and "a learning experience." It seemed that the shortcomings of the students as far as their expected contributions to the decision-making in the PTSA was concerned were understood by parents and teachers who often spoke about providing assistance to students to address these shortcomings.

The terminology used by parents and teachers in meetings also revealed their attempts to recognise students as important partners in the decision-making process. It was not uncommon in PTSA meetings at Dadoo Memorial Secondary and Tambo High, to hear students being addressed as "our future leaders" and "the government of tomorrow."

However, despite what seemed to me to be some genuine attempts by parents and teachers, to meet students on this new road of participatory democracy, students seemed to have had reservations. They seemed to be looking beyond the words and expressions of the teachers and parents. Let's listen to Roy:

What was frustrating was the fact that they did not want to accept our decisions. They said they understood, but deep down I don't think they really understood. Also, they say they treat us as equals but every - time we say something they say something to counteract it.

And Logan:

... from the smiles and the laughs and the giggles, I had the feeling that they didn't take us seriously. We were considered as students, you know, children ... that we didn't know what we were talking about and I got a bit frustrated.

In meetings in preparation for the fete that the PTSA was planning, parents and teachers revealed on many occasions their hesitancy to trust students completely with tasks. During a discussion of the netball report the chairperson commented:

Who is co-ordinating - I think we need an adult.

And again, when a student enquired as to who was going to be in charge of the stalls, the parents and teachers were unanimous in their view that it should be an adult, the form teacher.

Logan informed the house that he could arrange a sound system, to which the almost

immediate response of a teacher was to warn him against "unprofessional sound." Was this warning based on the fact that it was a student who took the responsibility? The students thought so!

A request was made by the principal for a member of the PTSA to address the staff of the school on the arrangements that were made thus far with respect to the proposed fete. The chairperson looked for somebody in the ranks of the parents to represent the PTSA but the thought of requesting a student did not enter his mind. It was evident that to the chairperson and other adults at the meeting, such a responsibility was beyond the student.

This attitude also surfaced when there was a request for PTSA delegates to attend a workshop on local government organised by the local civic organisation. No parent or teacher was available to attend the workshop. Roy (student) volunteered to attend. He was asked by the members to take another member. But the parents and teachers were still unhappy about the delegation to this important workshop resting with students. The Deputy Principal was requested to get a volunteer from the staff to be part of the delegation. Again, the reluctance of the adults to completely trust students with mandates and other responsibilities was evident.

These, often unwitting and unconscious, remarks acted as checks and balances by parents and teachers who, in my view had a desire to enter this new world of shared decision-making with students but at the same time would not enter it blind-folded. As Mr. Naicker put it:

We are facing new challenges with old experiences.

This view found a parallel in the comments made by the principals of both schools. Mr. Maharaj attributed parents' and teachers' scepticism about student participation in decision-making to "maturity."

What kind of comment can this person make at that level? Does he require guidance and that sort of a thing, maybe confer with somebody more adult on any matter?

Mr. Bruce expressed it thus:

Teachers, I won't say ours, but teachers in general, are inclined to think that they are the adults, they have the experiences and the qualification and therefore that makes them qualified to be the wisest head on any shoulder. Students invariably find themselves at the receiving end of such thinking.

Mr. Naicker, a parent representative at Dadoo Memorial Secondary, gave a parent perspective:

It goes back to tradition and history. The teacher was always seen as one who always knew what was best for students. And I think the parents are becoming aware of the fact that the changes that are taking place in the community and in the students calls for a relook at the way in which we have been doing things. As parents, we are coming to realise that we don't have all the answers.

The positive aspect of this experience however, as suggested in the above comment and as acknowledged by almost all students, was the possibilities that it offered for future decision-making. Students referred to the shortcomings of the parents and teachers not as though they were irremediable. They acknowledged too, that this was fairly new ground that they were covering and that given time, mindsets and attitudes would start to shift.

4.5.4. The influence of threats and intimidation

An important influence on the willingness of students to participate fully in decision-making was that of threats and intimidation by the establishment. In most cases, these were veiled.

In many instances, teachers and parents resorted to pulling out the constitution of the PTSA in the face of strong opposition by students. An example was the deadlock in the PTSA meeting at Dadoo Memorial Secondary over the ownership of the expected profits of the proposed fete. When it was becoming apparent that the students' arguments for keeping the profits were gaining ground, a teacher representative turned to the constitution. The adults' use and knowledge of the constitution, rather than having any educational value for the

students, had the effect of immediately disempowering them.

Allied to this was the teachers' and parents' insistence on formal procedures and structures. In the midst of discussion, it would not have been uncommon to have heard the following kind of comments:

In terms of procedures and in terms of functioning we wish to come to terms with exactly the way we need to operate. We cannot leave it very loosely and therefore you have a formal structure. (Mr. Pillay, teacher).

I think people must come in line in terms of meetings and what meetings are, the formality of meetings and meeting procedure. If we participate in meetings and we reach consensus at meetings and we are going ahead... we cannot have drawbacks like this. (Mr. Chetty, parent).

An indication of the emphasis placed on formal structures and procedures also emerged in the frustration teachers and parents experienced with the inconsistency of student representation at PTSA meetings in Dadoo Memorial Secondary. New representatives of the SRC walked in at many meetings and this was the reason Mr. Chetty (parent) provided for students not understanding certain issues clearly. It was evident that the formal processes that teachers and parents saw as a requirement for effective functioning of an organisation, did not go down too well with students. Herein lay the seeds of discord.

Students also felt intimidated by the unspoken authority of the teachers at PTSA meetings. After a lengthy and heated discussion on the autonomy of the SRC in which students spoke their minds, a student responded:

Whatever was said here today was the result of a meeting with the whole SRC. It's not the way we feel. It's not something personal. It is the SRC.

This response by the students seemed to have arisen out of their anxiety that the teachers would take offence to their forthrightness, a result possibly of the intimidation felt by the students. Students were also made to feel guilty of becoming stumbling blocks to the path of progress of the PTSA. One parent commented:

It is sad that we have come to a position where the PTSA is so strong but the SRC is weakening it.

In a sense then, this constituted a threat to students, the often silent censure by the adults. It did influence the contribution to decision-making by students.

The teachers' level of articulation and ability to argue their points in meetings were also seen to be intimidatory. The power of language and knowledge was evident in the following observation made by a teacher:

I guess if I was a student I will feel overawed by the teachers' contributions because you find them always talking.

Another important factor that influenced student contributions to decision-making was the fear of victimisation. Anita commented:

The thing in the office is that you don't get much of a chance to say what you feel because the principal tells you - he puts it down - oh yes you have a choice - when you go there he listens to what you have to say, but then eventually he gets around to forcing his view on you, using this tactic that he's over you and your testimonials are at stake and you are a prefect...

Roy also intimated a similar fear:

Most of them (students) tend to see that they need to watch what they are saying...

And Selvy:

In a meeting you'll say, "I want to say this" but you'll hold yourself.

It seems that this fear of victimisation, so characteristic of the old system under apartheid, affects the contributions of, not only the students, but also the parents, as evidenced in the comments made by students and parents and the responses of parents in the meetings.

Testimonials are seen as important documents for students when they make applications for jobs or entrance into tertiary institutions. The school, and more importantly, the principal, has the final say in the kind of report of the students' behaviour, personality, leadership qualities and allegiance to the school. It seems logical then, that students' contribution to decision-making, would be coloured by their concerns of testimonials.

4.6. Sensitive areas of decision-making

4.6.1. Student discipline

Almost all participants in the study agreed that student participation in decision-making in the administration of the school helped in student discipline. Where students realised that they were represented and were part of the drawing up of rules and regulations in a school, they were more prone to abiding by them. (This was discussed earlier in the section "Why student participation in decision-making"). It was also felt by students, teachers and parents, that:

because the student was the main reason for the existence of the school, the student voice must be heard in the formulation of regulations that would govern his stay at school (Mr. Chetty).

At Tambo High, students were part of drawing up a Code of Conduct for pupils and teachers, which, according to Vusi, "guides the students towards discipline." While students spoke of tremendous advantages the Code of Conduct had for them, they seemed to think that it was outdated as it was drawn up by the students who had preceded them. I had the impression that the present lot of students at Tambo High did not feel that they owed their complete allegiance to the Code because they were not directly involved in drawing it up. This poses a problem as it would imply that for a code to be accepted it has to be re-drawn every year.

There also exists at Tambo High an Internal Disciplinary Committee (IDC) which is made up of teacher, parent and student representatives and which is part of the PTSA. The IDC actually hears the students' (and the teachers') cases and decides on the form of punishment, suspension or expulsion. The decision to suspend or expel is not made by the principal, but

by a representative grouping including students.

In Dadoo Memorial Secondary, disciplinary matters are handled by the teachers and the principal's office with the PTSA making very little, if any, input. Suspensions and expulsions are decided upon by the principal. Students felt strongly against this. Vimal commented:

...I feel it is biased because it's mainly controlled by the teachers... We should have a disciplinary committee consisting of representatives of students, teachers and parents... so that if a student is suspended or expelled he/she would know that it was not by the teacher or principal without any interaction with any one of us. As long as it was a group effort.

While not disagreeing with the idea of student representation in a disciplinary committee, Logan warned against the bias of student representatives themselves who may be the friends or adversaries of the students facing discipline. He provided the following recommendation:

If we are going to have students as part of a disciplinary committee, I think they should be chosen for certain cases, much like the jury system in the US. You can't have a set disciplinary committee.

The idea of a disciplinary committee hearing cases, passing judgement and reporting to the PTSA found favour with teacher and parent representatives at Dadoo Memorial Secondary. Closely related to this was the concern around a code of conduct. Mr. Naicker expressed it thus:

I think on the whole question of participation and transparency, the way we act and so on, we are going to find ourselves in certain difficulties unless we have clear cut policies as to what are the offences that warrant suspension, for example, the right that the student has to get his voice heard and to defend himself... that policy should shape whether that student is suspended or not, not individuals' opinions.

On a day-to-day level, students' participation in decision-making with teachers and parents seemed to have assisted in discipline in school. In Dadoo Memorial Secondary, student representatives spoke of intervening in situations where students "wanted to go and stab the

principal and hit the teachers." They claimed that they calmed the students down and that they had managed to get the students to "listen to us." The student representatives at Tambo High recounted similar incidents of intervention.

4.6.2. Teacher misconduct

This area of decision-making involving students was a very controversial and difficult one. While the students at both Tambo High and Dadoo Memorial Secondary were adamant about their participation in the discussion of teachers' misconduct in the PTSA meeting, the teachers would not hear of the idea, parents were sympathetic largely to teacher misgivings and the principals had differing views.

The views of the students echoed their desire for equal status and the desire to be seen by the rest of the student body as effective leaders. Anita made the point:

Why can't we sit in when their wrong-doings are being discussed? They discuss our wrong-doings.

Vimal added:

The fact that a student comes to the SRC and complains involves us at that moment. Therefore we should be part of the committee that is discussing the misconduct of the teacher.

Bheki, from Tambo High, commented:

We are equal. We don't even have to think about it. If there is anything the student has done, the teacher must be there to discuss it. So too must the student be there to discuss when a teacher is doing something wrong. It's fifty-fifty. There's nothing to hide.

Teachers, on the other hand, felt strongly that this was a matter that fell outside the jurisdiction of the PTSA especially with the participation of students. Teachers made reference to their membership to a union through which representations should be made.

They saw themselves as professionals who could not view their misdemeanour in the same light as that of students. Mr. Adam, a teacher at Dadoo Memorial Secondary, conceded that progressive thinking would imply allowing students to participate in this area of decision-making, but he maintains practically,

... teachers would not want this to happen...Ultimately, what it implies is undermining the entire professionalism of the teacher and attacking the entire structure of the profession itself... The status accorded to a teacher must not be eroded.

Parents seemed to have been concerned with the repercussions of discussing teacher misconduct with student representatives present. They spoke of the integrity of the teacher being affected and raised the problem of the difficulty she would have in resuming her professional duties after the hearing. For these reasons, parents largely sided with the view that did not support the presence of students in discussion of teacher misconduct. While students would not be part of the investigation and the disciplining of the teacher, they would be entitled to receiving a report of the investigation.

At Tambo High, there was some experience of teacher misconduct brought for discussion and resolution to the PTSA in which students were active participants. A teacher recounts:

In principle I feel that teacher misconduct should be discussed openly but there are some areas of sensitivity where teachers need to be protected, as sometimes student behaviour towards teachers with problems can be highly insensitive.

And another:

Students can repeat what they've heard and make the teacher's life unbearable if he/she is re-instated."

It seems then, that while students expressed a desire to become involved in the investigation and discussion of teacher misconduct, the general feeling of the parents and teachers was that

students should not. Whether the PTSA is the forum to investigate the above-mentioned, or whether that matter should be discussed at all outside teacher circles falls outside the scope of this study.

4.6.3. Financial management of the school

This aspect of student participation was another very difficult and highly contentious one. Less than a third of parents and teachers in Tambo High and less than half in Dadoo Memorial Secondary, felt comfortable about giving financial responsibilities to students. Their hesitation stemmed from the experiences of improper management of funds by students that both schools went through over the past years and in the present structures.

In Tambo High, students had asked the PTSA for a sum of R2000 which they say was given without much hesitation. The students were not too clear on what that money was used for. They spoke about a workshop and "sponsoring injured students to go to hospital, taxi fares to attend meetings..." But there seems to be nothing substantial that the money seems to have been spent on.

In Dadoo Memorial Secondary, parents, teachers and students made reference to the mismanagement of funds by the previous student representatives. Sponsorships that were given by parents for a school ball, the profits of the ball and the financial arrangements were mismanaged. It seemed because of the students' shortcomings, the school suffered a poor image and as a result future fund-raising attempts by the school were looked upon with suspicion by the community. This would account for the reluctance displayed by parents and teachers in allowing students to assume financial responsibilities.

What seemed to have endorsed this in the minds of teachers and parents were their experiences in the meetings of the present PTSA. Despite the experiences of mismanagement of the past, a student was elected as the treasurer of the PTSA. At almost every meeting, the treasurer failed to present a full financial report, much to the frustration of the teacher and parent representatives who made comments like:

You must be more professional in the way you are keeping the financial records. You must be more serious.

These comments arose out of the ill-preparedness of the treasurer and his very casual attitude to what the adults regarded as a very important aspect of the organisation. Other examples of his inefficiency as noted by parents and teachers were that he had collected monies from different classes but had not issued out receipts, he was reminded about having a system to record the monies that were coming in etc.

A problem that was raised by a teacher, who happened to also be the internal auditor that was appointed by the PTSA, was that as a minor, the student treasurer was not liable, legally, for any mismanagement of funds. Although the teacher component expressed reservations about students being given financial responsibilities on the PTSA, on the basis of the above, parents did not see this as a major problem. As part of the developmental aspect of the exercise of joint decision-making, parents and teachers agreed that it might be a better option to elect students as assistant treasurers and as under-studies to parents and teachers.

Yet, despite these shortcomings, parents and teachers and both principals spoke of this being a learning experience. Mr. Maharaj, referring to the student treasurer commented:

We don't have any regrets about putting him up.

He then alludes to the concept of development:

In terms of their development, in terms of their training and becoming more responsible... that's our concern.... We are now training these youngsters that they must account for every cent that is collected and every cent that is paid. They must have this kind of checks and balances kept...

Mr. Bruce spoke in the same vein, using almost the same terminology:

I think the SRC is responsible. I just think they need stronger tutoring in managing money and knowing how to apply it and cross apply it... I wouldn't be unhappy to trust students with money as long as they were agreeable beforehand that checks and balances should be in place.

What were these "checks and balances" that both principals referred to? They seem to correspond with the notions expressed by teachers and parents that there should be "supervision (by parents and teachers) of the financial responsibilities given to students."

Students felt that they were capable of handling money and did not take too kindly to the idea that they be excluded from decision-making as far as financial matters were concerned. However students acknowledged that they had certain constraints. Roy stated:

...We are not ready to take complete responsibility. Handling PTSA funds is not an easy task. We need guidance...

Logan concurred with this view. He added

The PTSA handles quite a lot of money. I think it's important that we have parents and teachers who are wise at this stage to assist students in the handling of funds.

In summary, then, the general feeling amongst the participants in the study was that students should be allowed to assume financial responsibilities, but that these should be overseen or supervised by a teacher or parent who has some experience in financial matters. This supervision must be regarded as "tutoring" and part of a learning and developmental exercise.

4.6.4. Joint decision-making versus student autonomy: the dilemma

In participating in decision-making together with parents and teachers, students invariably had to confront situations which challenged and brought into question their autonomy as a body. This proved a dilemma for students who, on the one hand participated as partners with the other two components under a constitution that required a certain degree of obligation, and

on the other, were pressurised by the student body to uphold their autonomy guarded by the SRC constitution. This dilemma played itself out at the PTSA meetings.

At Dadoo Memorial Secondary, the principal, Mr. Maharaj, was of the view that the SRC's autonomy:

... should be confined, more or less, to the activities within the school itself...
where they are dealing totally with the student body.

To curtail the autonomy of the SRC in matters outside those confines, he suggests that there be a teacher "overall in charge of the SRC." He refers to a "liaison person" for the SRC.

The teacher liaising is important because sometimes students, because of their level of maturity, can just sort of go off line... That's the main reason for having a teacher to oversee, to see how things are going, whether they are doing this, they're moving in the right direction, their projects are being fulfilled and so on.

Parents were also very wary of this. Mr. Chetty was of the view that:

While it is important to have freedom of expression, it is also important that they (students) do not confuse freedom of expression with disrespect and indiscipline. That's a fine line.

But Mr. Chetty also spoke of parents and teachers being in a position to "manage their (students) contributions properly", so as to "enhance rather than damage development." He recognised the fact that parents and teachers "could be too domineering and insensitive to straggling development."

The students at Dadoo Memorial Secondary seemed not to take too kindly to what they viewed as "unnecessary intervention." Anita alluded to this when she spoke about the conflict that emerged during tensions between teachers and a group of senior students.

And when I went back to him (principal) he told me, "This is the first meeting you haven't told me you were going to have. How come you did that? Why

have you been doing things behind my back?" I said, "No sir, since when did we need permission to hold a meeting? We only need permission to use the rooms."

Selvy made the following comment:

...The thing is the principal had no right to ask us because the SRC's money is the SRC's money. The teachers have no position on our SRC.

This question of student autonomy became a source of concern and worry for parents and teachers at Dadoo Memorial Secondary and found expression at PTSA meetings. Mr. Chetty, a parent, alluded to a gap that was developing between students on one hand and teachers and parents on the other.

I think we have a gap here, and it's not surprising that people think differently. But we need to bridge that gap. The message that we need to get across is that we are separate bodies but we are not separate components moving in opposite directions. We are actually pursuing the same interests... even if it means parents and teachers from this committee going to the wider council of the SRC and conveying that message, that gap needs to be bridged first.

The parents and teachers were at pains to point out to students that they understood students' concerns and that the students should move away from looking at themselves as separate components. The dilemma was aptly captured in the following exchange:

Chairperson: You said "you" and "we". I just want to clarify something.
You are we. Do you understand that concept? You are we.
Student : We are also us!

The dilemma that students faced was very evident when they had to report back to the general student body the decisions made at the PTSA, which they were a part of. At Dadoo Memorial Secondary, both the recommendations brought by the student representatives to the PTSA meeting viz. that the profits of the proposed fete go into the coffers of the SRC, and

the holding of a discotheque on the day of the fete, were not accepted after much debate and discussion. In fact the student representatives present at the meeting agreed with the reasons put forward by parents and teachers in respect of these two issues. After a caucus at the meeting it was the student representatives who proposed that the fete be held under the banner of the PTSA rather than the SRC. In an interview after the meeting, the student leader in response to a question on the sudden change of mind by the student representatives stated that they realised that without the parents and teachers' assistance and coordination they could not pull off the fete.

The problem was, however, selling that decision to the larger student body without giving the impression that students' views were not respected. Students experienced tremendous difficulty in this regard as evidenced by the raising of the same issues at the following meeting. Students at large didn't seem convinced about the decisions reached at the PTSA meetings. Roy commented:

Quite a number of them were upset because they felt their views were ignored. We explained to them. Some of them understood, but many left upset feeling that we had sold them out.

In an attempt to get students to understand the difficulty they as student representatives experienced motivating for their positions at PTSA meetings, they frequently brought aggrieved students to meetings. This would explain the teachers and parents concerns about the consistency of student representation at PTSA meetings.

Another aspect of the dilemma faced by student representatives with respect to their participation in decision-making, was the impression that students had of them. In both Dadoo Memorial Secondary and Tambo High, increased liaison between student representatives and the administration on account of joint decision-making was viewed suspiciously by the larger body of students.

In Dadoo Memorial Secondary, students intimated that there were feelings that "we are not representing the students but we are more favouring the teachers."

In Tambo High, matters went a step further with some students deciding to form another student organisation. Mr. Bruce places the event in its perspective:

...What's happened recently is that the SRC has had a vote of no-confidence and it's been lobbied by a group that's calling itself the Tambo High School Congress. One of the insinuations is that ... the SRC is too thick as thieves with the administration. In other words they do what the administration says, which is not entirely true.

A final aspect of the dilemma that faces students revolves around the conflict of interests and the subsequent conflict of allegiances. Fazila expresses it thus:

The teachers have chosen us to be prefects but the students have chosen us to be SRC representatives. We are supposed to uphold what the teachers say, as prefects, and still represent the views of the students. It's contradictory. It creates a lot of tension but we have a greater allegiance to our SRC because it's something we are doing for our students instead of just being a puppet for the administration.

How far must student representatives go in joint decision-making? How do they balance full, active participation in decision-making with an autonomous voice of student concern without losing a vote of confidence by those they seek to represent? This is the dilemma!

7. Seeking alliances

In the course of their participation in decision-making, students experienced the making of unconscious alliances, that worked both for and against them.

It seemed, somehow, that students believed parents should naturally have fallen on their side in decision-making. Anita expressed it in the following way:

I just don't feel the parents are on our side. I don't know whether they are scared to tell the principal their views or what, but we expect somebody to stand up for us.

This view was supported by Selvy:

The parents tell us they are on our side but when they go there they just become afraid.

Vimal also felt that it was easier making alliances with parents than teachers. Parents, it seemed, accommodated them more.

Busisiwe, from Tambo High, cited the example of parents voting with students against the administration's decision to expel a student. "That's how we won the vote."

The principal of Dadoo Memorial Secondary offered a different perspective of the student-parent alliance.

Sometimes if a complaint is made... parents tend to become sympathetic more and they sort of climb on the bandwagon and say, "I think this must be right."

In response, postulated Mr. Maharaj:

"We try to avoid that kind of situation. That is why I always make the point that if they have this kind of a problem, then it must be brought up at another level, prior to bringing it up at the PTSA level. It could be brought directly to the form teacher or the subject teacher and then to the principal, prior to coming up to a PTSA forum on a complaint."

Although the context in which this comment was made was around the problem of students bringing up personal, rather than collective, issues to the PTSA for discussion, it can be interpreted as an attempt, I think, of avoiding the ganging up of parents and students on teachers.

The making of alliances seems an inevitable happening in joint decision-making in schools. It seems a healthy, democratic exercise which in Tambo High and in Dadoo Memorial Secondary has so far been used in a constructive way.

8. Leadership qualities necessary for decision-makers as identified by students

During the course of the research, students articulated the kind of qualities that are necessary for successful participation by students in joint decision-making.

One important quality that practically all students felt was necessary was the ability "to speak up and speak out." This was expressed in words such as:

- ...to speak authoritatively and convincingly (Selvy)
- ...to put your points across (Fazila)
- ...stand by what you believe in (Logan)
- ...stand in front of the people and speak freely (Bheki).

Roy made the point that students needed to be "firm as well as understanding." This was supported by Vusi who spoke of "allowing for other peoples' opinions" and Mandla who alluded to being able "to talk with people."

Busisiwe referred to the importance of reporting back to the students:

- ... to pass on the message even if he opposes the message...or regardless whether they support the ideas of students or not.

Students also hinted at the fact that successful participation in decision-making by students assumed acceptance of student authority by parents and teachers. Acceptance of students had a strong correlation with student academic record, behaviour and personality. Thus it was not uncommon to find in both schools, that the student representatives were good students academically who seemed to enjoy the popularity of the students at large.

Another very important consideration for successful participation of students in decision-making, was the organisation of the SRC itself. It became clear in the responses of teachers, parents and principals that meaningful student participation in joint decision-making proceeded from a fairly well organised and functioning SRC that had the support of the

majority of the students in the school. An important aspect of this organisation is that of feedback of decisions from the PTSA to the SRC by the student representatives. Mr. Adam, a teacher at Dadoo Memorial Secondary, recognized this as an important problem:

I think the SRC reps on the PTSA are not bridging the gap in actually convincing all students why they have taken certain decisions and what they are going to do with the money. I foresee a problem in communication between the leaders of the school body and the student population.

9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to present the multi voices of the key players involved in decision-making at the school level in a way that would illumine some common threads in this controversial fabric of school life. As a result, a number of themes emerged and it is within the framework of these themes, that I have attempted to capture the potential role that students have in making decisions jointly with parents and teachers in the management of secondary schools.

This role is aptly summed up in the following comments by students:

I think the SRC is basically a body that should maintain the balance between the two - they should make each other listen to the other side of the story and try and make the other side see the point. Teachers and students know what they believe in but they don't bother to find out the other side.

I don't believe the SRC is a bunch of rebels. I don't believe we should become fanatics. We believe we must compromise and come to an understanding ... We need to reach an understanding with teachers and parents. In that lies our true development towards becoming adults.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

The decision to explore the potential role of students in decision-making in secondary school management and administration arose out of the following:

- (a) the uncertainty that parents, teachers and the education authorities had on the status of students in the management of schools;
- (b) an increasing demand by black students for representation in Parent-Teacher-Student-Associations which major black political organisations, civic associations and the National Education Co-ordinating Committee were supporting;
- (c) anticipating a change of government in the first democratic elections in South Africa, a change in the educational policies, including that of school governance, was expected;
- (d) a scarcity of research in South Africa in this particular field, and
- (e) my interest in school governance generally and my support for democratic, participatory decision-making at the school level in particular.

Case studies of the two schools, Dadoo Memorial and Tambo High, revealed interesting findings which may have significant parallels in other schools engaged in experimenting with student participation in decision-making. However, it must be acknowledged that this study is not statistically representative of schools with student participation. Tambo High was the only secondary school serving township children in the greater Durban area that had a functioning PTSA in which students were active participants. Dadoo Memorial was one of the few schools under the former House of Delegates (serving "Indian" students) that had

students engaged in meaningful decision-making with parents and teachers. In fact, the intention of the study, far from adopting a comparative or representative stance, was to glean the potential of students and the extent of the opportunities afforded to them to make decisions jointly with parents and teachers. While this does not invalidate those findings, it does make it difficult to make conclusive statements about the issue of student participation in secondary schools.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered during the course of the research, certain conclusions can be drawn and recommendations made on the question of student participation in decision-making in the management of schools.

5.2. Conclusions

i. The participation of parents, teachers and many students for the first time in the democratic election of their representatives to the new government in South Africa seems to have led to the desire to participate in decision-making in other facets of their lives. The PTSA with active student participation symbolises a start towards this participation.

ii. Participants in the democratic governance of schools see the participation of students as crucial in attempting to create a climate conducive to learning and teaching in schools. Parents and teachers acknowledge that student participation in the formulation of rules to govern student behaviour is vital for the successful implementation of these rules. This observation is appreciated if one considers that South African black secondary schools are characterised by violence, gangsterism and a general disrespect for learning and teaching.

The idea of involving students in decision-making as far as formulating rules are concerned, emerged in the literature review, as a very sound one. A popular view amongst philosophers favouring student participation in decision-making was that those with legitimate direct interests in a decision should have majority representation with respect to that decision. There is a greater likelihood of students keeping the

rules that they were part of formulating (Walker 1990; White 1987; Scheffler 1985; Wringe 1984; Kilpatrick 1967).

iii. Students, as the beneficiaries of the learning process, are crucial in the ongoing evaluation of school effectiveness. Students' representatives gain a sense of responsibility and can transmit this to their peers with whom they relate with ease. The students bring to the PTSA's what is often a fresh and innovative approach to school governance, as the writers referred to in the literature review have pointed out (Snauwaert 1993; Wringe 1982). Wringe reminded us that children, having different experiences, are likely to see different and unfamiliar aspects of a situation. The advantage of this is that it leads to the formulation of rules which are more in keeping with the situation which has to be legislated for (Wringe 1982:47).

iv. Despite joint decision-making in PTSA's, there still exists, in both schools under study, a significant communication gap between teachers and parents on the one hand and students on the other. Teachers and parents still reveal scepticism and suspicion towards students and their contributions while students appear not to fall in line easily with traditional meeting procedures. These differences have the potential of creating conflict within decision-making structures and diverting the participants from their main objectives.

However, conflict, rather than being seen as destructive to the purposes of joint decision-making, can be creatively addressed through consensus and dialogue, as pointed out by Barber (1989), Freire (1989) and Snauwaert (1993).

v. The principal is still unconsciously seen as the most important figure in the PTSA. He assumes a very dominating role and despite his ex-officio status (in Dadoo Memorial at least), his views tend to colour the decisions made. Teachers, too, tend to dominate discussions by virtue of their power of articulation and their knowledge of relevant issues. This has the effect of intimidating students and stifling their potential contributions.

vi. Teachers support the idea of student participation in decision-making as long as it does not interfere with their rights as teachers, their membership of a union/association and their status as professionals. It is for this reason that teachers object strongly to discussion of teacher misdemeanour in meetings in which students are present.

vii. The case-studies of the two schools revealed that successful participation by students in joint decision-making presupposes the existence of a functioning, representative and democratically elected student representative body. The support and loyalty this body enjoys from the rest of the student population determines the extent to which it can intervene in matters affecting students in joint decision-making forums. It also influences the extent to which decisions taken jointly are successfully implemented.

viii. There is a problem where students are seen to be unwilling to compromise. If they did, they would be unable to sell such compromises to their constituency. This has the effect of eroding the degree of legitimacy they enjoy as representatives of student concerns, both from students whose mandates they carry and from teachers and parents with whom they share a responsibility for joint decision-making. This problem is related to students' understanding of the reality of politics and the democratic process.

ix. Parents and teachers are reluctant to allow students to take on any financial responsibilities. Students have manifested their laxity as far as handling finances in the projects undertaken in the past. Poor management of funds and mismanagement are the results of inexperience and the students' lack of skills in this area of administration. However, the potential to learn these skills by involvement as understudies to experienced parents and teachers, exists.

x. Students are not too concerned with the academic matters of school eg. curriculum decisions and policy formulation. Their participation is greater in matters of a more social nature eg. the organisation of sporting activities, dances and banquets etc.

Their lack of participation in academic matters is more a consequence of their ignorance of these matters, which have traditionally been the domain of principals and teachers, than of a lack of interest. Here again, the potential to become involved meaningfully in academic matters is there - it is dependent upon the willingness of the authorities to change the present centralised, bureaucratic system of education to one that is community based and to create opportunities for this potential to be realised.

xi. The interest level of students fluctuates during the course of the year. The waxing and waning of "fired-up" pupils is a reality in decision-making structures. Allied to this problem is that of the changing school population. Each year, older students bow out of the action arena and new students are expected to take over with the real possibility of starting back at square one.

5.3. Recommendations

In the light of the above mentioned findings and conclusions on the potential role of students in decision-making in the management of secondary schools, some suggestions and recommendations are made. These recommendations, which have some similarity with those made by Kent (1991) will be presented under the following categories:

- (a) General recommendations
- (b) Recommendations in respect of sensitive areas of student involvement
- (c) Recommendations for teachers
- (d) Recommendations for students
- (e) Recommendations for the local school council

5.3.1. General Recommendations

- i. Secondary school students should be involved as equal partners with parents, teachers and community representatives, in the management and administration of secondary schools.

ii. Principals and teachers should initiate the formation of student representative councils (SRC's) which are elected by the general body of students at school at regular, democratic elections. These SRC's should be independent from the influence of the school's administration or teachers.

5.3.2. Recommendations in respect of sensitive areas of student involvement

5.3.2.1. Discipline: Students should be actively engaged in decision-making on discipline in school. This will include participation in the following areas:

1. Drawing up rules and regulations governing student behaviour in school;
2. Drawing up a Code of Conduct for students;
3. Drawing up disciplinary procedures;
4. Implementing the decisions jointly arrived at.

With regard to **disciplinary procedures**, it is recommended that an Internal Disciplinary Committee (IDC) be set up, similar to that in Tambo High, the "Fairness Committee" in the Schaefer School (Kuhmerker:1989) and Brookline High (Lightfoot 1983) and the "Judicial Committee" at Sudbury Valley School in Masschausetts (Gray and Chanoff 1986). The IDC should have representatives of teachers and students and it is advisable that these representatives be selected for each sitting of the IDC. Because everyone serves, people get to see all sides of issues; yesterday's offenders are today's judges, trying to resolve the same kinds of problems that they themselves were involved in. The IDC also should offer the defaulting student a forum in which to explain her actions. After a decision has been reached, the IDC should make a report to the PTSA/School Council where the final decision would be made.

5.3.2.2. Teacher Misconduct: For healthy relations between teachers and students, and to safeguard the professionalism of the teacher so that a conducive climate of learning and teaching exists, it is recommended that issues concerning teacher misconduct should not be discussed at joint decision-making forums in which students participate. Where the misconduct affects a number of students, a select committee made up of parent and teacher representatives should investigate the matter and

present a report to the joint decision-making forum at which student representatives would be present.

This recommendation is made as a tentative one for the period of transition that schools are now in - a transition from no student representation to one in which students are equal partners. It is envisaged that in the future, when the element of trust has been built into the relationships between students and teachers, student representatives would be allowed to participate in this sensitive area of decision-making between students and teachers.

5.3.2.3. Finance: It is recommended that students not be given the finances of the PTSA to handle unless they are supervised by a teacher or parent who has had prior experience or is knowledgeable about keeping financial records. Opportunities should be created for the students to be trained in this regard.

This recommendation is made on the basis of the developmental concept of democracy discussed in the literature review. I am of the view that student leaders in the PTSA, because of a lack of experience in structures of governance, are not in a position to accept complete financial responsibilities. However, I also believe that in time, with sufficient training and exposure, these skills can be developed to enable students to perform such sensitive functions.

5.3.3. Recommendations for teachers

i. There should be a member of staff appointed to act as a liaison officer for student affairs. This idea was well supported in the experiences of democratic governance documented in the literature review. It should be the task of this officer to initiate the formation of a student representative council and ensure that students are represented at all meetings through timeous notification. She should also look at strategies for maintaining continuity and on-going activity with the SRC so that their interest level does not wane.

ii. When plans and programmes for the school are being developed, teachers should keep the issue of student participation on the agenda, ensuring that opportunities are taken to include students in decision-making processes.

5.3.4. Recommendations for students

i. It is recommended that students participate in three levels of decision-making viz. on formal decision-making bodies eg. the PTSA, in student-owned bodies eg, the SRC and in classroom-based curriculum decision-making and implementation. To avoid participation becoming a token and a facade there needs to be a balance between these three arenas of decision-making.

ii. Student representatives should ensure that other students be brought into the process by including them on sub-committees, action teams etc. In this way the idea of student representatives being seen as "office-boys" will begin to die out.

iii. There should be structures created for "understudies", where younger students can take on leadership roles as older students leave school or take on other positions of responsibility. This will address the problem of starting from square one at the beginning of the new school year.

iv. Students should initiate, arrange and organise activities and use teachers as resource people, advisors and consultants. This would ensure a decreasing dependency on teachers and thus a lessening of the influence teachers have in controlling and directing the student movement.

5.3.5. Recommendations for the school

i. It is recommended that at the school, all levels of the decision-making structures should continue to provide avenues for student participation. School Councils, committees, conferences, meetings and forums should make provision for satisfactory student participation and encourage student contributions.

ii. Teachers and parents should help the students to be better prepared, appropriately briefed and in tune with all aspects of matters to be discussed in the meetings. Spending some time in discussion prior to a meeting would assist students in understanding the relevant issues.

iii. Schools should credit students that participate in decision-making structures and such students should be given some form of recognition. This could take the form of a certificate or testimonial which would assist the student in securing a place in a tertiary institution for further study, or in securing a job.

iv. Schools should initiate the publication of a regular newsletter that carries news of activities that students are involved in.

v. Schools should build into the time-table facilities to enable students to hold SRC meetings of class representatives, report back on discussions and decisions and clarify mandates. The experiences of those schools, discussed in the literature review, that experimented with student participation pointed to the overall advantage of accommodating student concerns within the school programme. This is part of the process of education and thus it should be incorporated into the curriculum, not relegated to a time outside the normal school day (Polan 1989).

vi. Related to the above recommendation is the problem that Kent (1991) identifies, that many parents still have the expectation that "if their son or daughter is not in the traditional class, doing traditional work, then they are wasting their time in school" (1991:67). Schools should address this problem of parent perceptions through discussions and seminars for parents.

vii. Workshops, seminars and discussion groups should be organised by the school to address difficulties teachers and principals have in accepting students as active participants in the decision-making processes within the school.

viii. It is recommended that schools organise annual and on-going training

programmes for students. A possible programme outline that can be utilised is that developed by the Education Policy Unit at the University of Natal for the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC 1993). The training programme includes the following aspects:

1. Understanding democratic governance;
2. The constitution of the PTSA/School Council/School Board;
3. Planning the work of the PTSA/School Council/School Board eg. setting goals and time frames, planning a programme of action;
4. Discipline and the PTSA/School Council/School Board - Code of Conduct, disciplinary action and grievance procedures, conflict resolution;
5. Organisational skills - mandates and representation, reporting back, office-bearers and their function;
6. Specialised modules viz. financial administration, fund-raising, strategic planning, negotiating skills, conflict resolution and organising a workshop.

5.4. Recommendations for further research

This study has indicated some areas in which further research is needed viz.

- i. The kind of democracy, participatory or representative, that best fits models of school governance in which students participate - this is becoming relevant given the increasing school population.
- ii. The degree of autonomy students should enjoy while participating in decision-making structures.
- iii. The involvement of the PTSA/School Council (in which students participate) in the resolution of crises arising out of teacher misdemeanour.
- iv. The ways in which students can become involved in decision-making with regard to the curriculum and its management.

5.5. Conclusion

These, then, are the principle conclusions, findings and recommendations arising from this study of the potential role of students in decision-making in the management of secondary

schools. Although it is based on a very small sample, and noting its limitations as far as generalisability is concerned, many of these considerations and recommendations may be applicable to schools which may be moving in the direction of democratising their management by bringing students into the decision-making processes. We must continue to push participative decision-making, particularly student participation, because all students are an important part of the school community. They do want a say and they care for the future. They want to be valued contributors to society and the world beyond their school environment. Given skills, confidence and understanding, they will, in my opinion, be the people we wish them to be.

Student action and participation is a bit like the old iceberg -this study represents an attempt at some work on the bit that's out of water, but there is a lot to be done in the future with what remains to be discovered and developed.

REFERENCES

- ANC. (1994). A Policy Framework For Education and Training. ANC, Braamfontein.
- ANC. (1994). The Reconstruction and Development Programme: A policy framework. Johannesburg: Umanyano Publications.
- Adair, J. (1988). Developing Leaders. Berkshire: Talbot Adair Press.
- Angus, L. (1986). Pupils, power and the Organisation of the Schools. The Journal of Educational Administration, 24(1), 5-17.
- Apple, M.W. (1979). Ideology and Curriculum. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Barber, B.R. (1989). Public talk and civic action: Education for participation in a strong democracy. Social Education, October, 355-370.
- Bhardwaj, R.K. (1980). Democracy in India. New Delhi: National Publishing House.
- Buckland, P. and Hofmeyr, J. (1993). Education Governance in South Africa. Edupol Resource Document Series, 1(1), Johannesburg.
- Burgess, R.G. (Ed.). (1982). Field Research: a Sourcebook and Field Manual. London. George Allen and Unwin.
- Burroughs, G.E.R. (1975). Design and Analysis in Educational Research. University of Birmingham: McGraw & Hill.
- Callan, E. (1988). Autonomy and Schooling. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Chatterjee, D.K. (1984). Gandhi and Constitution Making in India. New Delhi: Associated Publishing House.

Cohen, L.H. and Manion, L. (1989). Research Methods in Education (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.

Darling, J. (1992). A.S.Neill on Democratic Authority: A lesson from Summêrhill. Oxford Review of Education, 18(1), 45-57.

Department of National Education. (1993). Education Renewal Strategy Document. DNE, Pretoria.

Dewey, J. (1948). Reconstruction in philosophy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Dunlap, D.M. and Goldman, P. (1991). Rethinking power in schools. Educational Administration Quarterly, 27(1), 5-29.

Dunlop, F. (1979). On the Democratic Organisation of Schools, Cambridge Journal of Education, 9(1), 43-54.

Education Policy Unit. Univ. of Natal (1993). Report to the NECC National Leadership on the Development of a Training programme for PTSA's.

Entwistle, H. (1971). Political Education in a Democracy. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Evans, K. and Haffenden, I. (1988). Education for Young Adults in Developing Countries: some emerging issues. Educational Review, 40(2), 211-218.

Flew, A. (1976). Sociology, Equality and Education. London: Macmillan.

Foster, W. (1983). Leadership as Praxis: Issues in Administration. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AERA, Montreal.

Fox, J. (1984). Social Work Ethics and Children: Protection Versus Empowerment. Children and Youth Services Review, 6, 319-328.

Freire, P. (1989). Education for Critical Consciousness. New York: Continuum.

Frith, S. and Corrigan, P. (1977). The Politics of Education. In M. Young and G. Whitty, Society, State and Schooling. Sussex: The Falmer Press.

Gauthier, D.P. (1965). The Logic of Leviathan. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. Basic Books: New York.

Giroux, H. (1988). Teachers as Intellectuals: Towards a critical pedagogy of learning. South Hadley: Bergin & Garvey.

Giroux, H. and Penna, A. (1977). Social Relations in the Classroom: The dialectic of the hidden curriculum. Edcentric, 40-41, 39-46.

Glaser, B.G. (1978). Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Goodman, J. (1992). Student Participation and Control for Democratic Schooling: Towards a Connectionist Power Structure. Curriculum and Teaching, 4(2), 39-60.

Gordon, T. (1986). Democracy in One School? Progressive Education and Restructuring. Lewes: Falmer Press

Gray, P. and Chanoff, D. (1986). Democratic Schooling: What Happens to Young People Who Have Charge of Their Own Education? American Journal of Education, Feb. 1986, 182-213.

Guba, E.G. (1981). Criteria For Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries. Educational Communication and Technology Journal, 29, 75-92.

Guba, E.G. (Ed.). (1990). The Paradigm Dialog. London: Sage Publications.

Gutmann, A. (1987). Democratic Education. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, J. (1972). Knowledge and Human Interest. London: Heinemann.

Harber, C. (1988). Schools and Political Socialisation in Africa. Educational Review, 40(2), 195-202.

Hartshorne, K. (1992). Crisis and Challenge. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Holdsworth, R. (1991). Taking Student Participation into the Nineties. Curriculum Perspectives, 11(2), 62-65.

Hulane, Z. (1994, 1 November). Public Hearings on the White Paper. The Daily News, p.3.

Johnston, J. (1992). Quality Assurance, School Self-management and the Contradictions of Control. European Journal of Education, 27(2), 165-177.

Kallaway, P. (Ed.). (1984). Apartheid and Education. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Kamenka, E. (Ed.). (1983). The portable Karl Marx. New York: Penguin Books.

Kent, G. (1991). Student Participation after the Shouting has Died Down. Curriculum Perspectives, 11(2), 65-72.

Kim, K.S. (1990). J.S. Mill's Concept of Maturity as the Criterion in Determining Children's Eligibility for Rights. Journal of Philosophy of Education, 24(2) 235-244.

Kuhmerker, L. (1989). School Governance Structures that Foster Friendship in the Elementary School. Equity and Choice, Fall 1989, 34-41.

Kulati, T. (1992). An examination of the historical evolution of the notion of community participation in South Africa. NEPI Working Paper, Johannesburg.

Lange, J.T. (1993). Site-Based, Shared Decision Making: A Resource for Restructuring. NASSP Bulletin, January, 98-106.

Lightfoot, S.L. (1983). The Good High School: Portraits of Character and Culture. New York: Basic Books.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. London: Sage Publications.

Lindsey, D. (1993). Authentic Empowerment for Children. Children and Youth Services Review, 15, 1-84.

MacPherson, C.B. (1974). The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (1989). Designing Qualitative Research. London: Sage.

Maxcy, S.J. (1985). The Democratic Myth and The Search for a Rational Concept of Education. Education Philosophy and Theory, 17(1), 22-37.

Melton, G.V. (1983). Toward "personhood" for adolescents: Autonomy and privacy as values in public policy. American Psychologist, 38, 99-103.

Miles, M.B. (1979). Qualitative Data as an Attractive Nuisance: The problem of Analysis. In J. Van Maanen, Qualitative Methodology. London: Sage Publications.

Miles, W.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1984). Qualitative Data Analysis. London: Sage Publications.

Miljeteig-Olssen, P. (1992). Children's Participation: Giving Children the Opportunity to Develop into Active and Responsible Members of Society. Social Education, 56(4), 216.

Mill, J.S. (1963). On Liberty. New York: Washington Square Press.

Morrow, W. (1989). Chains of Thought. Cape Town: Southern Book Publishers.

National Education Crisis Committee (1985). Report of the First National Education Crisis Committee.

National Education Crisis Conference (1993). Addresses by Cosas & SADTU, 15 May 1993, Johannesburg.

National Education Policy Investigation. (1992). Governance and Administration. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

NECC S. NATAL (1989). Minutes of Regional Conference.

NECC. (1985). Report of S. Natal Regional Conference, Durban.

Neill, A.S. (1968). Summerhill. London: Penguin.

Paine, T. (1942). Basic Writings of Thomas Paine. New York: Wiley.

Pascal, C. (1987). Democratised Primary School Government: Relevant Theoretical Constructs. Oxford Review of Education, 13(3), 321-331.

Patton, M.Q. (1980). Qualitative Evaluation Methods. London: Sage Publications.

Perry, H. (1992). A Comparative Study of the System of Administration and Control of Schooling in Mozambique, Nicaragua, Canada and Sweden, NEPI Working Paper.

Perry, L.R. (Ed.). (1967). Four Progressive Educators. London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd.

Peters, R.S. (1966). Ethics and Education. London: Allen & Unwin.

Polan, A.J. (1989). An Experiment in Sixth Form Democratic Participation. Educational Review, 41(1), 9-18.

Rawls, J. (1973). A Theory of Justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (Eds.). (1981). Human Inquiry : A sourcebook of New Paradigm Research. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (1981). Issues of Validity in new paradigm research.
In P. Reason and J. Rowan, Human Inquiry: A sourcebook of New Paradigm Research.
Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Robinson, V. (1992). Why doesn't Educational research solve educational problems. Journal of Educational Theory and Philosophy, 24(2), 8-28.

Robson, C. (1993). Real World Research. Oxford: Blackwell.

Rosenak, J. (1982). Should Children be Subject to Paternalistic Restrictions on their Liberties? Journal of Philosophy of Education, 16(1), 89-96.

Ruddick, W. (1979). Parents and Life Prospects. In W. Ruddick and O. O'Neill (Eds.), Having Children. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sander, B. (1989). Management and Administration of Education Systems: Major issues and Trends. Prospects, XIX(2), 225-241.

Sanders, W.B. and Pinhey, T.K. (1983). Conducting Social Research. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson.

Scheffler, I. (1985). Of Human Potential: An Essay in the Philosophy of Education. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Scrimshaw, P. (1975). Should schools be Participatory Democracies? In D. Bridges and P. Scrimshaw (Eds.), Values and Authority in Schools. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Shechtman, Z. (1993). Education For Democracy. Youth and Society, 25(1), 126-139.

Simon, B. and Taylor, W. (1981). Education in the Eighties. London: Batsford Academic & Educational Ltd.

Snauwaert, D.T. (1993). Democracy, Education, and Governance: A Developmental Conception. New York: State University of New York Press.

Soltis, J. (1993). Democracy and Teaching. Journal of Philosophy of Education, 27(2), 149-158.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research. California: Sage Publications.

Strike, K. (1982). Liberty and Learning. Oxford: Martin Robertson.

Swanson, A.D. (1989). Restructuring educational governance: A challenge of the 1990's. Educational Administration Quarterly, 25(3), 268-293.

Unterhalter, E., Wolpe, H., Botha, T., Badat, S. & Dlamini, T. (1991). Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles. London: Zed Books.

Van Bueren, G. (1992). Autonomy and the Child: The International Educational Rights of the Child. Social Education, 56(4), 214-215.

Van den Heever, R. (Ed.). (1987). Alternative Education: Vision of a Democratic Alternative. Cape Town: Utasa Publication.

Van Halen, B.J. (1991). Student Participation in Practice: A Principal's Perspective. Curriculum Perspectives, 11(2), 74-78.

Van Maanen, J. (1979). Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organisational Research: A Preface. In J. Van Maanen, Qualitative Methodology. London: Sage Publications.

Walker, J.C. (1990). Functional Decentralisation and Democratic Control. In J. Chapman (Ed.), School-Based Decision-Making and Management. London: The Falmer Press.

Watkins, P. (1983). Undistorted Communications and School Democracy. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Australian Association for Research in Education, Canberra.

White, P. (1973). Education, Democracy and the Public Interest. In R.S.Peters (Ed.), The Philosophy of Education. London: Oxford University Press.

White, P. (1983). Beyond Domination. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

White, P. (1987). Self-respect, Self-esteem and the Management of Schools and Colleges. Journal of Philosophy of Education, 21(1), 85-94.

White, P. (1991). Hope, Confidence and Democracy. Journal of Philosophy of Education, 25(2), 203-208.

Williamson, J.B., Karp, D.A., & Dalphin, J.R. (1977). The Research Craft. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Woods, P. (1986). Inside Schools. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Worsfold, V.L. (1974). A philosophical justification of Children's rights. Harvard Edu. Review, 44(1), 125-141.

Wringe, C.A. (1981). Children's Rights: A philosophical study. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wringe, C.A. (1982). Children's Rights. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Wringe, C.A. (1984). Democracy, Schooling and Political Education. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Yin, R.K. (1984). Case Study Research. California: Sage Publications.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 :	Letter to Schools' PTSA Requesting Permission to Conduct Research	109
APPENDIX 2 :	Response by PTSA Authorising Research	110
APPENDIX 3 :	Letters Accompanying Questionnaires	111
APPENDIX 4 :	Principals' Questionnaire	112
APPENDIX 5 :	Teachers' and Parents' Questionnaire	116
APPENDIX 6 :	Students' Questionnaire	120
APPENDIX 7 :	1993 SRC Students' Interview Guide	125
APPENDIX 8 :	Principals' Interview Guide	127
APPENDIX 9 :	1994 SRC Students' Interview Guide	131
APPENDIX 10 :	Teachers' and Parents' Interview Guide	135
APPENDIX 11 :	SRC Constitution - Dadoo Memorial	137
APPENDIX 12 :	PTSA Constitution - Dadoo Memorial	142
APPENDIX 13 :	A Review of the Methodology Employed in This Study	148

APPENDIX 1

86 Leo Avenue
Woodhurst, Chatsworth
Durban
4001

Tel. (031) 437645

15 May 1994

The Chairperson
Parent-Teacher-Student Association
Apollo Secondary School
Umhlatuzana

Sir/ Madam

I am enrolled as a Masters of Education student at Rhodes University. The topic of my research is : **The potential role of students in decision - making in secondary school management.**

I intend conducting this study through an enquiry into the perspectives of key players currently involved in school management structures in one school from each of the five Departments of Education that are servicing the greater Durban area.

With the exception of the Department of Education and Culture (House of Assembly), all of the other Departments have many schools that have opted for student participation in school management in the form of Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA's). The research hopes to elicit the perceptions of parent, teacher and student representatives of school management structures through the means of questionnaires and interviews.

Apollo Secondary School has been selected through a process of purposive sampling of all HOD secondary schools in Chatsworth. I therefore write to request permission of your committee for the above mentioned research to be conducted at your school.

I trust that my request to conduct part of my research in your school would receive a favourable response. I am of the view that a study of the way your school is administered (with special emphasis on the way students views are considered and their concerns addressed), especially since it differs from currently held options, is going to make a significant contribution to the question of future school management.

I look forward to a favourable response.

Yours faithfully

D. Chinsamy (Brian)

SECONDARY SCHOOL PTSA

05:08:1994

Mr.D.Chinsamy
86 Leo Avenue
Woodhurst
4092

Dear Mr.Brian Chinsamy

Thank you for your letter dated 15:05:1994. I do apologise for this late reply .Your letter was tabled at the PTSA meeting on the 29:06:1994 and your request was acceded to . Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research into the PTSA and its workings. I sincerely hope that you are successful in your studies.

Thanking you
Yours sincerely

S.V. Naidoo
MR S V NAIDOO
SECRETARY

APPENDIX 3

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your co-operation in this research project. Your responses to this questionnaire is going to be very important in assessing teachers and parents attitudes to student participation in decision-making at school. Please feel free to record your honest and frank comments. You can rest assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The goal of this research project is **to identify the potential role of secondary school students in decision-making in management and administration of the school.**

If you wish to append your name to the questionnaire, you may do so. Otherwise you may remain anonymous. I would welcome any comments you may have on the research project and the topic.

After completing the Questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope provided and leave it with the secretary of the school.

Thank you once again!

Brian Chinsamy

QUESTIONNAIRE - be completed by Head of school

APPENDIX 4

Name of School: _____

No. of Pupils on Roll : _____

No. of Academic Staff at School : _____

What standards/grades does the school cater for? _____

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES

1. Which of the following bodies does your school have presently

- (a) Education Committee
- (b) Parent - Teacher Association
- (c) Parent-Teacher-Student Association
- (d) School Management Council
- (e) None of the above
- (f) Any other (Please specify)

☐

2. Is there any student involvement in decision - making in management and administration of your school?

Yes

☐

No

☐

3. If the answer is yes , then please state the nature of such involvement eg. as reps on the PTSA etc.

4. If the answer to Q2 is NO state whether students are consulted before decisions are made by the school governing body.

Yes

☐

No

☐

5. If YES in Q4, then how is this done? Give examples to illustrate.

6. Does your school have a body representing students?

Yes

☐

No

☐

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES IN Q6 ABOVE, THEN PLEASE COMPLETE Q7.

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED NO IN Q6 ABOVE, THEN PLEASE ANSWER Q8.

7.

7.1. What is this body called?

7.2. How are leaders of this body chosen?

7.3. How much of support does the student representative body enjoy from the general student population at your school.

Very Much	Much	Undecided	Little	Very Little

7.4. Can you provide reasons for your response in 7.3 above?

7.5. How would you rate the role of the student representative body in your school with regard to representing students' concerns to the management/ principal of the school.

Very Efficient	Efficient	Undecided	Inefficient	Very Inefficient

7.6. Please provide reasons for your response in 7.5 above.

8.

8.1. Has there been any call or initiative on the part of students or staff towards establishing such a body? Give details.

8.2. In the absence of such a body, how are students' feelings on school activities, and school policy assessed? Are there other mechanisms that the school uses eg. prefects. Give examples.

THE FOLLOWING PART OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY HEADS OF SCHOOLS THAT HAVE PTSA's

9. How many members does your school PTSA have? _____

10. Please indicate the numbers of the following representatives on the schools PTSA.

(a) Parents _____

(b) Teachers _____

(c) Students _____

11. In what capacity is the Head of the school a part of the PTSA?

(a) As a member of the staff delegation

(b) As an ex-officio member

(c) As an office bearer

(Please specify position) _____

12. How often does the PTSA meet?

13. How would you rate the functioning of the PTSA in addressing the problems of the school.

Very Efficient	Efficient	Undecided	Inefficient	Very Inefficient

Thank you once again!

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

1. How long have you been a member of the school's management committee/PTSA/ Education Committee?

2. How do you view student participation in decision making in the management and administration of the school?

Strongly favour	Tend to favour	No opinion	Tend to disfavour	Strongly disfavour

3. Give reasons and/or examples for your response in Q2 above.

4. How often do students attend meetings of the above mentioned management body?

Always	Often	Unsure	Seldom	Never

5. How would you rate student representatives knowledge of general school issues?

Very good	Good	Not good not poor	Poor	Very poor

6. The ability of student representatives to present student concerns in a meeting is

very good	good	no opinion	poor	very poor

7. Give reasons and/or examples for your response in Q7.

8. How would you assess the contribution of students in meetings at which they are decision makers with teachers and parents?

very substantial	substantial	undecided	unsubstantial	very unsubstantial

9. How would you rate the interest of students in such meetings in matters unrelated directly to them?

very interested	interested	undecided	uninterested	very uninterested

10. To what extent do you feel the presence of staff members in a Management Committee/ PTSA inhibits full student participation?

Great extent	Some extent	Undecided	Very Small extent	No extent

11. What is your attitude to students being given equal status to parents and teachers in decision making bodies in school.

Strongly favour	Tend to favour	No opinion	Tend to disfavour	Strongly disfavour

12. Give your reasons for your response to Q11 above.

13. Students should be given office bearer positions on a Management Committee/PTSA etc.

Strongly agree	Agree with reservations	No opinion	Disagree with reservations	Strongly disagree

14. Students should be entrusted with financial responsibilities in a Management Council/ PTSA etc.

Definitely yes	Probably yes	Uncertain	Probably not	Definitely not

15. Student representatives should be present when teacher misconduct is being discussed.

Definitely yes	Probably yes	Uncertain	Probably not	Definitely not

16. What are your reasons for your response in Q15 above?

17. Student participation in decision making in school has resulted in decisions that would not have been possible without students.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18. Schools can be run without the participation of students in Management councils/PTA's etc.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

19. Students are immature and therefore they cannot be expected to make mature decisions for the school.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree

20. Student participation with teachers in joint decision making has a negative impact on a teachers discipline in a class.

Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree

21. Student participation helps in the general discipline of the pupils in the schools.

Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. The participation of students makes it difficult for urgent decisions to be reached quickly.

Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree

23. The participation of students helps to resolve conflicts between students and staff.

Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree

24. Please feel free to respond to any other issues concerning student participation that is not covered in this questionnaire

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE : To be completed by Students on the schools PTSA

This questionnaire is part of some research into the potential role of students in decision - making in secondary school management and administration. Thank you for your co-operation. You may be assured of the confidentiality of your responses.

Name: _____ Standard: _____

School: _____ Age: _____

If you hold an office-bearer position in the PTSA, please state what position this is. _____

Please place a tick in the box next to the answer you have chosen.

1. How have you become part of the PTSA?

- (a) you were elected by your src ☐
- (b) you were nominated by your src executive. ☐
- (c) you were asked by a teacher/ principal or any other member of staff ☐
- (d) you came on your own ☐

2. Why do you think you were chosen to represent students on the PTSA?

3. How often do you attend PTSA meetings?

always	most of the times	unsure	sometimes	never
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. How would you rate your participation in discussion at PTSA meetings?

Very Active	active but not as active as others	Unsure	Take very little part	Very Inactive
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Since you have been part of the PTSA, how successful have you as students been in getting your points across in PTSA meetings

very successful	successful	unsure	unsuccessful	very unsuccessful

6. Please state possible reasons for your answer in Q5 above and write down a few examples where you have been successful.

7. Do you think what you say at PTSA meetings are taken seriously by teachers?

always	most of the times	undecided	sometimes	never

8. Do you think what you say at PTSA meetings are taken seriously by parents?

always	most of the times	undecided	sometimes	never

9. How much of your time do PTSA activities and meetings take from you?

too much of my time	much of my time	unsure	little of my time	too little of my time

10(a). What kind of tasks/ responsibilities are students allocated on the PTSA generally. Next to each put in the correct number.

1 = always 2 = most of the times 3 = sometimes 4 = never

- a. financial b. discipline c. projects
- d. fund raising e. social functions
- f. extra - curricular eg. sports
- g. Any other (please specify) _____

10(b). What kind of responsibilities should be given to students?
Next to each write in the correct number 1 - 4.

- a. financial b. discipline c. projects
- d. fund raising e. social functions
- f. extra - curricular eg. sports
- g. Any other (please specify) _____

10(c). Give reasons for your answer in 9(b) above.

11. What difference do you think your participation in the PTSA is making on the decisions made by the PTSA?

a lot of difference	some difference	unsure	little difference	no difference

12. How do you find the PTSA meetings?

very interesting	interest ing	unsure	uninterest ing	very uninteresting

13. Please give reasons for your answer in 12 above.

14. How strongly do you feel about students taking part in decision making with parents and teachers at school?

Strongly favour	tend to favour	no opinion	tend to disfavour	strongly disfavour

15. What are your reasons for your response in Q14 above?

16. How many students do you think should be on the PTSA?

more than the teachers and parents
same number as parents and teachers
fewer than the teachers and parents.

17. Give reasons for your response in Q16.

17. How would you rate your PTSA in resolving problems in your school?

very effective	effective	unsure	not very effective	very ineffective

18.1. Did you undergo any training to prepare you for your role in the PTSA?

Yes

☐

No

☐

18.2. If you have answered yes in 5.1 , then please give details about the training.

18.2.1. Who conducted the training?(eg. school, Ptsa, SRC etc)

18.2.2. What aspects did the training cover?(eg. how to run meetings, taking minutes etc)

18.2.3. Did you find the training useful?

Very useful	useful	unsure	a little useful	not useful

19. Is there any particular aspect you would have liked some training on to equip you in participating more fully in the PTSA?

17. Is there anything you would like to say about your PTSA/ SRC/ that has not been covered in this questionnaire?

Thank you for your co-operation.

INTERVIEW - GUIDE

APPENDIX 7

INTERVIEW WITH 1993 SRC OF DADOO MEMORIAL SCHOOL

1993 src (not on present ptsa)

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

A. 1. All of you believe that students should be involved in the **management and administration** or governance of the school. What do you understand by this?

2. What would be some of the aspects that management would include?

3. Are there any aspects of managing a school that you feel students should not be involved in? What are they?

B. 1. How did you manage to attend to the affairs of the ptsa and complete your **schoolwork**?

2. Did you find it very time consuming?

3. Tell me about some of the frustrations of being on the ptsa.

C. 1. Why do you think you were elected by the students to represent them? What are some of the **leadership qualities** you see as important in selecting students for the ptsa. What does leadership mean to you. IN other words what kind of person must you be to be effective in the ptsa.

2. How important is the ability to speak **English** fluently in deciding who to elect as a student leader to the ptsa?

D. Let's talk about the **ptsa meetings**.

1. What can you tell me about these meetings?

2. Generally how do parents and teachers respond to comments that you as students make in the meetings?

3. One of you commented on the domineering attitude of the teachers on the ptsa that made it difficult for you to pursue a point. Was this the general feeling?

4. Somebody also mentions that when you spoke the principal stared in such a way that it was enough to shut you up. Please elaborate. Is this the general feeling? Has this happened much?

5. What are some of the difficulties you have faced in these meetings as students?

6. How did you attempt to overcome these difficulties as students.

E. Lets talk about the **finances** of the src.

1. Where do you'll get your money from?

2. How do you ensure that the finances are kept in order.

3. There is a hesitancy on the part of teachers and parents to trust you completely in financial matters. In my-observations I have noted that there was some experience of mismanagement of src funds. Can you tell me more about this.

F. Is there any aspect of school life that you would like to have a say in and that is being denied you?

G. 1 What do you think of the idea that students be present when **teacher misconduct** is being discussed?

2. What about the teachers integrity?

H. If you had to advise the next group of student reps entering the ptsa, what are some of the things you would tell them to advise and prepare them for their roles?

I. Has participation in the ptsa helped you in any way? What have been the benefits of participating in decision -- making for you personally?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL - DADOO MEMORIAL SECONDARY

DATE _____ TIME: _____

1.

1.1. When, in the history of the school, did student participation in school governance begin.

1.2. What were the circumstances surrounding this decision?

2. Do student reps generally feel that they can freely approach the administration about student matters?

2.1. How do you account for this?

2.2. What kind of attitude do students reps display when they do make these representations?.

2.3. Is there a general pattern with regard to the kinds of matters student reps bring to you ? Tell me more about this.

3. What has been your experience wrt students contribution to discussion in meetings which are attended by parents and teachers also.

4. Have there been instances where students were able to win over parents and teachers to their side in an argument?

5. Does student inexperience of meeting procedure and constitutions etc influence the meeting in any way? Does it hamper the progress of the meeting in any way?

6. What do you see are some of the advantages of having students participating in decision-making in schools?

7.

7.1. What are some of the disadvantages of students participating in decision making processes with parents and teachers.?

7.2. How has the ptsa attempted to address the difficulties posed by the participation of students.

8. In your experience with students in the ptsa, what tasks/responsibilities do you think students feel comfortable with and you feel confident of letting them handle.

9. Tasks you definitely feel students should not be involved in.

10. Students feel strongly about being present in ptsa meetings when teacher misconduct is being discussed. How do you feel about this? What has been your experience thus far?

11. Has student participation in decision-making affected relationship between teachers and students generally? Explain.

12. Do you think the student contributions since they are part of the PTSA have been significant enough to make an impact in the school management. Have they really changed things in the school because of their contributions or the school is just the same even if they did not contribute in these PTSA meetings.

13. Generally in school life in terms of school discipline and pupils discipline has there been any impact that the SRC had because of the participation in decision making?

14. Talking to the students they give me an impression that teachers still have this domineering attitudes over the meetings so much so that it quietens them down. What is your experience on that, do you think its true?

15. What do you think is the future for students participation in decision making in the schools?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL OF TAMBO HIGH

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

VENUE: _____

1.

1.1. When, in the history of the school, did student participation in school governance begin.

1.2. What were the circumstances surrounding this decision?

2. You say, in your response to the questionnaire, that there is little, if any, reluctance by student reps to approach the admin about student matters.

2.1. How do you account for this?

2.2. What kind of attitude do students reps display when they do make these representations?.

2.3. Is there a general pattern with regard to the kinds of matters student reps bring to you ? Tell me more about this.

3. What has been your experience wrt students contribution to discussion in meetings which are attended by parents and teachers also.

4. Have there been instances where studentd were able to win over parents and teachers to their side in an argument?

5. As a chairperson of the ptsa meetings, does student inexperience of meeting procedure and constitutions etc influence the meeting in any way? Does it hamper the progress of the meeting in any way?

6. What do you see are some of the advantages of having students participating in decision-making in schools?

7.

7.1. What are some of the disadvantages of students participating in decision making processes with parents and teachers.?

7.2. How has the ptsa attempted to address the difficulties posed

by the participation of students.

8. In your experience with students in the ptsa, what tasks/responsibilities do you think students feel comfortable with and you feel confident of letting them handle.

9. One third of teachers and parent reps disagreed about giving students office-bearer positions in the ptsa. Another third agreed, but with reservations. Has this to do with the experiences of the past? What are they? Why are teachers and parents hesitant about this issue?

9. Tasks you definitely feel students should not be involved in.

10. On the issue of giving students financial responsibilities, two thirds of the parent and teacher respondents said no. It seems that parents and teachers do not trust students as far as money matters are concerned. Why is this the case?

11. Students feel strongly about being present in ptsa meetings when teacher misconduct is being discussed. How do you feel about this? What has been your experience thus far?

12. Has student participation in decision-making affected relationship between teachers and students generally? Explain.

13. As a principal, do you think giving students the right to participate in decision-making has helped you or hindered you in

INTERVIEW GUIDE

APPENDIX 9

INTERVIEW WITH 1994 SRC OF DADOO MEMORIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

A. 1. All of you believe that students should be involved in the management and administration or governance of the school. What do you understand by this?

2. What would be some of the aspects that management would include?

3. Are there any aspects of managing a school that you feel students should not be involved in? What are they?

B. 1. How did you manage to attend to the affairs of the ptsa and complete your schoolwork?

2. Did you find it very time consuming?

3. Tell me about some of the frustrations of being on the ptsa.

C. 1. Why do you think you were elected by the students to represent them? What are some of the leadership qualities you see as important in selecting students for the ptsa. What does leadership mean to you. IN other words what kind of person must you be to be effective in the ptsa.

D. Let's talk about the ptsa meetings.

1. What can you tell me about these meetings?

2. Generally how do parents and teachers respond to comments that you as students make in the meetings?

3. What are some of the difficulties you have faced in these meetings as students?

4. How did you attempt to overcome these difficulties as students.

E. You said you were successful in getting your points across in ptsa meetings. --- indicated that you were able to persuade members into making decisions arising from school matters eg the buying of paper and the provision of textbooks. Can you tell me more about this.

F. Lets talk about the finances of the src.

1. --- was of the view that students are not intellectually capable although you are able to cope with financial situations. Lomalin also said that the handling of money must be supervised. Please expand on this. Are you saying that you are not ready to take complete responsibility for financial matters?

2. ---, how have you been coping as a treasurer?

2.1. Why/how were you elected?

2.2. What are some of the difficulties you are experiencing?

2.3. Are teachers and parents on the ptsa helpful?

2.4. Does it upset you when there is comment of the way in which you present your reports?

2.5. Do you think students should be made treasurers of ptsa's. Why?

3. There is a hesitancy on the part of teachers and parents to trust you completely in financial matters. In my observations I have noted that there was some experience of **mismanagement** of src funds. Can you tell me more about this.

G. On discipline in school. Vinolan said that discipline is normally biased because it is controlled by the teachers. Therefore you believe responsible students should play an active role. How exactly should src reps become involved in discipline in the school?

H. Is there any aspect of school life that you would like to have a say in and that is being denied you?

I. 1 What do you think of the idea that students be present when teacher misconduct is being discussed?

2. What about the teachers integrity?

J I have observed in the ptsa meetings that student reps become very **rowdy and noisy** at ptsa meetings and the chairperson has to continually ask for their attention. Why do the student reps become restless in the meetings?

K. --- mentioned that at times parents and teachers tend to dissuade certain statements which you present. Can you provide examples of that?

L. If you had to advise the next group of student reps entering the ptsa, what are some of the things you would tell them to advise and prepare them for their roles?

M. Has participation in the ptsa helped you in any way? What have been the benefits of participating in decision - making for you personally? (One of you said you gained a tremendous amount of experience. Tell me more about it.)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW WITH SRC FROM TAMBO SECONDARY SCHOOL

A. 1. All of you believe that students should be involved in the **management and administration** or governance of the school. What do you understand by this?

2. What would be some of the aspects that management would include?

3. Are there any aspects of managing a school that you feel students should not be involved in? What are they?

B. 1. How do you manage to attend to the affairs of the ptsa and complete your **schoolwork**?

C. 1. You mentioned **leadership qualities** as important in selecting students for the ptsa. What does leadership mean to you. IN other words what kind of person must you be to be effective in the ptsa.

2. How important is the ability to speak **English** fluently in deciding who to elect as a student leader to the ptsa?

D. Let's talk about the **ptsa meetings**.

1. What can you tell me about these meetings?

2. Generally how do parents and teachers respond to comments that you as students make in the meetings?

3. What are some of the difficulties you have faced in these meetings as students?

E. 1. You mentioned the **suspension of students**. Tell me about the role the student reps play in deciding about student suspensions?

2. What is the reaction of the students towards the src reps when a student is suspended?

3. Do you think students reps should continue being part of the decision to suspend students? Why?

F. Lets talk about the **finances** of the src.

1. Where do you'll get your money from?

2. You asked the ptsa for an allocation. Tell me about it.

3. What was the money used for?

4. How did parents and teachers respond to your request?

5. How do you ensure that the finances are kept in order.

G. Is there any aspect of school life that you would like to have a say in and that is being denied you?

H. All of you mentioned **discipline** as the task that is always given to student reps. Tell me more about this.

I. 1. Somebody mentioned that most of the students believe that **teachers are "eating the school fees"**. Is this a generally held view?

2. Why do students feel this way?

J. 1 What do you think of the idea that students be present when **teacher misconduct** is being discussed?

2. What about the teachers integrity?

K. If you had to advise the next group of student reps entering the ptsa, what are some of the things you would tell them to advise and prepare them for their roles?

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS AT PAMBHILI SEC SCHOOL

DATE: _____ TIME : _____

1. How long have you been a member of the schools management com?
2. Have you held any office bearer positions on the ptsa? What were they?
3. All teachers questionned said they favoured the participation of students in decision-making with parents and teachers. Is this the majority view of the staff as a whole? Are there any strong dissenting voices among staff? What reasons do they furnish?
4. Do you favour students enjoying equal representation as parents and teachers in a ptsa? Reasons.
5. While it is felt by teachers that student reps ability to rep student concerns are good, they lack in the knowledge of general school issues. What are your views on this? How has it surfaced in ptsa meetings? Does it hinder progress in the admin of the school? Examples from the past.
6. Most teachers felt that the presence of staff members in ptsa meetings inhibits full student participation to a very small extent. Has this always been the case? Possible reasons for this?
7. A majority of teachers agree to students being given office bearer positions but with reservations. What would these reservations likely be?
8. On the issue of entrusting students with financial responsibilities, 80% of teachers felt that they should probably not. What could be some of the reasons behind this? Has it to do with the past history/past experiences? Elaborate.
9. The majority of teachers felt that students should be present when teacher misconduct was being discussed. How do teachers then view the aspect of the threat to their professionalism? Also the danger of a breakdown in discipline if students are privy to sensitive information.?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS - DADOO MEMORIAL SECONDARY

DATE _____ TIME: _____

1.

1.1. When, in the history of the school, did student participation in school governance begin.

1.2. What were the circumstances surrounding this decision?

2. Do student reps generally feel that they can freely approach the administration about student matters?

2.1. How do you account for this?

2.2. What kind of attitude do students reps display when they do make these representations?.

2.3. Is there a general pattern with regard to the kinds of matters student reps bring to you ? Tell me more about this.

3. What has been your experience wrt students contribution to discussion in meetings which are attended by parents and teachers also.

4. Have there been instances where students were able to win over parents and teachers to their side in an argument?

5. Does student inexperience of meeting procedure and constitutions etc influence the meeting in any way? Does it hamper the progress of the meeting in any way?

6. What do you see are some of the advantages of having students participating in decision-making in schools?

7.

7.1. What are some of the disadvantages of students participating in decision making processes with parents and teachers.?

7.2. How has the ptsa attempted to address the difficulties posed by the participation of students.

8. In your experience with students in the ptsa, what tasks/responsibilities do you think students feel comfortable with and you feel confident of letting them handle.

STUDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL OF SECONDARY

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Preparing pupils for adulthood is an important aim of education. Therefore a relevant school curriculum will eventually enable pupils to earn a living, to organise their personal lives, to take responsibility for their actions. Participation in an S.R.C. is an essential experience for pupils so that the above can be achieved.

At first, pupils should carefully draft the constitution for the S.R.C. The constitution is required to enlist recognition by the Education Committee, the principal, the teachers and the bank at which the S.R.C. wishes to open an account. A good constitution should also enable all pupils to understand how the S.R.C. will operate. The constitution should implement majority decisions and lay down a code of conduct for pupils, office bearers, principals, teachers, parents and the Education Committees. Provision shall also be made to deal with the misconduct of S.R.C. office bearers and individual pupils.

The S.R.C. shall promote pupil involvement initiatives to improve the academic curriculum activities at school. The Association of Education Committees is presently focusing on the relevance of present school academic curriculum. The S.R.C. shall aspire for the formation of a parent, teacher and student association at the school. In this way pupils would not be dictated to but guided by parents, principals and teachers.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. The S.R.C. shall mean Student's Representative Council.
2. Quorum shall mean the minimum number of students required to be present for a meeting to start.
3. Standing Committee shall mean any committee instituted by the S.R.C. for the execution of specific duties.
4. Student Body shall mean all the students enrolled at Apollo Secondary School.

COMPOSITION OF THE S.R.C.

The S.R.C. shall be composed of :

1. President;
2. Vice-President;
3. Secretary;
4. Treasurer;
5. six members of the Executive Committee;
6. Chairperson of the Entertainment Committee;
7. Chairperson of the Sports Committee;
8. Chairperson of the Academic Committee;
9. Chairperson of the Publications Committee;
10. Chairperson of the Fund-Raising Committee; and
11. two representatives from each class.

DUTIES OF THE S.R.C.

The S.R.C. shall :

1. represent the students to : (a) school staff members
(b) parent's organisation
(c) S.R.C.'s of other schools
(d) national student organisations;
2. be the umbrella body for student committees, clubs and societies;
3. co-ordinate and supervise the use of student facilities in conjunction with the school staff;
4. convene and conduct all meetings of the student body;
5. be responsible for the preservation of order at functions organised by the S.R.C. , and at meetings;
6. promote good relations and understanding between students, staff and parents; and
7. be responsible for any student publications.

OFFICE-BEARERS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. The President shall :

- 1.1. chair all meetings of the S.R.C. and of the student body;
- 1.2. represent the S.R.C. at all student functions;
- 1.3. submit a report on activities to the student body on behalf of the S.R.C.;
- 1.4. ensure S.R.C. representation at meetings of parents.

2. The Vice-President shall :

- 2.1. perform all the duties and functions which are otherwise performed by the President, if the President is unable to do so; and
- 2.2. assist the President.

3. The Secretary shall :

- 3.1. be responsible for all S.R.C. and student body records and property;
- 3.2. conduct the S.R.C.'s correspondence and keep copies of all correspondences;
- 3.3. take minutes at all S.R.C. and student body meetings;
- 3.4. post on notice-boards all information as decided by the S.R.C. or student body; and
- 3.5. co-opt assistance from any student in the school.

4. The Treasurer shall :

- 4.1. be responsible for the keeping of all accounts of the S.R.C.;
- 4.2. disburse all monies as may be authorised by the S.R.C.;
- 4.3. submit a financial report to the S.R.C. every quarterly and to the student body at least one month before the end of the term of office of the S.R.C.; and
- 4.4. prepare a financial report when required by the President.

5. The Executive Committee members shall :

- 5.1. form the Executive Committee along with the aforementioned office-bearers;
- 5.2. be chiefly involved in the decision-making of the S.R.C.;
- 5.3. serve as the Pupil Welfare Committee, thereby being responsible for helping pupils with problems and grievances; and
- 5.4. make representations, on pupils' behalf, to staff members and parents with respect to grievances or problems.

6. The Chairperson of the Entertainment Committee shall :

- 6.1. form the Entertainment Committee from members of appropriate clubs, societies, sub-committees and interested members of the student body;**
- 6.2. represent the Entertainment Committee in the S.R.C.;**
- 6.3. chair all meetings of the committee;**
- 6.4. organise activities; and**
- 6.5. present a progress report to the S.R.C. every quarter.**

7. The Chairperson of the Sports Committee shall :

- 7.1. form the sports committee with representatives from the committees for the different codes of sport at school;**
- 7.2. represent the Sports Committee in the S.R.C.;**
- 7.3. chair all meetings of the committee;**
- 7.4. organise sporting activities with other institutions;**
- 7.5. organise inter-class activities; and**
- 7.6. present a progress report to the S.R.C. every quarter.**

8. The Chairperson of the Academic Committee shall :

- 8.1. form the Academic Committee with representatives from the different subject committees and interested members of the student body;**
- 8.2. represent the Academic Committee in the S.R.C.;**
- 8.3. chair all meetings of the committee;**
- 8.4. organise debates, seminars, symposia, workshops, talks by experts, etc;**
- 8.5. present a progress report to the S.R.C. every quarter; and**
- 8.6. present a report to the Education Committee on the academic status of the school.**

9. The Chairperson of the Publications Committee shall :

- 9.1. form the Publications Committee with pupils of the student body who have the ability for or experience in media and advertisement;**
- 9.2. represent the Publications Committee at all S.R.C. meetings;**
- 9.3. chair all Publications Committee meetings;**
- 9.4. be responsible for producing all publications of the S.R.C.;**
- 9.5. promote and publicise the activities of the S.R.C.; and**
- 9.6. produce a quality newsletter for distribution among parents.**

10. The Chairperson of the Fund-Raising Committee shall :

- 10.1. form the Fund-Raising Committee with pupils of the student body who have the ability for fund-raising;**
- 10.2. represent the Fund-Raising Committee at all S.R.C. meetings;**
- 10.3. chair all Fund-Raising Committee meetings;**
- 10.4. be responsible for all fund-raising activities; and**
- 10.5. work in conjunction with the Treasurer regarding distribution of funds.**

ELECTION PROCEDURE

Elections shall be held in the first week of the second term of each school year. As a first step the two S.R.C. representatives shall be elected in each class in the first two weeks of each term. Note that the class representatives, by serving on consecutive S.R.C.'s, provide continuity.

NOMINATIONS

Any member of the student body may nominate or be nominated to any of the positions on the S.R.C. The nominations must be made at least one month before the day of the elections. Nominations shall be by form of writing and shall contain the name of the nominee, the mover and the seconder. The nominations should be handed to the Electoral Officer in a sealed envelope in exchange for a receipt. The Electoral Officer shall be appointed by the outgoing S.R.C. There shall be no nomination for the position of Vice-President. The nominee who receives the highest votes will become President and the one who receives the second highest votes will become the Vice-President.

VOTING

The Electoral Officer shall prepare a ballot sheet from the list of nominations. The class teacher, at an appointed time, shall hand out the ballot sheets. This shall be done simultaneously in all the classes at school. The outgoing S.R.C. shall arrange for boxes in each class for the return of the sheets. The Electoral Officer shall immediately pick up each box and arrange to count the votes within the hour. The results shall be posted up on the school notice-boards.

S.R.C. MEETING

A S.R.C. meeting shall be held at least once a month. The Chairpersons of the sub-committees, the class representatives, the principal and teachers shall be circularised one week before the meeting unless a year planner has been adopted. Reports from class representatives, chairpersons of the sub-committees and the President of the S.R.C. shall be made at this meeting. A written balance sheet shall be submitted by the Treasurer. The quorum at S.R.C. meetings shall be 30.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

A Special meeting of the S.R.C. or the Student Body may be convened by the secretary. These meetings may be called by the President as decided by the S.R.C. or by a written request signed by at least 20 pupils. The secretary shall convene the meeting within one week of receiving the request. The meeting and the agenda shall be advertised on the notice-boards for at least 5 days before the meeting. Only matters for which the meeting was called may be discussed at a special meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AND ELIGIBILITY TO THE S.R.C.

Any pupil at Apollo Secondary School is eligible to stand for election to the S.R.C. A member of the S.R.C. shall cease to be in office if he / she has been absent from three consecutive S.R.C. meetings without a good reason.

FINANCE

A bank or building society account shall be opened in the name of the S.R.C. All money belonging to the S.R.C. shall be deposited in the account within 7 days. The account shall be operated by the Treasurer, President and Secretary. The Treasurer shall present a statement of income and expenditure at all meetings of the S.R.C. and a audited financial statement once a year to the student body. The financial statement shall be drawn up from the date of election of a new S.R.C. to the date on which their term expires.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Written proposals for alterations and amendments to the constitution shall be lodged with the secretary at least three weeks before an S.R.C. meeting. The Secretary shall display on the school notice-boards, the proposed changes to the constitution, for at least 2 weeks before the Student Body Meeting.

DISSOLUTION

The S.R.C. may be dissolved by a majority resolution taken at a Student Body Meeting. Upon dissolution, the assets of the S.R.C. shall, after discharging all liabilities, be donated to any institution/s as determined by the majority decision taken at the Student Body Meeting at which the S.R.C. was dissolved.

SECONDARY PARENTS TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

NAME

The name of the association shall be: Apollo Secondary Parent - Teacher - Student Association, hereinafter called the Association.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To further the interests, well-being and education of the pupils of the community.
- 2.2 To foster co-operation and sound relationships among parents, students and teachers.
- 2.3 To promote, develop and encourage the above ideal practically and financially.
- 2.4 To encourage further self-education in the understanding of our society and the educational system.
- 2.5 To struggle for one, free socially relevant education system in a non-racial democratic society.
- 2.6 To do or perform all such other acts, deeds of function as may be coincidental or conducive at the attainment of the above objectives of any of them.

3. POLICY

The Association shall by way of resolutions or declarations set out its policies on matters affecting the interest of its members.

4. ACTIVITIES

To achieve these aims the PTSA will:

- 4.1 organise general meetings or parents, teachers and student representatives where:
 - 4.1 a. healthy relations can be established.
 - b. parents will have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the progress of the students.
 - c. parents and teachers can discuss with student representatives, educational and other related problems.
 - d. views can be exchanged on matters such as child-raising, home education, hazards of drugs, social behaviour and career guidance.
- 4.2 Assist the staff, in extra-mural activities of the school.
- 4.3 Address those matters which in their opinion hamper the progress of the students and which could benefit them.

5. SCHOOL FUND

- 5.1 School fund shall be raised through:
- a. contributions made from parents and guardians which are annually determined.
 - b. additional funds shall be raised through activities organised by the Association.
- 5.2 These funds shall be used for the development of educational facilities eg. sports, library, laboratory facilities, etc.
- 5.3 Any funds raised for a particular purpose (eg, sports facilities, laboratory equipment, school feeding project) shall be regarded as trust money.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 Membership shall be open to both parents or the guardians of students attending the school.
- 6.2 Membership shall be opened to persons whose children attended the school at any time in the past, on condition that it is:
- a. on special application to the executive committee.
 - b. at the special request of the executive committee.
- 6.3 Membership shall be opened to all teachers of the school.
- 6.4 The student representative will nominate three (3) students to represent itself on the PTSA Executive Committee.
- 6.5 Persons not qualifying for membership in terms of 4.1, 4.2, or 4.3, but who have rendered special services to the school or whose co-operation or advice may be of special value to education, can be co-opted as patrons by consensus of the Executive Committee and approved of at a General Meeting. Such patrons can attend meetings in an advisory capacity when invited by the Executive Committee.
- 6.6 All full members will be eligible for office except patrons.

7. OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Association shall liaise with, and affiliate to, other organisations with similar aims and objectives.

8. MEETING

8.1 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- a. at the AGM an Executive Committee (EC) will be elected for a term of office of twelve months.
- b. The annual reports and audited financial report shall be presented by the chairperson and treasurer.
- b. Any of the activities mentioned in Articles 8.1 b. can be raised and referred to the EC for further discussion and execution.
- c. Notice of the AGM shall be served two(2) weeks prior to the date of the above.

8.2 GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. At least three (3) general meetings shall be held annually excluding the AGM.
- b. A special general meeting can be called by the EC on its own accord, as well as when requested by the general membership, with the provision that at least twenty five percent (25%) of a specific group, i.e. teachers, parents of students can be canvassed.
- c. At least seven (7) days written notice must be given to all members of all meetings.
- d. The quorum of any general meeting, including the AGM shall be fifty persons.

9. ADMINISTRATION

The administration of the Association shall be vested in the Executive Committee which shall consist of ten elected members.

- 9.1 Office bearers of the association shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

9.2 EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of ten members, three (3) of whom shall be teachers, three (3) of whom shall be students, four (4) of whom shall be parents. The principal shall be an (ex-officio) member.
- b. The Executive shall review the progress of the Association.
- c. The Executive shall be elected at the first General Meeting and thereafter at the Annual General Meeting. They shall hold office until next AGM.
- d. The Executive shall be entitled to co-opt members of the Association to form sub-committees for particular purposes, eg. fund-raising, publications, education, etc.
- e. The Executive shall execute all decisions taken at General Meetings.
- f. Vacancies in the office-bearers of the Association shall be filled by decision of the EC.
 - i) Any resignations from the EC can only be done in writing.
 - ii) The EC can terminate the office of any member of the EC who without furnishing an acceptable reason, is absent at three consecutive meetings.
 - iii) Interim vacancies shall be filled by co-option.
- g. In the event of any other vacancies occurring in the Executive Committee, such vacancies shall be filled at the next General Meeting.
- h. The EC may institute, conduct, defend or abandon any legal proceedings by and against the Association, its office-bearers or members, or otherwise concerning the affairs of the Association.
- i. All decisions of the EC shall be subject to ratification by the General Meeting.
- j. Only members present at the election meeting will be eligible for election to the EC. However, a previously expressed statement in writing of his\her willingness to serve, will be acceptable.

10. ELECTION PROCEDURE

- 10.1 At least 2 weeks to the AGM, the 3 teacher representative and 3 student representatives shall be elected by the teachers and students respectively.
- 10.2 At the AGM the returning officer who shall preside over elections of the EC will be elected.
- 10.3 At the AGM the returning officer will call on the parent delegates to nominate and second candidates for the 4 seats, and announce the 6 elected members as per 10.1.
- 10.4 Students, parents and teachers shall each be represented by not more than eleven (11) delegates.
- 10.5 Nominations can be accepted verbally. However, 9.2 will apply.
- 10.6 Voting shall be by show of hands. Each voter shall be entitled to one vote only.
- 10.7 The Chairperson, Vice chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer will be elected, from the EC.
- 10.8 The retiring officer will hand over the chair to the elected Chairperson who will be Chairperson of both the PTSA and EC.

11. DUTIES OF OFFICE BEARERS

11.1 CHAIRPERSON

- a. He\She shall preside at all general and executive meetings.
- b. He\She shall sign all minutes of such meetings after same have been duly adopted upon motion duly moved and seconded.
- c. He\She shall exercise such supervision over the affairs of the Association that usage and custom appertain to his\her office.
- d. He\She shall deliver the Annual report at the AGM.
- e. The chairperson shall have a deliberative vote only.
- f. Statements shall be made by the chairperson in accordance with the spirit of the constitution.

11.2 VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The vice-chairperson shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the latter.

11.3 SECRETARY

The secretary shall attend all meetings and perform both duties and keep such records as the Executive Committee may from time to time decide upon.

- a. The secretary shall receive requisitions for meetings and issue notices of such notices.
- b. The secretary shall keep a register of all members, careful minutes of all meetings and record of all, correspondence received and copies of correspondence despatched.
- c. The secretary shall present the report of the Executive Committee at the AGM.

11.4 TREASURER

The treasurer shall be required to keep a correct account of the finances of the association and shall submit written reports to the executive committee and general members and the duly audited financial statement at the AGM.

- a. All monies due to the Association shall be paid to the treasurer who shall issue a receipt therefore.
- b. The treasurer shall deposit all monies received in a savings account to be decided upon by the Executive Committee.
- c. The treasurer shall make such payments and purchases as are decided upon by the Executive Committee.
- d. The signatures of any three of the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer or Principal shall be required to draw money for purchases for payments, see 11.5 c.

12. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 12.1 The EC will perform its duties in accordance with the constitution.
- 12.2 The EC will plan ways and means to execute the activities (4.1 to 4.3).
- 12.3 The EC will follow up suggestions and resolutions of the general meeting.
- 12.4 The EC can appoint from their sub-committee or co-opt other PTSA members on such sub-committee on specific matters.
- 12.5 In consultation with the Chairperson the EC will arrange dates and times for general meetings and EC meetings or other PTSA functions and give notice to all members concerned.
- 12.6 The EC will prepare the agenda for general meetings.
- 12.7 The EC shall meet whenever necessary but at least twice per quarter.
- 12.8 At the last meeting of the year the EC must adopt a report of activities and finances to be tabled at the AGM next year..
- 12.9 The quorum for all meetings the half plus one.
- 12.10 In the case of a tie, the chairperson is entitled to a casting vote.

13. AUDITOR

- 13.1 The auditor shall be appointed by the EC.
- 13.2 The auditor shall examine the accounts and relevant documents of the Association at least 4 days before the AGM and submit the written report thereof.

14. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS

The Association will facilitate the implementation and smooth running of the SRC at the school.

15. LIMITATION TO LIABILITY

The resources of the Association shall solely be liable for the debts of the Association and the office-bearers and members shall not be personally liable for such debts or any portion thereof.

16. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 16.1 Amendments to this constitution can be made at the AGM on a special general meeting only after the general body has been given at least fourteen (14) days notice of the proposed alteration to all members.
- 16.2 The quorum shall be at least fifty persons of whom two-thirds must vote for the proposed alteration before the constitution can be amended.

17. DISSOLUTION

- 17.1 The Association may be dissolved at a Special Meeting called for such a purpose by a majority vote of two-thirds of the members present.
- 17.2 - If upon winding up or dissolution of the Association, all debts, liabilities and any assets whatsoever shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Association, but shall be transferred to the school fund to be used by the school as it may seem fit.

A Review of the methodology employed in the study

The decision to use an exploratory approach through case studies of the two schools I selected arose partly out of circumstances and partly out of the scarcity of research in this field. After a preliminary investigation of the schools in the greater Durban area (including Chatsworth, Merebank, Isipingo, Lamontville, Umlazi, Wentworth, Durban Central and Phoenix), I located only one school in the former Department of Education and Training and a few schools in the former House of Delegates Department of Education and Culture in which student participation in decision-making in school management was formally exercised.

The idea of selecting two schools for the case studies, one each from the above mentioned departments, was based on the assumption that there were differences in experiences that characterised these schools since they served two different race groups. Without making this the focus of the investigation, it was important, I felt, that commonalities and significant similarities be highlighted. This was an important exercise in view of the expected changes in schools in terms of student composition. However, single case studies in schools could not achieve much of what was initially intentioned. The research exercised pointed to the limitations of the case study method.

The idea of using the technique of triangulation was a fruitful one and it had the effect of validating many of the observations that were being made. Comments and experiences from the questionnaires and interviews were matched against non-participant, and on occasions, participant observations made in the many PTSA meetings and workshops I attended. To a large degree there was sufficient correlation to warrant a conclusion and/or a recommendation.

The questionnaires that asked for responses using the Likert scale were used to find areas of agreement and division amongst respondents, but it did not make any significant contribution to the research process. More important were the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews.

149My decision to attend the PTSA meetings and the workshops as a non-participant observer was important given my personal involvement in setting up PTSA's and SRC's in the area. This was alluded to in the last meeting of the PTSA at Dadoo Memorial when the chairperson commended my non-interference in the meetings. However, I am becoming convinced that the idea of "non-participant" observation is an impossibility. My presence at the meetings and workshops, with my tape recorder and constant note-taking, has influenced participants responses in some way or the other. To say exactly to what degree their responses have been shaped, and the results of those shaped responses on the conclusions and findings, is difficult.