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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN
THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of a re-emphasis of human rights, social justice and democracy, learner leadership has become a topic of interest and importance. An absence of any meaningful form of leadership development among learners in formerly disadvantaged schools in South Africa prompted this interest into exploring the development of learner leadership.

A more recent approach to learner leadership in many countries, including South Africa, has been to look at providing the necessary platform for learners to experience a more shared, cooperative, transformative and service approach within schools in order for them to develop their capacity to lead. This is supported by theoretical developments in the field of leadership, such as Distributive Leadership and Servant Leadership, which emphasise shared leadership. These developments were based on dialogue and strong relationships, where learner leaders situated their practices in moral action, with signs of individual growth, social justice and democratic positioning.

In spite of this, not much is known of learner leadership development in South Africa. There are very few studies, none using approaches which look at the context and situation holistically. Hence this study, using Cultural Historical Activity Theory and Critical Realism as under-labourer, for its stance on ontological, epistemological and principled expectations of reality and its understandings on agency and structure, is advanced. Transformational leadership theories, in particular Distributive and Servant Leadership, are used as lenses to help make sense of the nature of learner leaders' practice and the development of leadership.

The aim of the single case study was to discover and explore how and under what circumstances learner leadership could be developed. To this end the researcher established a leadership development group at a previously disadvantaged secondary school. This project provided the platform for leadership development initiatives and became the activity which is the focus of this research. The study examines how leadership is learned and practised, and how the participants interrelate and influence learning and practice in their activity system. It examines the challenges that the learner leaders faced within their communities and what the underlying causes of these challenges were.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews, document analysis, direct observation and focus groups were used to collect data. Non-probability sampling, in particular purposive sampling, was used in selecting the sixteen learner leader volunteers who participated in the study. These learners represented various ages, gender and leadership positions that were held in the school. Using inductive, abductive and retroductive modes of inference, the data was abstracted and analysed. The Change Laboratory workshop was used to boost the growth of shared collective views of the learner leaders within the changing object and activity system, in order to build and develop new practices, tools and models.

The study recognized that learner leadership was generated by numerous mechanisms, which included the need to overcome the calamitous scarcity of virtuous leadership within their communities; the need to address cultural and historical assumptions, prejudices, and values that existed which reinforced their existing perceptions and behaviour towards leadership; the need to create a space for learner leaders to share responsibilities, thoughts, and become reciprocally dependent on each other, developing together due to their cooperative efforts; the need to demonstrate a willingness and the necessary resilience to survive in an environment whose socioeconomic demands and effects are restrictive and disempowering; a need to respond to the demand for impartiality and access to leadership; and a need to know that one is able to transform the practice of leadership, without it necessarily affecting one's culture, in such a way that the needs of the people are met.

This thesis reports on encouraging signs of leadership growth within the activity, observed and documented over a period of three years. The intervention led to behaviour and attitudinal development that suggests transformative learning and agency. The study's findings further clarify the many challenges the potential learner leaders faced. Chief among these was the lack of adequate and efficient structures and systems in their communities in order for effective leadership to be established and practised in their communities. These included weak social structures in homes that were unable to support and meet the needs of the learner leaders due to the breakdown of families. Negative forces included high levels of authoritarian leadership practised by a restrictive socialised patriarchy. The underlying causes of these challenges include the perceived threat to individual dignity and survival; the fear of change; the feeling of powerlessness; a lack of hope which fuelled an apathy, a low self-esteem and poor attitude to education; adverse

socioeconomic conditions; poor communication skills; a lack of adult role models and willpower; the demand for impartiality and access to leadership knowledge.

In order to encourage learner leaders to advance their practice of leadership, the study recommends that adolescents be made to feel valued and included in the development process of leadership so that their willingness to engage with the process becomes pre-emptive. Learner leaders prefer structure, so it becomes all the more important to ensure that any rules, policies and guidelines that are established exhibit a demonstration of transparency and accountability. The study also recommends that when developing an understanding of the learner leaders' behaviour, using their socio-cultural and historical contexts, they are provided with a non-threatening platform. This enables them to become empowered to actively participate, debate and dialogue collaboratively. They have an opportunity to demonstrate a willingness to engage with each other over tensions that arise, breaking the bonds of socialized pathology.

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There have been numerous moments along this doctoral journey where I have reached the point of wanting to throw the towel in. It has been in times like these that I have had to sit down and seriously reflect on why I actually started this journey. It was in moments like these when I realised that I had embarked on a journey that was enabling me to live out my purpose in life: *To make a significant difference in the lives of young people that I would be privileged to work with*. It was in times like these that I realised that there were many people who had placed their faith in me, and these are the people I would like to sincerely thank.

I would like to acknowledge Ntsika Secondary School, Grahamstown, South Africa, and its learners for opening their school to me to complete my research study. Firstly, I would like to thank the principal, Mrs. Madeleine Schoeman, for her trust and willingness to open the school to me. Secondly, to all the research participants of Ntsika Secondary School for the many memorable moments that I experienced during this study, moments when your smiles made me realise that there is more to life than just chasing after ‘things’. Your drive to want to become effective learner leaders and the enthusiasm that you displayed, encouraged me in so many ways. Thank you for being so willing to be vulnerable and be willing to tell your stories. Yes, here is another story about you and your growth. Thanks to you, I have grown significantly with you.

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I have been very fortunate to have parents that have been the ultimate role models I needed in life. Their selfless and moral approach to life is well demonstrated in the way in which they have left an indelible imprint on the community in which they have lived and served for the past 60 years.

Finally, and by no means last, my family. You have been so patient and understanding during this period of time. The unwavering support is much appreciated. I can't find the words that would express the role that you played Annette. It has been a long journey and through it all you have stood by me all the time, even when I was ready to throw the towel in. Yet, quietly, you were there and gently prodded me on. Thank you.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research study to the youth of South Africa, in particular, the young learner leaders from Ntsika Secondary whom I was privileged to have journeyed with over the last 4 years. May you, each one of you, recognize your roots, your values and your abilities, and take hold of the opportunities that come your way. Become the leaders for tomorrow, being empowered to lead with the dignity of a true servant leader!

In the very words of our South African iconic leader, Nelson Mandela (2005)
(<http://www.nelsonmandelaonline.net>):

*Sometimes, it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that generation.
Let your greatness blossom.*

Yes, you are that generation!

ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AT	Activity Theory
BPC	Black Peoples' Convention
CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity System
CL	Change Laboratory
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
DET	Department of Training
DoE	Department of Education
DWR	Developmental Work Research
HIV and AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
MANCO	Management Committee
RCL	Representative Council for Learners
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	South African Student Organisation
SASM	South African Students' Movement
SGB	School Governing Board
SRC	Students' Representative Council
SSRC	Soweto Students' Representative Council
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Council
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY



(A participant's first experience of flying and free-falling in a Tandem Skydive, with Grahamstown in the background) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“Today all of us confer glory and hope to new-born liberty. We understand that there is no easy road to freedom. We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must therefore act together as a united people, for reconciliation, to build together, for the birth of a new world. Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all”.

Nelson Mandela (Inaugural Speech – 10th May 1994)

1.1 PERSONAL HISTORY AND MOTIVATION

It appears that leadership remains one of those deceptive, perplexing human phenomena that has drawn the attention of man over centuries and yet still remains the least understood (Bennis & Nanus, 1978, p. 4). “It’s an elusive concept” explain van Linden and Fertman (1998, p. 7) which changes from generation to generation, resulting in many a lively debate being undertaken which has still not been able to shed any more light on explaining what leadership really is.

Following a group discussion on “Describe in one-word what leadership is” – in the Leadership Think Tank on LinkedIn – there were 773 varied responses within just 114 days. This intriguing subject appears to have as many definitions as there are research studies on the topic. Even so, in society the position of leadership is needed, but unfortunately has also been exploited over centuries by people who have satisfied their hungry appetites for selfish gain. Given this irrational abuse of leadership that has had an inhibiting effect on people globally, there is a call to find leaders that can galvanise our resources to achieve the objectives of human dignity for all, through a selfless approach to leadership.

Taking all of this into account, since the end of the 20th century, humanity has found itself at a crossroad. It is requiring a completely new paradigm of leadership that will fill the work place with purpose and meaning. “There is a dire deficit in leadership, not only in South Africa but in Africa”, explains Ebrahim (2013) during the 11th Nelson Mandela Lecture. The world has begun to experience some sweeping global, cultural, political and economic changes, witnessing the release of Nelson Mandela and the bringing down of the Berlin Wall at the turn of the century.

A number of iconic leaders (Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King jnr., Sister Teresa, Bishop Tutu) to mention a few – have demonstrated what it means to be human by representing their own humanity through an uncompromised lifestyle that would not surrender to the trepidation nor embrace the senseless carnage that has engulfed our global community. These leaders have demonstrated that there is a link between selflessness (moral capital) and leadership, and that this is a vital linkage that needs to be inculcated in our future citizens – our youth.

Martin Luther King Jnr (1968) (<http://whatwillmatter.com>) stated:

You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of Thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.

“The catalogue of injuries that we can and do inflict on one another is not the whole story of humanity, not by a long measure...we are indeed made for something more. We are made for goodness” (Tutu & Tutu, 2010, p. 4).

The rationale for conducting research into the development of learner leadership in schools is informed and stimulated by my social and professional background. I have been immersed in the field of education and learner leadership outreach programmes spanning three decades, which has been driven by an interest in the holistic development of young people, specifically, in leadership development. I have developed this curiosity in learner leadership because of my personal discoveries and experiences. Aebli (1988, as cited in Engeström, 1999a, p. 23) explains that:

...the child [becoming] a newcomer in a complex system, in a system of her world: she is born in a family, she then enters a school, later a workplace. She tries to understand the system: What makes it tick? What moves the system? What are its mechanisms, its interconnections? ... It is a question of solving this puzzle, of letting it gradually take shape, of understanding what are its structural features and the motives functioning within it.

This personal discovery challenges our leaders to meet the needs of their followers and questions whether we as educationalists are getting it right in our schools, in developing the leaders that society is yearning for. A deep social transformation needs to take place in leadership.

Leadership development is experienced by individuals as an ongoing process. We learn continuously about ourselves and from one another, influenced by the interactions that take place. As leadership is a social process, it ensues across the spectrum of the family, community, people and schools (van Linden & Fertman, 1998) through interaction and influence.

I use a framework (Figure 1) that has been adapted from researchers van der Mescht (2006) and van Linden and Fertman (1998), to reflect on my leadership development, in order to gain perspective on how this phenomenon arises within the complex lives of our adolescents today.

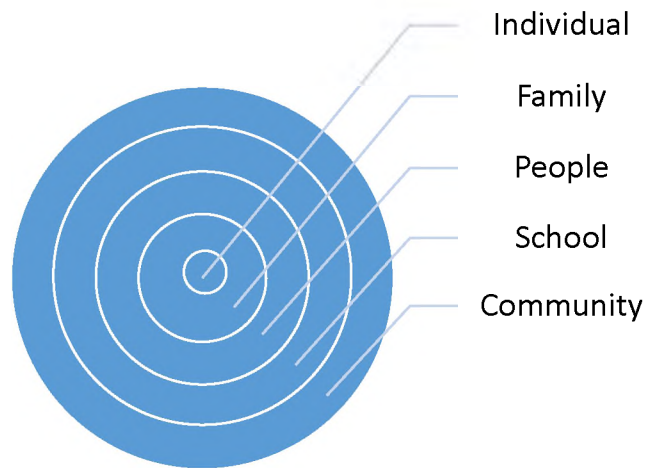


Figure 1: Spectrum of influence

The first concentric circle brings insight into how and where leadership is first learned and experienced – in the family. Having been born into and growing up in a typically traditional South African family (five siblings) in the Eastern Cape, I was exposed to an authoritative (patriarchal) style of leadership, where the leader of the house always rules his ‘kingdom’ with a tight fist. His role was to admonish, discipline and maintain control of his family without ever being questioned whilst the wife looked after the children and the home. The adults were the leaders, our role models, whilst the children observed how each task was executed. It is here, that through observation, we quickly learned how to conduct ourselves – based on learned values – and practiced leadership skills ourselves. I learned that a pecking order existed and how I could use my ‘position of power’ to influence my younger siblings. As young children, we believed that the world revolved around us and at this stage of our lives we were incredibly self-absorbed. What was interesting was the way in which my younger siblings attempted to emulate me. They could not wait for me to leave the house for greener pastures so that they could then step into the void that was left behind and take over. I never fully realised how powerful my example was to my siblings as a role model.

Nonetheless, we were still a very closely-knit family and protected each other from any outsider that became a threat. As a family, our roles were reasonably well-defined and we were responsible for a number of chores. We learned how to carry out our duties and were held accountable for them. Family outings and holidays always enhanced unity as well, as we eagerly worked together to pack the car or set up at the other end. This is where I learned that we needed to work collaboratively in order to have a functional family.

In the 1960's and 70's when I first attended school, I found that schools were no different to home as the teachers were always right and you learned quickly to get on with what you were told and never to question authority. These schools exhibited entrenched British bureaucratic hierarchies with the headmaster and his staff giving the orders and punishing any errant learners who dared step out of line. The headmaster made the decisions which were often based on orders that were directed downward from the Education Department, who were dictated to by the incumbent government, driven by their personal philosophies of life.

This was no different in the circle of learners who had to suffer at the hands of their leaders, who were called prefects. Their role was to maintain law and order in the school grounds, based on their understanding of what power was, fulfilling the role of a 'policeman'. They were feared and one spent most of the school day well away from them. I was always intrigued by these learners who could be described as normal, ordinary learners, yet seemed to undergo a radical change once becoming a 'senior' of the school. They appeared to reproduce their hold on power, each year, making their views privileged while less privileged groups (followers) were silenced (Western, 2008).

I soon learned that to avoid being victimised by an individual who had not yet had his hunger for power fulfilled – particularly at recess – you stayed out of their way. To get to class one would avoid the quadrangle (beautifully located, grassed area in the centre of the school) at all costs. As junior learners, we would spend most of our time in those areas of the playing fields, which provided us with a sense of freedom and safety, interacting and engaging with our 'own'. Yet, there were times when this sanctuary was invaded by seniors who still needed to have their 'fix'

for the day. The day scholars were probably better off as opposed to their boarder¹ colleagues as the latter then still faced some of the seniors in their boarding houses² after school hours. There the juniors were exposed to a system (fagging, skunking, etc.) of looking after the selfish needs of the seniors which when not carried out would result in some form of abuse. These systems will be discussed further in Chapter Two (see Section 2.6.1).

However, what I learned during this time was that the juniors could not wait to become seniors so that they too could then have their turn to meet out the same treatment to the new incumbent juniors, with devastating effects (the untold story). I am reminded of an old adage that says, “The way you are led will determine the way you lead!” This system (code) seems to have perpetuated itself within schools. Even today it is described as being a ‘tradition’.

In the 1970’s – when given the role of leader in the school – I found it difficult to assimilate my position. There was very little that I knew about leadership in order to maintain the example set by my predecessors. Nevertheless, I began to question the need to be a ‘policeman’ – being used just for the sole purpose of implementing the rules of the school – managing and supervising. I cannot recall ever being given the opportunity to be innovative (to lead) and yet when I did it resulted in conflict between me and the adult – were they feeling that they were being undermined and thereby losing control? There was very little guidance in those days and yet we were expected to ‘lead’. This ‘power’ that we had inherited tended to skew our understanding of what leadership truly meant. We led purely from the example that had been set by our predecessors.

Nonetheless, I believe that it was during this stage of seniority that I recall questioning the process and reflecting on the need to treat my juniors with respect and attempting to develop a relationship with them. It was something that I grappled with throughout my senior years as it was not the done thing (code) not to use your ‘power’. What made me question this inherited process? What were the ‘mechanisms’ that steered me towards this questioning? At this early stage of my

¹ Boarder—is a learner who is sent by his parents to a school (located in another town, city, or country) in order to be educated and is provided with accommodation by the school under the guidance of an adult (housemaster).

² Boarding house – the building in which a boarder is accommodated in a school, under the guidance of an adult.

discussion I would like to use the analogy of the African baobab tree (Figure 2) and will refer to it again later in the study.



Figure 2: Baobab tree analogy

In many places in Africa, these enduring giant trees have become a symbol of community, a place of gathering – the Tree of Life. Was I beginning to question what existed below the surface – the *Real*?

This interest was short lived as I was called up to complete my compulsory military service at the height of conflict on the North-Western borders of South Africa, having to experience a year of torment and hell. Here I experienced a twist to my approach to life. No longer was I an individual with human dignity. Now I was ‘just a number’. Leadership had taken on a completely different meaning. An attempt was made to break us down in a short period of time only to ‘build us up’ again – not being able to think for ourselves as we scurried around trying to avoid further abuse and humiliation. Position and power was the order of the day. I agree that it was a different environment with different agendas, but was it necessary to almost ‘de-humanise’ people in order for them to carry out instructions? It was a year that was lived in fear and not worth reminiscing on.

Nonetheless, the strategy worked – I had over time become a ‘number’ willing to carry out instructions just to stay out of trouble. What really kept me sane during this time was my undeniable love for sport. I was able to use this strength to avoid being in an environment for too long. Here I was amazed how my leaders transformed themselves into such pleasant people on the sports field. This was a place of escapism – here new relationships were developed – ones that revealed the authenticity of many of these team players. They were no different to me and were also carrying the burdens of life.

It was during this stage that I had received a reply from a well renowned South African university accepting me into the faculty of architecture. My dreams had been fulfilled which provided me with the drive to see that year out quickly. However, life presented me with a ‘curve ball’ that I had not expected.

It was in the latter part of the year – with only a few weeks left in this institution – when I had this inward desire to want to teach. I struggled to explain and account for this feeling, as it was a deep-seated feeling – one that I had never experienced before. Where was this coming from? Why was I being led to alter my career path – one that I had a great passion for? Why this change? Was it an epiphany? In hindsight – I now know it was a ‘calling’, which I will allude to later in my thesis. This was the beginning of an amazing transformational journey for me, one in which I believe I was called for.

The turn of events made me realise – not immediately – that I was no longer going to design, create and build amazing constructions. I was going to be involved in architecture of a different kind – making a significant difference in the lives of young people (the building of young lives). It was going to be one of influence and engagement.

Nonetheless, I still had a long road to follow before I got there. It was during my student days that I underwent further moulding/transformation. It was during this period of time that I was drawn towards making myself available as a ‘stooge’/student assistant at an independent school. The initial reason was possibly selfish in that I needed to make it possible to pay for my university education. Although there was an agenda, this agenda changed and further prepared me for the life of working with young people. For three years, I learned to become responsible and

accountable for other peoples' children. I had to unlearn what I had previously learned and begin to develop skills that would allow me to lead these young, innocent people.

One of the first things that I learned to do was to develop relationships with people who had come to school leaving their families behind in far-off African countries. The role I took on was so different to what I had been used to. I had to take care of people, be aware of their needs and play different roles in this new environment. Although it was a new-found experience, I discovered that it came naturally. I began to question where this ability came from and it wasn't too long before I realised that my upbringing had developed the foundation on which I was currently building.

The journey to discovering my purpose in life (to make a significant difference in the lives of young people that I am fortunate enough to engage with by empowering them to reach their dreams) and my destiny had begun in earnest. This study furthers this discovery, focusing specifically on the development of learner leadership. This interest has been driven by the success of my recent Masters' research study (2008) with regards to the transformation students underwent when they were empowered to make changes. For me, the exploration of leadership has been an intriguing undertaking with many unanswered questions. It gives me the opportunity to delve into and research the untapped field of learner leadership, especially in a township school in Grahamstown.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on the desperate state of abuse of junior learners by their senior school counterparts whereby schools have been rocked and left reeling. Local and international newspapers (Appendix A) have exposed this unwarranted abuse to the public, with overwhelming reaction. Educational institutions have responded and with much grappling have attempted to deal with the issue, unsuccessfully.

This practice of abuse reminds me so much of the novel, "Lord of the Flies", written by William Golding (1954). In the novel, boys are stranded on an uninhabited island where they have to try and govern themselves, with disastrous results. These boys are described as ordinary, well-educated schoolboys who descend into savagery, regressing into a primitive state in a paradisiacal environment. It becomes a wrestle between group thinking and individuality, between realistic and emotional reactions, and between morality and immorality. It is about how different people

influence each other on so many complicated and intricate levels and end up in such a desperate state of mind, body and spirit. My interest here is – why do certain individuals take the lead? What drives them to make the decisions they did? What makes the other boys want/not want to follow these self-imposed leaders? What makes these boys react in this situation the way in which they did?

In my Master's study (Knott-Craig, 2008) I argued that schools formed one of the pillars that could develop strong foundations and beliefs in the development of future nation builders. However, at a recent open debate in 2010 hosted by Rhodes University about 'Education in crisis', I was made aware of the void that existed in the development of learner leadership in 'previously disadvantaged'³ township⁴ schools and hence I decided to base my research study at a school located in an impoverished area of Grahamstown.

The challenges faced by township schools are formidable due to the conditions that they are exposed to. Kamper (2008, p. 84) points out that many of the learners in these schools are exposed to material, emotional, financial and psychological challenges on a daily basis, affecting their outlook on life. Although the South African youth is described as being "restless, angry, and bitter" (Jansen, 2010, p. 63), Oliver Tambo (1992) warns that, "A nation that does not invest in its youth does not have a future". There is a need to invest in the development of the learners' capital and capacity to lead so that they can take their rightful place in society (Gunter, 2001).

Nevertheless, it was revealed in my Master's study (Knott-Craig, 2008) that young people demonstrated the desire to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. The study showed that, when learners from an advantaged background were engaged and empowered in a process they were able to develop a community of shared values and beliefs, transforming a

³ 'Previously disadvantaged' – A phrase used in the discussion. In this study this phrase refers to the effects of having been deprived of basic human rights (to vote, to education, etc.).

⁴ 'Township school' refers to a school that was established in the (often underdeveloped and under-resourced) urban living areas in South Africa that, from the late 19th century until the end of Apartheid (1994), were reserved for black Africans, Coloureds and Indians. Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities in which these schools existed. The schools often displayed characteristics such as poor academic track records, poor leadership, and lack of resources - including human and financial backing - in order for the schools to function adequately.

group of individuals into a socially just community (*ibid.*). The learners demonstrated that when they took on the responsibility for others and achieved a moral order, they were able to use their position of power to serve others. They focused on the challenges of changing their traditional practices of leadership, which had undermined their independence as individuals, and found new ways to promote collective human agency and emancipation, accepting responsibility.

Jansen (2010, p. 63) describes the youth as being “decent, respectful and idealistic about their futures” and this untapped exuberance needs to be channelled in a direction in order for them to look forward to a future of hope and be able to demonstrate a desire “to be the difference that they seek in their land” (*ibid.*). According to researchers Gardner (1987) and van Linden and Fertman (1998), it is at this age that the skills (capacity to understand and interact) – critical for effective leadership - are developed in adolescents. They lead in so many different ways which demonstrate that they have the potential to lead and that this impending potential needs to be harnessed and channelled.

It is in light of this that my research study will seek to investigate and explore learner leadership development in ‘township’ schools, using servant leadership as a model. I will attempt to explore the development and practice of leadership within the school in order to identify dominant structures and discourses. This study will be underpinned by a critical realist ontology, which aims to provide an examination of the structural, cultural and agential factors that enable or impede learner leadership development within this school.

1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

In developing my PhD thesis, this research study could add to the body of knowledge on learner leadership development and the role of servant leadership. I believe that the study will shed light on the how and why learners develop as leaders – in a South African context. Although recent research (Knott-Craig, 2008) has demonstrated that when the learners are afforded an opportunity to become responsible and accountable for their own transformation – by being engaged in decision-making – they develop ‘ownership’. My current study is interested in discovering and understanding more about what mechanisms cause the learners to become responsible and accountable for their transformation as leaders. In this process do the learners begin to develop a

community of shared values and beliefs, transforming a group of individuals into a socially just community, using their ‘positions of power’ to serve others?

Although servant leadership is cited over 21 000 times in the Social Science Index, much of the literature comes from popular literature (Eicher-Catt, 2005). Van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1230) points out that despite its introduction four decades ago and with empirical studies having only started more than 10 years ago, there is still no consensus about a definition and theoretical framework of servant leadership. Van Dierendonck (*ibid.*) also raises another issue of concern which is that “most of what has been written about servant leadership (including both academic and non-academic writings) has been prescriptive – focusing mainly on how it should ideally be – and only a few have been descriptive, informing us about what is happening in practice. As such, there is a compelling need for validated empirical research building on a theoretical model that incorporates the key insights learned from research until now”. Block (2005, p. 55) probably formulated it best in his 2005 keynote address at the International Servant Leadership conference:

You’ve held onto the spirit of servant-leadership, you’ve kept it vague and indefinable. ...People can comeback every year to figure out what it is.

It is against this historical and personal background that this study will focus on encouraging learners to reflect on and create a space to develop their capacity to lead effectively in their schools and communities. The study is based on the following assumptions:

- That learners of the school will be willing to explore the philosophy of servant leadership in their school;
- That the school is an ‘open’ system and constantly allows for the internal elements to interact with the surrounding environment;
- That there are deeper mechanisms – reasons – that are responsible for the way in which learner leadership is implemented and practiced at schools;
- That the school’s structures (leadership, management, communication, decision-making, parental and community involvement) may not currently be able to support the development of learner leadership, and hence

- That learner leadership may not be functioning effectively in township schools (as previous research suggests (Kok, 1997; Mathebula, 2001; Nongubo, 2004; Mncube, 2008) (see Section 3.4.1);
- That leadership can be developed in all learners and is not necessarily vested in a particular learner.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The foremost objective of this research study was to provide a critical but practical illumination of how and why learners respond to developing a culture of leadership within their school. It was concerned with the researching of how leadership is learned and practiced, and how these different activity systems interrelate and influence learning and practice. In order to achieve this objective my study set out to:

- Explore and investigate systemic, historical, social and/or underlying cultural mechanisms/factors that enable and/or inhibit the development and agency of learner leadership and the development of community in the school;
- To see how these factors (listed above) have shaped leadership in the school (What form of leadership currently exists? How it is experienced, and why?);
- Identify opportunities within the school that could enable the development, practice and sustainability of learner leadership;
- Begin to develop a school environment that will be conducive to releasing the collective agency of the learners, encouraging servant leadership to take root as an alternative style of leadership within the organisation;
- Establish a ‘space’ where research participants can voice their feelings and opinions through the process of participation and collaboration, without feeling threatened, and where synergy would begin to develop informing the sustainability of leadership within the school.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1 Overarching question

- What role does/can servant leadership play in developing learner leadership in a township school community?

1.5.2 Specific questions:

- What underlying or causal mechanisms (systemic, historical, social and/or cultural) facilitate or obstruct the development of learner leadership (agency) and community within the school?
- How and why do learners collaborate to provide leadership in their school?
- How does working with/engaging with servant leadership affect the development (agency and capacity) of learner leadership in the school?
- How does the change in leadership style/philosophy impact on the culture, behaviour and interpersonal relationships in the structure of the school, and between its members and the school community?
- How can the principles of servant leadership be optimised to yield improved and sustainable leadership practices and community development in the school?

Researcher Lam (1990) stated that “leadership is an attitude which informs behaviour rather than a set of discrete skills or qualities” (as cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 1). Sergiovanni suggests that, “it needs to be viewed as a behaviour and not an action” (1992, p. 3).

Upon reflecting on the project, I felt that it was necessary to build up an understanding of specific concepts in the following section (1.6). I believed it would be relevant to understanding the development of leadership when undertaking this research project at this research site. Since “leadership belongs to everyone”, I did not want to underestimate the nature of human potential but felt that it was necessary to reflect on these specific terms that are relevant in the practice of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 1).

1.6 CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Agency

According to Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 962), the term *agency* is one that could be described as being “elusive, albeit resonant, vagueness” and has been associated with terms such as “selfhood, motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality, choice, initiative, freedom and creativity”. However, Lukes (1973) on the other hand, points out that, “the early Enlightenment, which, while still grounded in the religious morality of the times, allowed for the subsequent invention of the individual as a ‘free agent’ able to make rational choices for (him)self and society” (as cited in Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 964). Nonetheless, Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 970) define agency “as the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments– the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations”.

Leaders are described as agents of change (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Fullan, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Bush, 2003). Agency is described as the capacity (ability) of an agent to act in a world, taking a positive action to improve [transform] the condition of their organisation (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 2006). An agent is said to be a person or entity – a human or any living being in general – who has the ability to engage with their social structure based on the level of reflexivity the agent may possess. According to research, agency may be classified as unconscious, involuntary behaviour, or purposeful, intentional action (*ibid.*).

According to Wikipedia “the capacity of a human to act as an agent is personal to that human, though consideration of the outcomes flowing from particular acts of human agency for us and others can then be thought to invest a moral component into a given situation wherein an agent has acted and thus to involve moral agency” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_(philosophy))); Bandura, 1989). (see Section 1.6.5)

An enduring core debate in sociology is that of structure and agency (see Section 3.7). Essentially the same as in the Marxist conception, agency refers to “the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices, whereas structure refers to those factors (social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, and subculture) that seem to limit or influence the opportunities

that individuals have” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency \(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_(philosophy))); Bandura, 1989; Campbell, 2009).

Agency in Critical Realism (CR) tends to be understood in relation to patterns of relationships and dynamic interactions of people in organisations. Mason (2009, p. 39) points out that CR adopts both an agency and structure approach (see Section 3.7).

1.6.2 Power

The exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings and is often regarded as the ability to influence the behaviour of people, both positively and negatively. In leadership positions people often use power more than rewards, threats, and information to influence people (Palestini, 2011). In everyday situations, people will use a variety of power mechanisms to push or prompt (coerce) people into particular actions in an attempt to control them. There are plenty of examples of power mechanisms that are quite common and employed every day. Some of these control mechanisms are said to include bullying, complaining, criticising, demanding, disengaging, evading and manipulating – such an approach to power requires a hierarchy.

Palestini (2011, p. 182) explains that research has demonstrated that, “people high on Machiavellianism more often use non-rational and indirect tactics (e.g. deceit, thought manipulation), whereas people with low Machiavellianism more often use rational and direct tactics (e.g. reason, persistence, assertion)”. Palestini (*ibid.*) argues that, “Those high on need for approval use rational and indirect tactics (e.g. hinting, compromise, bargaining) and those low on need for approval will use non-rational and direct tactics (e.g. threat, evasion, reward)”.

According to Ramphela (2008) a notion of power exists and is deemed to be finite, and that it is this understanding that eventually leads to intolerance of others who have different views. Ramphela (2008, p. 121) argues that,

This notion of power is predicated on the idea of ‘power as a right to do what one wants’ rather than ‘power as a capacity to act’. Power as a ‘right’ is an entitlement that excludes others. It is more about the control of others than about enabling participatory decision-making.

Ramphela (2008, p. 12.) does however warn that, “The logic of the pecking order frames social relationships and access to resources, resulting in behaviours of racism, sexism, ethnicity and authoritarianism which are used to define who has the right to these resources”.

Nevertheless, authority is also often used for power that is perceived as legitimate by the incumbent social structure. Power can also be seen as evil or unjust, depending on the circumstances used in the organization (Knott-Craig, 2008). What becomes relevant in this study is the power that the learners’ teachers and peers have over their subordinates. In the educational environment, power is often expressed as downward. With downward power, an organization’s superiors (staff) influence the subordinates (learners) below them. This is prevalent in organizations that are strictly hierarchical and this power is then perpetuated downwards. Greiner and Schein (1988) point out that when an organization exerts upward power – an example being the practice of servant leadership – it is the subordinates who influence the decisions of the leader (as cited in Pasmore, 1989).

The use of power need not involve coercion (force or the threat of force). At one extreme, it more closely resembles what many believe to be influence, although researcher Zimmerling (2005) does make a distinction between power and influence – the means by which power is used. Referring to research completed by Wrong (1988) she explains that, “power relationships, that is, one agent’s ability intentionally to affect another’s actions or mental states, may often also have the (secondary) effect of generating influence that is not power”, but also warns against conflating the two kinds of phenomena. Wrong (1988, as cited in Zimmerling, p. 130) suggests that:

Rather than equate power with all forms of influence, unintended as well as intended, it seems preferable to stress the fact that the intentional control of others is likely to create a relationship in which the power holder exercises unintended influence over the power subject that goes far beyond what he may have wished or envisaged at the outset.

However, in abusive relationships, where a senior student lauds his position over the junior student in a school environment, violent behaviour is posited to arise out of a need for power and control. The abuser will use various tactics of abuse (e.g., physical, verbal, emotional, or financial) in order to establish and maintain control over the subordinate through an action called “skunking” or “fagging” (Knott-Craig, 2008).

Much of the recent sociological debates on power revolve around the issue of the enabling nature of power. French philosopher, Foucault (1980) being deeply structural, saw power as "a complex strategic situation in a given social setting" (as cited in Etim, 2016, p. 72). His concept involves both constraint and enablement whilst the work of Giddens (1984) portrays a more enabling (and voluntaristic) concept of power (as cited in Social Psychology Quarterly, 2006, p. 197).

1.6.3 Moral capital

In his writings, Emeritus Archbishop Tutu (2010, p. 4) states that:

We know all too well the cruelties, hurts, and hatreds that poison our life on our planet...we know that the catalogue of injuries that we can do and do inflict on one another is not the whole story of humanity, not by a long measure...indeed [we are] made for something more.

There is more to humanity than this abusive behaviour – driven by power – which we inflict on one another. Sison (2003, p. 34) claims that “experience abundantly shows that human beings are capable and, as a matter of course, do commit evil acts wilfully and knowingly”. However, he does point out that “virtue can never be used to do wrong...it can’t be used for further evil purposes” (*ibid.*, pp. 34-35). Nonetheless, Tutu (2010, p. 4) further states that, “We are made for something more. We are made for goodness. We are fundamentally good. [That’s] who we are at our core”. This is not merely our impulse but rather our essence (*ibid.*) – our virtue or moral capital.

Sison (2003, p. 31) suggests that it is moral capital that makes a person good as a human being. He (*ibid.*) defines moral capital as “excellence of character, or possession and practice of a host of virtues appropriate for a human being within a particular sociocultural context”, possibly expressed as ones ‘integrity’. The cultivation of moral capital depends primarily on cultivating the right habits or virtues. According to Aristotle (as cited in Sison, p. 35):

A virtuous character comes from the cultivation of virtuous habits, virtuous habits result from the repeated performance of virtuous actions, and virtuous actions spring from a person’s having nurtured suitable inclinations or tendencies in accordance with his nature and final end.

Greenleaf (1977) points out that people caring for one another can be seen as the foundation on which a good society is built. They demonstrate a caring ethic in their community which is a virtue,

which is defined as “a behaviour or attitude that shows high moral standards” (Oxford Dictionary, 2010).

For Sison (2003), virtue has a special influence on a person’s rationale. He stresses that, “although virtue is primarily ascribed to an individual person as a trait, it needs an adequate sociocultural context or community in order to be practiced” (*ibid.*, p. 33). According to the works of Socrates and Plato, virtue is knowledge and “perfects that non-material principle in human beings which is the soul; more concretely, it perfects the superior power of the soul, reason” (as cited in Sison, p. 34).

For Sison (2003), virtue is special in that it cannot be taught or transmitted. Greenleaf’s work (2002, p. 82) corroborates this point when relating a story of a teacher:

He did not “teach” us to be servants or leaders or followers, but he stands tall as a model of all three and as a facilitator of our learning about them from our own experience.

Most knowledge is theoretical in nature whilst virtue is more of a skill or practice that one learns or acquires by doing. Greenleaf (*ibid.*) describes learning as a lifelong process. Students learn by doing. For instance, rules may be laid down for the acquisition of virtue, in the same way as playing any game, be it that of a board game or sport. Learning the rules are not quite as effective as playing the game in order to gain the required skill.

A similar argument is made by Sergiovanni (1992) who argues that a distinction be made between leadership as a skill and leadership attitude. On the one hand, he claims that “leadership is an attitude which informs behaviour rather than a set of discrete skills or qualities” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 1). He feels strongly that leaders are required who understand the *how* of leadership practice which is informed by our attitudes and values. Sison (2003, p. 34) agrees when he suggests that, “it can’t be readily taught or transmitted”. However, on the other hand, Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that leaders require the skills of leading but points out that they can be learned.

Nevertheless, MacIntyre (1980) defines professional values as virtues that enable anyone to practice leadership in an exemplary way, and which results in the accomplishment of valued social ends (as cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 53). Sergiovanni (*ibid.*) adds to this dimension by quoting Flores’ (1988) work:

The ability to engage in a practice informed by the virtues... [in a fashion that] contributes as well to strengthening and enhancing the growth and development of practice. This is because the exercise of the virtues uniquely defines our relationship with all those other practitioners with whom we share the same purposes, goals, and standards of excellence, such that the singular realization of these internal goods naturally contributes to the overall flourishing of a practice.

1.6.4 Relationships

Our world is shrinking ever so quickly to the point that our communities have fast become homogeneous. Tutu (2010, p. 6) remarks that, “people of many cultures, races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds share our neighbourhoods and meet in our streets”. Soros (2003) expands this point further when he stresses that there is a “need for an appropriate sociocultural context or community, with its web of relationships and friendships forged in a variety of spheres” (as cited in Sison, 2003, p. 33). In his view, the ability of the human to develop in close cooperation with others, sharing common cultural traits, values, and norms, underscores the importance of social and cultural capital.

It is not natural for humans to live solitary lives, as they have always existed and thrived in complex, organised structures – such as communities – and yet still with sufficient movement in order not to be confined to any given place for a long period of time. We have always required a certain amount of collaboration and cooperation in order to coexist, adequately providing for life’s necessities (Sison, 2003).

Leadership is an art and is described by De Pree (1989, p. 3) as “more of a weaving of relationships than amassing of information”. Healthy relationships are necessary within any sociocultural group in order for it to survive and grow but it requires participation and ownership from its stakeholders. The values that are agreed upon and adopted by the group will act as the catalyst to bind the members together as they strive towards a common and shared purpose (Knott-Craig, 2008).

1.6.5 Service

Greenleaf (1997) was the first person credited for coining the term ‘servant leadership’. It is suggested that this term expresses the idea that the leader should not dominate but rather serve

their followers (Khoza, 2011, p. 54). It is argued that the changes they bring to people they work with are that they tend to be more productive and happier in their working environments. The interests of all are advanced through the development of a clear vision underpinned by sound values which direct the behaviour of those concerned. Servant leadership is described as a philosophy where the leader focuses on meeting the highest priority needs of their followers through service, with humility and empathy (De Pree, 1997; Khoza, 2011). Khoza (2011, p. 55) suggests that the leader “brings a sense of efficacy to the relationship, filling followers with the confidence that they have the power to succeed”. It is also proposed that “the leader gives hope where there is none” (*ibid.*). This efficiency in leadership epitomises the power that humans possess to change themselves and to transform their situation by uniting communities to believe that they can achieve what was not possible before. The leader acquires the capacity to put others first as he/she begins to serve their needs. Greenleaf (1997, p. 37) points out that “this external manifestation of this internal achievement begins with caring for the individual persons, in ways that require dedication and skill and that help them grow and become healthier, stronger, and more autonomous. ...Serving is not popular, because it is exacting and hard to attain”.

According to De Pree (1997) “this transition will give us an opportunity to rise above polarization”. It is a process of learning who we are and it starts within. Our global society is experiencing a powerful, ostensibly resolute denigration of the traditional family (*ibid.*, p. 40), wherein lies the foundation of a civil society.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

In Chapter One, I introduced the reason and purpose for wanting to embark on this exploration into learner leadership development in a black school in Grahamstown. Here I endeavoured to paint a landscape of the development of my personal philosophy of leadership, using past significant events that have shaped and channelled – not only my personal development – my interest and passion into learner leadership development.

As the participants have grown up and are still surrounded by the aftermath of apartheid, I believe that the focus of Chapter Two should be to develop the context of the situation of the study. Here I attempt to weave a short, yet comprehensive historical picture of this landscape that informs the reader – the circumstances that led to so much despondency during that time and its effects today.

It also allows the reader to probe into the past and understand what the learners wrestle with today and how it shapes their further development as leaders, in a township school.

Mankind has had a particular fascination with the topic of leadership, and yet still struggles to define its meaning. In Chapter Three, I offer a brief, yet sound description of the development of leadership theory with a focus on the changes that have taken place in thinking and also introduce leadership in an African context. The chapter also examines the role of educational institutions and introduces the historical development of learner leadership in a South African school's context.

Since schools are open, complex systems I needed an approach that would enable me to better understand the nature of the reality of leadership outside of what we know about it and how we conceive it to be. It is for this reason that in Chapter Four I introduce the reader to the critical realist approach as it offered me a significant, stratified depth that framed the enquiries addressed by the research questions. I felt that this approach would best suit my study as it provided a means to delve into the ontological depth of the study and understand what leadership is and how it is developed. I also show how I used the Cultural Historical Activity Theory as a cross-disciplinary framework for studying the development of learner leadership. This theory can be seen as a combined set of developmental processes where both the individual and its social levels are interwoven and studied together, a 'web of activity'. It is a new approach and is aimed at understanding the mental capabilities and transforming human life. Here I explain how I used it as a framework to collect data.

In Chapter Five I present the methodology of the study. Here I develop a methodological framework that will inform the reader of the positioning of the study, the methods and techniques that I used to gather the data; the analysis and interpretation of the data; the validity and credibility of findings; my role in the research study and ethical considerations.

The focus of the study was on developing an understanding of the social structure that influences the agency of the learners and how the learners were impacted in developing their skills as learner leaders. In Chapter Six, I therefore set out to explore and describe the processes and challenges that the learners experienced in developing their leadership skills in the case study.

Chapter Seven takes the readers through the process of agitating the leadership landscape of the learner leaders in which contradictions surfaced. Here I make use of Engeström's (1987) model of activity systems as an analytical tool for identifying and negotiating contradictions and tensions that occurred within this learners' leadership activity system.

Having agitated these contradictions, in Chapter Eight I make use of these to develop the learner leaders' leadership capacity through small expansive learning cycles.

To conclude, in the final chapter, Chapter Nine, I draw my research journey to a conclusion by presenting my findings in a way that centres on a retroductive reflection. Here I summarise the situation in which the study was undertaken, the meaning that was derived from the interaction within the learner leader activity system, the discoveries that were made and the causes of the challenges that the research site faced. I propose ways of making learner leadership possible, in a sustainable manner, in the sense of developing learner leadership further in the school and the community, given the overwhelming challenges that the learner leaders are faced with in their community.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONTEXT OF THE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL IN THE RESEARCH STUDY



(Participants engaged in a teambuilding exercise where they learned to help each other overcome challenges) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, and a child of a farm worker can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another”.

(Nelson Mandela, 1994)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I endeavour to pave the way forward in developing a little insight into the complicated landscape that these learners found themselves in, having had their cultural group living in repression for over three hundred years in South Africa. By taking a step back into the not too distant past, I attempt to weave a short, yet comprehensive historical picture of this landscape that will inform our intellect of the circumstances that led to so much despondency during this time. It allows the reader to probe into the past and understand what the learners wrestle with today and how it shapes their further development as leaders, in a township school.

2.1.1 A brief background to Apartheid

During the ‘dark days’ of the Apartheid era (1948 to 1994) – *apartheid*, an Afrikaans word meaning ‘the state of being apart’ – saw many naturalised South Africans being forcefully removed from areas that were designated for ‘whites’ and relocated into areas demarcated for ‘blacks⁵’.

After the general election of 1948, Apartheid was introduced as an official policy in South Africa by the Nationalist government – which had serious implications for the inhabitants of South Africa. Wilkinson (2000, p. 197) points out that the implementation of the Group Areas Act had an overwhelming impact, leading to the displacement of well-established communities.

The country’s inhabitants were now legally classified into four groups according to race, “Whites”, “Blacks”, Coloureds”, and “Indians” (people from India). In his book, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela (1994, pp. 127-128) describes his meaning of apartheid succinctly:

Apartheid was a new term but an old idea. It literally means ‘apartness’, and it represented the codification in one oppressive system of all the laws and regulations that had kept Africans in an inferior position to Whites for centuries. What had been more or less *de*

⁵ The terms ‘white’ and ‘black’ are essentially used here to develop an understanding of South Africa’s racial past and the legacy it has left. These terms are often unclear, especially given the demographic changes and mixing in many of our schools, today. However, the term ‘black’ is often used to refer to all ‘racial groups’ excluded by apartheid – Africans, Coloureds and Indians (Bloch, 2009).

facto was to become relentlessly *de jure*. The often haphazard segregation of the past three hundred years was to be consolidated into a monolithic system that was diabolical in its detail, inescapable in its reach and overwhelming in its power. The premise of apartheid was that Whites were superior to Africans, Coloureds and Indians, and its function was to entrench White supremacy forever.

The incumbent political power used the Group Areas Act (1950) to legitimise this forced removal of people. When Malan – the architect of apartheid – introduced the Group Areas Act he described it as “the essence of apartheid” requiring separate urban areas for each racial group (Mandela, 1994, p. 130). From 1960 - 1993, the country witnessed 3.5 million black South Africans being forcibly removed from their rightful properties (urban and rural) to live in separate designated areas called townships – also known as *locations* – that were established for each of the black groups (Wilkinson, 2000; www.overcomingapartheid.msu.edu; www.sahistory.org.za).

These new settlements were also referred to as *lokasies* (locations) (Figure 3) and are still referred to as such in some quarters. A shorter slang word for ‘lokasie’ – ‘Kasie’ – is still bandied about in South African communities today. They were built in order to accommodate the African labour force required to work in the towns due to their growing economy and originating from immigration from the Eastern Cape region. This resulted in many social problems arising. In the mining regions of the Free State and Gauteng provinces these migrants – in search of work – left their families in the Transkei and Ciskei and relocated to these townships – mainly in ‘hostels’.

The government began to segregate necessary and public services in these areas as well, providing black people with services inferior to those of white people. These townships contained rudimentary rental housing, infrastructure and facilities to accommodate the newly relocated people and for migrants in search of work. According to Watson (1994) a shortage of accommodation resulted in very high levels of sub-letting of rooms and erection of backyard shacks, resulting in severe overcrowding and overloaded sewage systems, schools and other public facilities. Cole (1987) highlights the fact that many migrant Africans began to occupy informal settlements or ‘squatter camps’. This emerged due to the fact that they did not have government permission to live in the city and they began to live a precarious existence confronted by constant intimidation and eviction from the city by government officials (Cole, 1987).



Figure 3: A 'Lokasie' (South African Township)

(Source: <https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQYpAh-UvAGADztU3xn8vfI7i-VchqjQyLwS0YfgnOwIj1kTqHoVg>)

2.1.2 Bantu Education Policy

Education was viewed as a part of the overall apartheid system which included 'homelands', urban restrictions, pass laws and job reservations. However, it is interesting to note – when reflecting on historical sources – that long before the historic 1948 white elections a system of segregated and unequal education existed in the country (SA History Online). While white schooling was free, compulsory and expanding, black education was sorely neglected. 90% of black South African schools were state-aided mission schools prior to the apartheid government's implementation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (*ibid.*).

Nonetheless, the Bantu Education system was introduced by the Nationalist-dominated government, which “sought to put apartheid’s stamp on African education” (Mandela, 1994, p. 195). The word ‘Bantu’⁶ used in the Bantu Education system was highly charged politically and

⁶ Bantu (or 'Abantu' is the Zulu word for people) as it was used by colonists. It is the plural of the word 'umuntu', meaning 'person', and is based on the stem '--ntu' plus the plural prefix 'aba'. This original meaning changed through the history of South Africa. It is a term used in two ways in archaeology, history and anthropology: (1) it named a major linguistic group in Africa, and more locally, to identify the sizeable group of Nguni languages spoken by many Africans in sub-Saharan Africa. (2) It identifies those Bantu-speakers who spoke that group of closely related languages which linguists divide into four categories: Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Venda and Tsonga-speakers. It is important to note that the Bantu-speaking peoples are not a homogeneous group. They comprise more than a

had derogatory connotations (Mandela, 1994). This system was designed to ‘train and fit’ Africans for their role in the newly (1948) evolving apartheid society. This legislation was intended to separate black South Africans from the main, comparatively very well-resourced education system for whites (*ibid.*).

Bloch (2009, p. 43) sheds light into the way the all-white parliament was thinking at this time when a National Party MP suggested that:

[Schools] should not give the natives an academic education, as some people are prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in this country? ...I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country.

The architect of the Bantu Education Act (1953) – H.F. Verwoerd (the Minister of Native Affairs, who then went on to become the Prime Minister of South Africa) – believed that the role of the black was one of labourer, worker, and servant only (Mandela, 1994; Bloch, 2009). He perceived that:

[There is] no place for the [African] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. It is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim, absorption in the European community.

Bloch (2009, p. 43) points out that Dr Verwoerd – when addressing parliament on 17 September 1953 – explicitly asked the question, “What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when he cannot use it in practice?”

According to historical sources (Mandela, 1994, p. 195; Bloch, 2009, p. 43), African learners were to be educated in a way that was appropriate for their culture. Mandela explains that, “education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life” (Mandela,

100 million Negroid people who live in southern and central Africa, ranging from Nigeria and Uganda to South Africa, and who speak about 700 languages, including many dialects (SA History Online).

1994, p. 195). No consultation occurred on this. All the definitions of culture, appropriate educational content and levels, all the decisions about purpose and outcomes of the system were controlled by the apartheid government.

The Act also separated the financing of education for Africans from general state spending and linked it to direct tax paid by Africans themselves, with the result that far less was spent on black children than on white children. Its stated aim was to prevent Africans receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions they wouldn't be allowed to hold in society (SA History On Line; Bloch, 2009, p. 43). Instead Africans were to receive an education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the Bantustan 'homelands' or to work in manual labour jobs under white control (*ibid.*).

The Bantu Education Act (1953) was seen as the cornerstone of the apartheid ideology – a practice which began to wreak havoc on the education of black people in South Africa, depriving and disadvantaging millions of people (SA History Online). It produced – with its implementation – “devastating personal, political and economic effects” which continue to be felt and wrestled with today (*ibid.*). This Act was described as “a poison one could not drink even at the point of death from thirst” (Mandela, 1994, p. 197). Mandela warned the decision-makers that this Act had the makings of causing “irreparable damage” (*ibid.*). He cautioned them by pointing out that “the mental outlook of all future generations was at stake” (*ibid.*, p. 196).

2.1.3 Debilitating effects lead to subversion

Noticeable trends started to develop and emerge that would undermine the education of learners over the years to come and the rise of ‘subversive’ ideas. In 1955 – nationally – the pupil to teacher ratios went up from 46:1 to 58:1 in 1967. In Soweto⁷ alone Bloch refers to the “critical mass of young people finding themselves in an over-crowded, underfunded and unequal schooling system. Numbers grew from 12 000 in 1972 to 34 000 in 1972” (Bloch, 2009). Schools were hugely under

⁷ Soweto is one of South Africa's oldest townships. It is an urban area of the city of Johannesburg in Gauteng, bordering the city's mining belt in the south. The township of Soweto was created for blacks by South Africa's oppressive apartheid government in 1963. It was formerly home to Nelson Mandela and the centre of anti-apartheid protests in 1976. Its name is an English syllabic abbreviation for South Western Townships.

resourced in many areas (Figure 4) leading to gravely insufficient schooling facilities, teachers who were under qualified and lack of educational materials. Learner absenteeism and non-enrolment plagued the schools.



Figure 4: An overcrowded and under resourced classroom

(Source: <http://newobserveronline.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/edukashion.jpg>)

Classrooms became overcrowded, often used on a rotational basis in an attempt to cope and accommodate the influx of learners. In 1961, only 10 percent of black teachers held a matriculation certificate (Bloch, 2009). Black matriculation pass rates were abysmal in that only 53 percent of blacks actually passed, as opposed to the 94 percent success rate of their white counterparts (*ibid.*, p. 47). Black education was essentially retrogressing and schooling was becoming dysfunctional.

The increase in black secondary school attendance in the 1970's started to have a significant effect on the youth culture (Bloch, 2009). Previously, many young black learners generally lacked any political consciousness, as much of their time – after dropping out of school – was used searching to obtain a job in labour gangs on farms or mines. Nonetheless, according to Bloch (*ibid.*), secondary school learners were now starting to develop their own individual and group consciousness (see Section 3.6.1). In 1969 the black South African Student Organisation (SASO) was formed. In 1970 the black consciousness movement – under the leadership of SASO and the Black People's Convention (BPC) – was leading the new militancy at university level and resisting moves to turn education graduates into 'homeland' functionaries in the ethnic Bantustan (Bloch, 2009).

Although Bantu Education was designated to deprive Africans and isolate them from ‘subversive’ ideas, indignation at being given such a ‘gutter’ education became a major focus for resistance. Bloch (2009, p. 48) suggests that:

The combination of factors laid the base for an explosive youth and school culture to develop, with the potential to be fanned into intense resistance. A small spark, such as the decision that maths and science subjects were to be taught in Afrikaans, quickly turned into a raging fire.

Mandela (1994, p. 198) warned of the consequences of this approach, explaining that they were going to be huge for the white government as it was going to produce the angriest, most rebellious generation of black youth the country had ever seen in the 1970’s. Most notably the Soweto uprisings of 1976 were proof of this (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Bantu Education Act protests

(Source: <http://www.glogster.com/malbert18/steve-biko-glog/g-6m2iv639cfmsa4q435s7a0>)

Historical records reveal that on 16th June, some 15 000 learners converged on Orlando West Junior Secondary in Soweto township in response to a call from the school-based South African Students’ Movement (SASM) and the newly formed Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). The police responded with tear-gas and live bullets resulting in the loss of young lives. Shots were fired bringing down Hector Pieterse and 20 of his unarmed schoolmates and then resulted in a full-scale rebellion that ensued across the nation (Knott-Craig, 2008; Bloch, 2009).

Kallaway (1984, as cited in Bloch, p. 49) describes the events of the confrontation with the police as:

A hastily summoned and aggressive police detachment...fired into the crowd, killing two injuring several more. By midday rioting had broken out in several parts of Soweto; cars were stoned and barricades erected, arson took place on administration buildings and beer halls, and two white men were attacked and killed. The rioting continued into the evening and deepened in intensity when police baton-charged homecoming crowds of commuters outside railway stations. During the next few days while the revolt spread to pupil and student groups...the pattern of attack on police patrols and symbolically significant buildings was established in Soweto.



Figure 6: Hector Pieteron
(Sometimes spelled '*Pieteron*'), being carried to hospital by Mbuyisa Makhubo⁸.
(Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>)

In their struggle for freedom, young, predominantly male blacks emerged as powerful, assertive and militant leaders who became the “foot-soldiers of the revolution” (Kallaway, 1984, p. 226). They were radical and involved in a low-intensity war, fighting against the burden of the apartheid

⁸ This famous photograph was taken by a black photographer, Sam Nzima, at the height of the Soweto revolt. It shows a young boy, Hector Pieteron, being carried to hospital by Mbuyisa Makhubo, with his sister Antoinette Pieteron running alongside. Hector Pieteron died of his wounds (Knott-Craig, 2008, p. 5).

government's policies and the employment of its "agents" in township schools (Knott-Craig, 2008).

However, in the wake of this effective and clear protest, the government endeavoured to implement some reform attempts, but "it was a case of too little, too late" as these young protégées of Bantu education "rose with a vehemence" (Mandela, 1994, p. 198).

Till today, the events of 16 June 1976 are commemorated by a South African national holiday, Youth Day, which honours all the young people who lost their lives in the struggle against Apartheid and Bantu education.

In October 1977, according to Bloch (2009, p. 50) the incumbent government banned a number of black consciousness organisations in the hope of preparing the way forward for a possible political and social restructuring but it was "a little too late". A series of nation-wide actions were initiated by the students in what is described as a very well locally organised manner, coming together through their school-based Student Representative Councils (SRC) and finally linking up in the Committee of 81 which brought the representatives from black and coloured striking schools together (*ibid.*). Bloch (2009, p. 50) points out that their demands now went beyond the calls of 1976 for 'equal education':

The student leadership challenged the very authoritarian education whites received, and argued for a different kind of education geared to the needs of a different kind of society.

The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was formed in 1979 who immediately adopted the Freedom Charter and whose slogan became 'each one, teach one'. Students were not able to stand aside from the events taking place. The students and their schools increasingly became part of a much wider set of democratic and community-orientated struggles (Bloch, 2009). COSAS became the driving force and inspiration for many students to creatively use tactics which had a disruptive side to it. Bloch (2009, p. 53) alludes to the fact that "the young people... were at the centre of some of the violent divisions, including necklacing, forcing community members to obey, [imposed] boycott campaigns, and violent disputes between political factions".

It is also interesting to note from Bloch's work (2009, p. 54) that:

The origins of the 'progressive' teachers' movement were also in this period, teachers forming the basis of what later became the [South African] Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). Teachers were drawn into the democratic goals of the liberation movements as compared to the more inconsistent and hesitantly contradictory responses of teachers to the different context in the 1950's.

In the 1980's, very little education took place at all in the Bantu education system, which was the target of almost all continuous protests. Violent boycotts and strikes became the order of the day which became wide-spread. As the politics of wide and inclusive unity entered the public stage, students were automatically drawn into the fray. In the Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC) (1998, p. 251) the Reverend Frank Chikane describes the South African world as being:

A world made up of tear-gas, bullets, whippings, detention and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids of roadblocks and bloody searches. It is a world where parents and friends got carried away in the night to be interrogated. It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol-bombed.

The TRC (1988, p. 268) revealed that:

South African children were exposed to countless horrors and suffered considerable trauma because of apartheid. Their role and involvement in the resistance struggle placed them on the firing line. ... Children and young people were killed, tortured, maimed, detained, interrogated, abducted, harassed, and displaced, as well as being witness to these abuses.

The legacy of decades of inferior education (under-development, poor self-image, economic depression, unemployment, crime, etc.) and inadequacies in classroom outcomes has lasted far beyond the introduction of a single educational system in 1994 with the first democratic elections, and the creation of the Government of National Unity, the effects still being witnessed today.

2.1.4 The impact of apartheid on the learners

It cannot be denied that apartheid has had a devastating effect on the education of our youth and left a legacy of poverty since the creation of a Government of National Unity. Bloch (2009, p. 75) describes the impact of apartheid on education as a people being "trapped in poverty". A host of

challenges still exist today that impact on our schools, which in turn reinforces schools' poor performance (Bloch, 2009, p. 75).

In section 1.1, I made reference to the circles of influence. The same applies to education and the learners. Bloch (2009) describes education as having three levels of influence:

Level 1 – the teacher has influence on the outcome in the classroom;

Level 2 – support to the schools;

Level 3 – the wider society.

It has been pointed out that many of the problems that impact on education are not caused by anything that happens in the school, but are brought from society into the classroom (Bloch, 2009, p. 123). Many of the learners enter into the classrooms in a state that is not conducive for learning, therefore, poorer learners are at a distinct (serious) disadvantage due to educational deficits or social dynamics that hinder learning (*ibid.*)

May and Govender (1998, p. 9) state that “poverty essentially concerns the inability of individuals, households or communities to reach and maintain a socially acceptable minimum standard of living due to a lack of resources”. Kamper (2008, p. 1) does however make it clear that “although the phrase ‘lack of resources’ is mostly understood to mean a lack of food, housing or income, it can also be interpreted in a far wider sense”. Here he (*ibid.*) alludes to the work of Payne (2003) who aptly defines poverty as “the extent to which an individual does without resources”. Payne (*ibid.*) lists these resources as:

- Financial – money to buy goods and services;
- Emotional – control over emotional responses;
- Cognitive – mental ability and acquired literacy and numeracy skills to deal with everyday life;
- Spiritual – a belief in divine purpose and guidance;
- Physical – physical health and mobility;
- Support structure-related – friends, family and available back-up resources;

- Relationship-oriented – access to constructive, nurturing relationships.

Bloch (2009, p. 124) also suggests that, “families’ social capital is one of the strongest reasons for these inequalities and relatively weak outcomes in poor communities and schools”. Many of these learners experience a lack of learning support in the home (parents are often themselves uneducated/absent); parents are unemployed; sexual violence and inappropriate sexual relationships in the classroom; added responsibilities in the home (parents have died due to Aids/violence); peer pressure to partake in drugs and alcohol and crime and gang-related violence within the community (*ibid.*). These all affect the learner in a number of negative ways.

Bloch (2009, p. 124) further alludes to the fact that:

At every turn, the networks, assets, capabilities and social capital available to poor communities are subject to stress and pressure leading to their ongoing exclusion. The cycle of exclusion and marginalization is reproduced and deepened through the schooling system itself, with the most negative effects on poor schools and pupils who can least afford it.

The lack of resources does impact on the quality of education in a school. Cole-Henderson (2000, p. 84) states that:

The socio-economic and sociological problems relating to poverty imply specific challenges as regards the orderly, effective and equal provision of education. The true impact of poverty in schools is often highlighted by the fact that learners are often hungry and ill; do not have proper clothing; lack study facilities, parental support, study motivation, self-esteem and language proficiency; and move frequently from school to school.

Families go to great lengths (huge sacrifices) to ensure that their children receive a quality education that will get them a job one day and that will bring them out of the cycle of poverty. Nonetheless, Bloch (2009, p. 76) explains that “there are many communities that report a youth unemployment rate of 60% or higher. The evidence is that without education, and often at least a matric, the stakes become even higher”. What sadness!

It becomes all the more difficult to convince adolescents of the importance of education knowing that there is a greater chance of not being able to use it one day. The unfortunate negative spin-off

to this situation is that role models become the gangsters with flashy cars and gold chains, rather than children working hard to succeed at achieving their academic goals.

The life that these learners lead is tough and schools need to become places of refuge for the learners developing individual agency. A place in which they experience order, a caring framework that encourages them to discover, where the learner can learn and grow and become who they want to be.

2.2 THE CONTEXT OF NTSIKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

The research site – Ntsika Secondary School – was established in 1978 and is located on the periphery of the city of Grahamstown about 8 kilometres from the city centre. This small country town is found in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. It is located some 130 km from Port Elizabeth and 180 km from East London, and is also the seat of Rhodes University, a diocese of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and home to the College of the Transfiguration – the only residential provincial college of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa – and a High Court (Grahamstown History Online).

Grahamstown is also seen as an educational city in the province in that it is also home to many wonderful quality schools. Currently it hosts:

- Private senior schools (4): Diocesan School for Girls (DSG Senior School), GADRA Matric School, Kingswood College, and St Andrew's College;
- Private junior schools (4): Diocesan School for Girls (DSG Junior School), Grahamstown Seventh Day Adventist School, Kingswood Junior, and St Andrew's Preparatory;
- Government secondary schools (10): Graeme College, Khutliso Daniels Secondary School, Mary Water's High School, Nathaniel Nyaluza Public Secondary School, Nombulelo Senior Secondary School, Ntaba Maria Secondary School, Ntsika Senior Secondary School, PJ Olivier Hoerskool, T.E.M. Mrwetyana School, and Victoria Girls' High;
- Government primary (18): Amasango Careers School, Andrew Moyake Primary, Archie Mbolekwa Public School, C.M. Vellem Lower Primary School, DD Siswa Primary School, Fikizolo Primary Public School, George Dickerson Primary School, Good Shepherd

Primary School, Graeme College Junior, Makana Public School, N.V. Cewu Higher Primary School, Ntaba Maria Primary School, Oatlands Preparatory School, Samuel Ntlebi School, Samuel Ntsiko Primary School, St Mary's Primary School, Tanty Public School, and Victoria Primary School.

The town of Grahamstown has a troubled background which is steeped in a history of conflict stemming from the clashes between the various migrating peoples of South Africa. This town forms part of the Eastern Cape Frontier which was literally the 19th century frontier between the British Cape Colony and the Xhosa territories. It was the scene of first contact, cultural clashes, confusion and, inevitably, conflict – from the time of the Bushmen, the Khoisan, the amaXhosa (the angry men) to the arrival of English Settlers and the ‘Boers’. Much of what happened here set the tone for South Africa's turbulent multi-cultural history.

Grahamstown is historically an apartheid town and was established on the principles of the Apartheid policies that were introduced as an official policy in South Africa after the elections of 1948. It is a town where the whites live in a designated area whilst the non-whites live in settlements that were established on the outskirts of the town, based on the Apartheid policy. As of 2011 the population of the city (including townships) was 67,264, of whom 78.9% described themselves as "Black African", 11.3% as "Coloured" and 8.4% as "White" (Grahamstown History Online).

Since 1994, there has been a considerable influx of black people from the former Ciskei Xhosa homelands – which lie just to the east of Grahamstown – who have settled in the township called Joza. Here the communities face many troubling issues due to the lack of proper services, such as sewage, electricity, roads and clean water.

2.2.1 Ntsika Secondary School’s landscape

Ntsika Secondary School is located on the outskirts of the city of Grahamstown in the township called Joza. In 1977 a significant number of Grade 7 (Standard 5) learners from the local Department of Training (DET) primary schools in the township of Joza could not be accommodated and admitted to the only DET secondary school – Nathaniel Nyaluza – at that time. However, due to the determination of the learners wanting to learn they were eventually

accommodated in the primary schools of N.V. Cewu, Makana and Andrew Moyake Higher Primary Schools whilst a new secondary school was still under construction.

Finally, on 1st February 1978 the new Ntsika Secondary School buildings were occupied by 700 learners and 13 teachers who were employed to teach. The school was located on Ncame Street in the Joza Township. Subsequently, the school had three more principals and three care-taker principals. However, today these buildings are home to T.E.M. Mrwetyana Senior Secondary School (Figure 7).

According to the school's records the school was relocated to new buildings which were located in the Joza Township in Extension 7, on the 20th August 1998. The original school staff members chose the school's name 'Ntsika' and the school colours (black, red and white) as well as its emblem (Figure 8). The school's motto that is still in use today is "Imfundo yintsika yesizwe" – meaning "Education is the pillar of the nation" – which is underpinned by the values: respect, responsibility, co-operation, dedication, Ubuntu, equality, morality and spirituality.



Figure 7: The school's emblem



Figure 8: Mrwetyana Senior Secondary School

Under the circumstances, the school is well maintained (Figure 9). The buildings – double- story – depict a simple architecture which is synonymous with state buildings and constructed out of brick reducing the cost of maintenance. The upkeep of the school is generally good, however,

there are a few superficial issues such as classroom doors being broken (not able to close or difficult to close); the condition of the ablution facilities being in a state of significant disrepair and many windows not able to open creating ventilation problems on extremely hot days. It was interesting to note that there were no curtains in the classrooms covering the windows to keep the harsh summer sun out. Although the school is not able to employ staff to clean classrooms, learners are encouraged to do so in the afternoons after school. However, it was evident that some classes were left uncleaned and dusty – piles of rubbish could be located behind the door on occasions.



Figure 9: The school - Ntsika Secondary High School

The school grounds are fenced in, neat and tidy, however, larger tracks of grass are often uncut due to the size of the property. These vast areas could be converted into sports fields which the school currently lacks. There is also evidence of an attempt at beautifying the school grounds as there is evidence of flower gardens and tree planting activity. Many young saplings were found planted in strategic places in the school grounds.

The school boasts a functional library and computer laboratory which is always open to the learners at specific times of the day depending on the availability of volunteers from various support groups in Grahamstown. In the interview the principal proudly pointed out that – at the time of the interview – she had noticed that 90 plus learners had taken out books from the library that week. However, this in itself poses a problem because the librarian is a volunteer who will not be able to continue with her services. The principal pointed out that she was struggling to get someone within the school or community to get involved and learn how to run the library. There was just no commitment.

In the early 2000's the school was able to accommodate about 800 learners with a support staff of 17 educators and two non-teaching personnel. According to the current principal, the current learner enrolment of the school – at the time of the interview (20/02/14) – was 538 learners and the school had a staff of 21 to carry the teaching load. However, in this interview the principal pointed out that the school was about to lose seven of these teachers due to a relocation plan of the Department of Education (DoE).

This approach has resulted in a lot of dissatisfaction and unhappiness within the ranks of the teaching staff. The principal raised the concern about what results these actions would have on the amount of teaching time which may be lost once the relocation process started, due to the possibility of strikes called for by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). The principal alluded to a 7 day 'stay away' called by the Union as one of the teachers had not yet been paid. This was beyond the control of the principal as it was a National Policy issue that could only be solved at a District Office level. These issues often resulted in demoralisation and lack of motivation which had a profound impact on the learners. The principal explained that, "*You just can't rely on teachers anymore*" (Interview - 20/2/14). SADTU has proven to be a very strong

teachers' union which has had a great influence amongst the teachers of the school, which on some occasions, leaves learners without teachers. However, it was explained that there are some teachers who have – in the past – put the needs of their learners first and stayed away from these strikes. These teachers then lived in fear that they might fall victim to some form of retaliatory action for failing to adhere to the Union's call.

The parents try hard to make an attempt to get involved, "*more so than what the staff give them credit for*" (Interview – 20/02/2014). Nevertheless, the parents – many grandmothers and grandparents – attend meetings regularly to support the learners and raise issues that concern them. The principal also elucidated on the many deep-seated issues (hunger, abuse, drugs, homelessness, to mention a few) which have arisen from broken homes and death of parents due to HIV and Aids. To underline the current situation, it was pointed out that the school currently has 100 different social grants due to the fact that many of these learners live with their grandparents.

Although these parents/grandparents are supportive, they very seldom take a stand on specific issues and the principal explained that, "*They will not put pen to paper as they are too scared of victimisation*". Here the principal was referring to an incident where a learner had been beaten by a teacher. Yet on the other hand, the principal also experienced similar issues with the staff and suggested that it was due to "*a lack of trust of one another*". It was felt that the adults did not want to be "*held to ransom*". "*They even struggle to implement policies in the school*". "*So much talk but so little action*" (Interview – 20/02/2014).

Nevertheless, the press (Grocott's Mail, Thursday, 9th January, 2014) (Appendix B), indicated that the school's Grade 12 pass rate had gone up from 26% (2012) to a pleasing 66% (2013). The school's success was attributed to the success in mobilising human and limited material resources to meet the school's needs and being able to channel and manage these resources in a more effective way. However, the principal was quick to indicate that the learners should take credit for this significant improvement due to their hard work as there were a number of them who took responsibility for their learning. It was felt that the learners had begun to realise that they could not just rely on their teachers anymore due to all the strikes that had taken place. "*They have realised that they [learners] have got to do something about it themselves*". They have established study groups and have been able to get outside help to further their learning. It was noted that "*the*

learners arrive at school at 7.00 a.m. in the morning for Life Science additional studies and stay at school until 4.30 p.m. ... 5.00 p.m. most days” (Interview – 20/02/2014).

Ntsika Secondary School serves a very poor community which experiences crippling socio-economic issues. This is compounded by the little or total lack of support that the school receives from the government. In the interview (20/02/14) the principal indicated that the school receives little support from the government. However, this provision is often complicated even further by the offer of ‘free education for all’. *“It is simply just not like that. You must remember that from the parents’ point of view they still have to purchase uniforms; the pupils still have to get to school and pay to do this”*. It was also revealed in the interview that *“the single most expense that these families have to cope with is that of transport”*. In my observations over the last two years I have witnessed during my contact sessions with the participants that the learners walk up to five kilometres – sometimes in the rain and cold – to get to and from school. As was pointed out, the routes that many of these learners have to take are not safe and learners are often victimised by gangs and the girls live in fear of being abused at any time.

The financial woes of the school make the provision of education even more difficult. The principal stated that the school’s budget for books of R209 000 was very tight due to the fact that R52 000 was short paid to the school. *“But this has now happened for three straight years”* (Interview – 20/04/2014). It was pointed out that the cost for the photocopier and paper amounted to R80 000 per annum and that the school only had less than R2000 for the rest of the financial year – which would end in three months’ time from the date of interview.

Even so, the school is able to operate a successful nutrition programme which is a feeding kitchen. Here the school relies on government funding and outside help. For every 200 meals, the school is able to provide they get one meal server who cooks. At the moment, the school has a group of ladies who volunteer their services each day producing meals for the children. All the learners make use of this service but it was explained that, *“although the food is provided many choose not to eat”* (Interview – 20/04/2014). The provision of this feeding kitchen however, creates issues in itself. It was explained that the time that was available for meetings is now taken up in the day supervising this programme. To make sure that there is control of the learners in the classrooms, teachers are supposed to monitor their classes until everyone is fed. The principal emphasised her frustration as she noted that, *“this does not happen which results in discipline issues arising in the*

classrooms as teachers don't supervise this time effectively. They don't all do it". Behavioural problems emerged in the form of fighting, not eating and generally not cleaning up. Cultural problems have also emerged as the 'Bhuti'⁹ have also demanded their 'man portions' and come back after their initiation wearing different clothing to school.

The school demonstrates a willingness to want to provide a space for young leaders to develop but not to the extent that is wished for. The reasons for this are the lack of commitment and willingness of the staff to run such programmes as it is not part of their portfolio. Nonetheless, there are a few leadership and service groups that do operate reasonably well under the circumstances. The Representative Council for Learners (RCL) is active but does not function effectively (see Section 3.6.1). The principal pointed out that they had great difficulty in developing an understanding of team work. It was felt that once the learner got the status of being a RCL leader – which occurs when they receive a badge labelling them a prefect – they feel that they now have particular rights that set them apart from the other learners in the school. It was felt that the RCL leaders had forgotten that there are responsibilities that go with being a leader. The feeling was that the RCL did not function well. However, there were those who had other delegated responsibilities who took the initiative and carried out their responsibilities effectively and with pride. Here the librarian and computer monitors were singled out.

There were two other smaller groups that were functioning, but very unobtrusively. The reason for this is that there is no-one to drive the process. Nonetheless, the principal pointed out that the Council of South African Students (COSAS) is another group that provides a space for leadership, probably in a negative form. The school has experienced difficulties with this group where issues have arisen between the old and new members of the group. The group is then mobilised to destabilise and disrupt classroom activities. In the past, the students have been taken out of the class

⁹ A 'Bhuti' is a male teenage learner who has been through the Xhosa cultural tradition of being circumcised and he has spent six weeks excluded from his community. He spends this time in a remote area (bush) with other males his age as a Mahkweta and is attended to by an adult male. Once this ceremony has been concluded he then returns to his rightful place in the community as a young adult man (Krawala) and with it comes certain traditional rights such as being able to receive a 'man's portion' when it comes to meal times. Part of the initiation process is that the young male gets rid of possessions by burning all the clothes that he possesses, including school uniform – as an indication of breaking all ties with his past life as a young boy – and then is required to wear different clothing on his return to community life.

to participate in marches that have no bearing on education. It was pointed out that disgruntled staff members use this group for personal agendas and stir dissent within the student group which then overflows into the classrooms. This approach results in a lot of teaching time being wasted.

Outside influences in the form of gangs and tsotsies¹⁰ have a negative effect on the learners' willingness to lead due to intimidation. These groups often hang around outside the school gates waiting for recess and then threaten the learners even to the point that fights have broken out. The school has had problems with vandalism and graffiti on the school grounds. The principal stated that the learners live in two worlds – the school and the community.

Although researchers Stoll and Fink (1996) and Glidden (1999) state that, “It is not surprising that struggling and sinking schools are found mostly in impoverished areas” (as cited in Kamper, 2008, p. 3), I do however, see encouraging signs of change on the Ntsika campus. Although the school is struggling in many areas there are signs that demonstrate that this school is beginning to turn away from the corner of despair – one of having very little hope – to one with a brighter future. This is evident in the initial success – although limited – in activating human and limited material resources to meet the school and the learners' needs, and being able to channel and manage these resources in a more effective way in order that learners benefit holistically.

2.3 CONCLUSION

What I have endeavoured to accomplish in Chapter Two – through analysis and reflection – is to develop a deeper understanding of how the history of our country has had an effect on the development of learner leadership. As I explain in Section 3.7, education has an integral role to play in developing young leaders, nevertheless, education will not be able to change a society that is riddled with division, greed and self-absorbed leaders. Deep scars of conflict and heartache have been etched into our lives by our past. This we cannot change if we continue to focus on the wrongs of the past. It can only result in “[getting] our stomachs churning and our emotions twisted” (Bloch, 2009, p. 24). There will probably not be ‘quick fixes’. However, there is enough that is

¹⁰ Tsotsie – It is a South African word that is used to describe a dodgy character, someone who steals, lies and generally is not to be trusted. The person is also described as a young township gangster/criminal.

positive and good in our country that we could focus on, taking us forward into a more promising and fulfilling future for everyone.

History is a critical complement to contemporary reality...It should charge us not only with a surge of new pride but the electric energy of creative action. For it to animate us thus, it will demand, it will most certainly demand, a corresponding animation of consciousness. ...The vision of our former stature in the world must penetrate our consciousness so deeply that it begins to transform the degrading and dwarf-like habits of our present thought and action, habits which have crippled our progress. This heightened awareness of the best in our past can stimulate and inspire and heal us but it must blend intelligently with a maturing vision of the living present if it is to be of practical value. (Van Sertima, 1994)

In the next chapter I describe the development of leadership theory which focuses on the changes that have taken place and also introduces leadership in an African context. The chapter also examines the role of educational institutions, introducing the historical development of learner leadership in a South African school's context.

CHAPTER THREE

A REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP THEORY



(While jumaring up a cliff face, participants encourage one another to overcome their fears.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership”.

(Nelson Mandela)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When reflecting on the current trends that are taking place in the melee of leadership in the world, I was reminded of a song – *The times they are a-changing* – sung by the legendary Bob Dylan in 1964. It got me thinking about the space that the discussion of leadership has got to. The song is said to be a “deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change for the movement” (History of Information; Wikipedia - Online) – not necessarily leadership but rather the attitude and approach to social injustices that existed at that time – [It is] *rapidly agin*”! In the song, Dylan (1964) even encourages the politicians to pay attention to the call of the people when he sings, “*Come on senators, congressmen, please heed the call*”. His lyrics – whilst still eliciting change for the most altruistic of causes (civil rights, ending of wars) – depict the meaning of “the simple idea of a paradigm shift and that the certainty that all times are transient” (*ibid.*). Dylan (1964) goes to great lengths to warn the current regime with the words,

The line is drawn,
The curse it is cast,
The slow one now,
Will later be fast.

A former anti-apartheid politician and former president of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, made similar suggestions in 1992 with regard to change but related it to the youth of South Africa. His poignant words were that, “The children of any nation are its future. A country, a movement, a person that does not value its youth and children does not deserve its future” (AZ Quotes - Online). Gunter (2001) argues for a need to invest in the development of the learners’ capital and capacity to lead, so that they can take their rightful place in our changing society.

We are exposed daily to change and the views of people on leadership behaviour are no different. Fullan (1993; 2001) describes change as a “deliberate double entendre” and a “double-edge sword”. Other people have been making similar calls with regards to leadership. Van Dierendonck (2011, p. 2) suggests that there is a current demand for a more ethical, people-centred style of management. De Pree (1997, p. vii) states that this call is due to the “blithe carelessness of humans for human life”.

Leadership has become everyone’s business – and rightly so – and “it is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen” in their environment

(Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 3). People need to have the capacity to mobilise themselves into developing an understanding and awareness of this highly sought-after and yet elusive phenomenon. It has become one of the most discussed issues in organisations to date. In a recent Google Scholar search relating to the word ‘leadership’ 131 000 articles were available and likewise on Amazon (www.Amazon.com), 100 233 books were offered on the topic (August, 2013). In his work, Storey (2004) alludes to a similar search of published articles on leadership in the field of business and management in Ebsco which revealed an exponential increase. My search on Ebsco Host (2013) in the leadership and management source revealed the following:

- 1970 - 1971 61 publications
- 1980 - 1981 87 publications
- 1990 - 1991 215 publications
- 2000 - 2001 1,015 publications
- 2012 – 2013 2,911 publications

However, what is interesting to note is that I found that there were very few publications relating to learner leadership development at school level. I raise the question, “Should schools not be more involved in the early stages of leadership development?” I allude to the concern of the lack of leadership being offered in schools and the failure to empower the people who work in them and literature reveals the lack of this later in the discussion (see Section 2.7).

With the changes occurring in recent decades in world cultures, such as – the emancipation of women, more women in the work place, and the dismantling of world-wide oppression resulting in a greater racial diversity, and globalisation – the focus on and need for leadership has undergone some significant changes (Laub, 1999). This current focus on leadership is a global occurrence as it is seen as the ‘enabler’ in development initiatives by corporates and institutions, resulting in increased investment in leadership and management development initiatives (Bolden, 2004).

The traditional “command and control” method of leadership has been questioned, prompting a re-evaluation of its effectiveness in a modern society. According to Stephen and Pace (2002) this has occurred because of a long-standing view that leaders have failed to recognise that their followers may be suffering as a result of their actions. “The old gung-ho has gone... corporate

loyalty no longer exists, faith in the hierarchy and bureaucracy is dead, [and] the distressed employee is replacing the company man” (Stephen & Pace, 2002, p. 2).

However, in his work Spillane (2006, pp. 4-5) cautions the reader about “the myth of individualism” and encourages the development of a more “interactive” approach to leadership, as “concentrating on individual actions fails to capture the significance of [these] interactions”. He (*ibid.*, p. 5) goes on to suggest that, “While knowing *what* leaders do is important, knowing *how* they do it is also essential in understanding the practice of leadership”. The question that I would like to pose is, should leaders not be first asking themselves *why* they want to lead?

Although leadership appears to be fast becoming the panacea of the 21st Century, concerns do however arise in that there does not appear to be a common consensus and acceptance of what leadership really means. Nonetheless, a need has been voiced, stronger than ever, for more effective leadership. Dr Mo Ebrahim explained this need when he stated that “there is a dire deficit in leadership, not only in South Africa but in Africa” (11th Annual Nelson Mandela Lecture, 2013) and this needs to be addressed.

3.2 WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Many approaches could be used to complete the sentence “Leadership is...” Humankind has had a fascination with this complex phenomenon which has grown exponentially over the centuries (Northhouse, 2007, p. 1) and according to Bass and Stogdill (1990, p. 3) the study of leadership has been one of man’s oldest preoccupations – since the early times of Greek philosophers, Plato and Socrates. It is described as being a complex concept, a subject of approbation and exhortation but equally diffuse and lacking any sort of systematic consensus as to what it actually means (West-Burnham, 2009). Stogdill (1974) alludes to the fact that there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it (as cited in Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

Bookshelves and libraries are brimming with popular writings and academic research literature attempting to shed some perspective on the concept of leadership, such as group processes, personality and its effects and the exercise of influence (*ibid.*). Bass and Stogdill (1990, p. 11) suggest that leadership has been seen as an act or behaviour, a form of persuasion, and a power relation.

They (Bass & Stogdill, pp. 19-20) further define leadership as:

The interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change – persons whose acts affect other people more than the other people’s acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group.

Although leadership has been defined in many different ways (Spillane, 2006, p. 10) for the purpose of this project it becomes necessary to determine an understanding of this “mysterious” yet “elusive” concept, even if it is to generalise it for the sake of being able to grasp and appreciate its complexity.

According to researchers, Peters and Austin (1985, as cited in van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 8), “leadership connotes unleashing energy, building, freeing, and growing”. On the one hand, it is the capacity to influence the actions of others in both formal and informal settings (Halloran & Benton, 1987). Yukl (2006) states that “influence is the essence of leadership”. Spillane (2006, p. 10) concurs by stating that “leadership is a relationship of social influence”. Yet on the other hand, it is the “physical sensation: a need to share ideas, energy, and creativity, and not let personal insecurities be an obstacle” (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 17). Greenleaf (1970) describes it as being able to serve, whilst Block (2005, p. xxiv) points out that leadership should be seen as stewardship which is “hold[ing] something in trust for another”...choosing service over self-interest.

Leaders are defined as being individuals who are empowered to think for themselves, make decisions, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs, influencing them in an ethical and socially responsible way. People lead in so many different ways, using their ability/agency to exercise their skills/attitudes to recognise the situational influences that could support and promote leadership (Linden & Fertman, 1998).

However, leadership in the workplace and for that matter the school is often confused with concepts of management and supervision and it becomes imperative to shed light on the differences that exist.

3.3 LEADERSHIP VS MANAGEMENT

To distinguish between leadership and management is not easy. Although plentiful, most definitions remain vague and ambiguous, making even the very idea of a definition problematic. Van der Mescht (1996, p. 19) suggests that, “they are essentially different activities, and yet sufficiently similar to each other to defy attempts to capture the essence of each in a glib definition. Neither can, I think, be defined”.

The terms are often used interchangeably and thought to mean the same thing. They are symbiotic, each being compromised in the absence of the other (West-Burnham, 2009). Dimmock (1999, as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 7) points out that this difficulty is also experienced at school level. He explains:

School leaders [experience] tensions between competing elements of leadership, management and administration. Irrespective of how these terms are defined, school leaders experience difficulty in deciding the balance between higher order tasks designed to improve staff, student and school performance (leadership), routine maintenance of present operations (management) and lower duties (administration).

Nonetheless, Baldrige (1978, p. 9), suggests that careful evaluation and adaptation of these models is required before applying them to educational organisations (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 16). He says:

Traditional management theories cannot be applied to educational institutions without carefully considering whether they will work well in that unique academic setting. ...We therefore must be extremely careful about attempts to manage or improve...education with ‘modern management’ techniques borrowed from business.

Bush (2003) also warns that these concepts were developed outside of education and then applied to the school context. The application of industrial models to educational settings has had mixed results (*ibid.*, pp. 9, 13). Bush (2003, p. 13) argues that there “are general principles of management which can be applied to all organisational settings”. Furthermore, quoting Handy

(1984), he points out that “schools have much in common with other organizations that bring people together for a purpose” (Bush, 2003, p. 13).

Numerous authors (Quarendon, 1997; Senior, 1997; Adair, 1998; Kotter, 1990; 1996; 1999) – to mention a few – all agree on the need to distinguish between leadership and management, yet also agree that leadership is part of the function of management. Kotter (1990, p. 103) compares these two functions (Table 1) and argues that the two functions are quite dissimilar, yet necessary:

Leadership is different from management, but not for the reason most people first think. Leadership isn't mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It's not the province of the chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile environment.

On the one hand, in a management position, one will be expected to focus predominantly on the formal aspects of the organisation, maintaining the system (Senior, 1997). The manager is expected to preserve the status quo by ensuring that there is control, that policies (rules and regulations) are adhered to and that the system is organised (Zaleznik, 1992; van der Mescht, 1996). The manager's role is to supervise and control the organisation in its production efforts.

On the other hand, leadership is a “distinctive, high-order activity which provides the context and direction for management” (West-Burnham, 2009). In leadership, the leader tends to focus on the informal aspects of the organisation, often challenging the status quo. However, this is where the learner has great difficulty in the school environment in that habitually the adults ‘feel threatened’ when the learners challenge the status quo within the school. Learners need to be provided with opportunities to be creative and to use their initiative, developing their capacity to lead. By grasping these opportunities to grow the organisation and its people, they are able to develop relationships with their followers, influencing and encouraging them to aspire to achieve goals that have been set. The differences that emerge between the leader and the manager is highlighted in the attitudes that they display towards the goal, work and relationships with people and themselves (Zaleznik, 1992).

Table 1: The functions of leadership and management

<p style="text-align: center;">LEADERSHIP Produces change and movement</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MANAGEMENT Produces order and consistency</p>
<p>Establishing Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vision • Clarify big picture • Set strategies 	<p>Planning and Budgeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing agendas • Set timetables • Allocate resources
<p>Aligning People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate goals • Seek commitment • Build teams and coalitions 	<p>Organising and Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide structure • Make job placements • Establish rules and procedures
<p>Motivating and Inspiring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire and energise • Empower subordinates • Satisfy unmet needs 	<p>Controlling and Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop incentives • Generate creative solutions • Take corrective action

(Source: Adapted from Kotter (1990))

Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 21) provide a more insightful understanding of these activities when they state:

To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion. The distinction is crucial. Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things.

Bush (2003, p. 8) concurs, and stresses the importance of both leadership and management in an organisation by quoting Cuban (1988):

By leadership, I mean influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals. ...Leadership...takes...much ingenuity and skill.

Cuban (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 8) also states that:

Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills, the overall function is toward maintenance rather than change.

Although there is a difference in meaning between these terms, it is difficult to see how the skills associated with one could be applied without the skills associated with the other (Schmuck, 1986; Adair, 1988; Kotter, 1990; 1996; van der Mescht, 1996). Daft (1999; 2015) contends that it is possible for one person to be both a leader and a manager, yet the skills could differ in so many ways. Schmuck (1986, p. 11) encourages “administrators to combine both leadership and management skills into their repertoires”. Cuban (1988) supports this view, saying that he values both managing and leading equally, attaching no special value to either of them as different settings and times call for varied responses (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 8).

Leadership skills, such as “energy, enthusiasm and commitment” could complement management skills such as “efficiency, the concern with detail and co-ordination” within the organisation. According to Fidler (1997, p. 26), organisations would ideally want leadership and management to operate simultaneously as they have an “intimate connection and a great deal of overlap, particularly in respect of motivating people and giving a sense of purpose to the organisation” (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 8).

If schools want to provide a platform for students to develop their leadership abilities, then it is important that these institutions understand both the differences that exist and the possibilities for coexistence between leadership and management (Schmuck, 1986; Adair, 1988; van der Mescht, 1996). Often students are selected to leadership positions (prefects), but their terms of office are centred on management issues and their leadership skills are seldom effectively utilised. They become so intent on supervising and controlling (“bossing”) the students that they often fail to develop relationships with their subordinates, which hinder their ability to influence their followers in a positive way.

Bush (2003) encourages schools and colleges to give equal importance to both leadership and management if they are to function effectively and realise their objectives.

3.4 CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP THEORY

Leadership theory has evolved from championing a simplistic trait-thinking – the authoritarian “born-a-leader” approach, underlying the traditional “command and control” style of leadership often displayed in the workplace and is essentially task and power-focused – to a preferred orientation where leaders are encouraged to look beyond their self-interest for the good of the group (Bass & Stogdill, 1990, p. 9; Stone, Russell & Paterson, 2003, p. 350; Knott-Craig, 2008). Whereas previously, leadership was centred on hierarchy, command and control, it has now moved towards becoming more integrated with the work force, through team building, leadership development, shared decision-making, and a striving for collegiality.

Relationships have developed into a more important dimension of the group as there is a greater sense of belonging, being cared for and collegiality. Leaders are motivating their followers by satisfying their high-order needs, thereby elevating their interest in the team. This means developing the capacity (see Section 1.6.5) of people to become more responsible for “the well-being of the organisation through service, rather than through a command-control” style of leadership (Bloch, 2013, p. xxiv). Accordingly, Leithwood (1992) argues that there is a need to move from the concept of ‘transactional leadership’ to ‘transformational leadership’ (as cited in Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000, p. 95).

Nonetheless, these traditional and contemporary theories of leadership continue to influence current practice and offer a useful framework for the selection and development of leaders (Bolden, 2004, p. 9).

3.4.1 Great man/Born-a-leader/Trait theories

The study of leadership traits has been a controversial theory over time. In the early 19th and 20th centuries ‘great man’ leadership theories were very popular. The assertion was that these ‘great men’ had inherited leadership qualities, especially in people from the upper class. It was believed that “great men were born not made” (Kilpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48). It was believed that ‘born to be’ leaders would stand out by way of their personality traits.

Bolden (2004) suggests that researchers assumed that it would be easy to recognise and isolate a set fixed of traits (Table 2) which could be used to select and promote individuals to required

positions of leadership. He argues that this search was powerfully influenced by the ‘great man’ theory that predominantly focused on how male figures achieved and maintained positions of influence.

Although researchers (Stogdill, 1974; Shaw, 1976; Fraser, 1978) have attempted to amass a definitive set of traits, it has been widely accepted that they were not adequate to serve as the foundation for the recognition of superior leaders (Table 2) (as cited in Iszatt-White et al., 2011, p. 21).

Table 2: Leadership traits

LEADERSHIP TRAITS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong drive for responsibility;• Focus on completing the task;• Vigour and persistence in pursuit of goals;• Venturesomeness and originality in problem-solving;• Drive to exercise initiative in social settings;• Self-confidence;• Sense of personal identity;• Willingness to accept consequences of decisions and actions;• Readiness to absorb interpersonal stress;• Willingness to tolerate frustration and delay;• Ability to influence the behaviour of others;• Capacity to structure social systems to the purpose in hand.

(Source: Stogdill, 1974, p. 81)

Stogdill (1948) after a thorough review of the literature concluded that, "a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits" (as cited in Kilpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48). He believed this because the research showed that no traits were universally associated with effective leadership.

In spite of whether leaders are born or made it is clear that leaders are not like other people. A leader does not have to be a ‘great man’ by being an intellectual mastermind to succeed, but they

do need to have the "right stuff" and this stuff is not equally present in all people (*ibid.*). Spillane (2006) suggests that the focus should rather be on the practice of leadership (the how) and not on the leader's actions (the what) as interrelations exist between numerous players. Leadership is a challenging position which comes with severe pressures and heavy responsibilities.

3.4.2 Transactional vs Transformational

In their exposition of leadership, Stoll and Fink (1996, pp. 106-107) point out how the concept of leadership has evolved from a managerial approach (focus on results-task), via transactional approaches (based on an exchange of services for various rewards) – in which the leader controls – to transformational approaches (focused on shared values and the personal development of the worker) (Table 3), but fails to capture the essence of school leadership and the type of leadership required in the future.

Although transactional leadership models tend to be used in organisations where strong central control has been retained (Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000, p. 32), a higher priority is placed on maintenance than development and the leader plays a major role in protecting and promoting the interests of the system. The leader places emphasis on the management of systems and structures, on creating efficiency and effectiveness, attempting to achieve prescribed outcomes that have been set by the organisation (*ibid.*). The leader focuses on the purpose of the orientation (the task) and gets the people to recognise what needs to be done in order to reach the desired outcomes. The parameters within which the workers work is well defined and conformity rather than creativity is valued and encouraged (*ibid.*). However, this style of leadership restricts complex and dynamic changes within an organisation and is less likely to encourage improvements, potentially leaving the leader conforming to a static system rather than working creatively with people in a more 'global' environment in attempting to meet their needs (Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000).

Table 3 : A comparison of transactional leadership

Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds on a man’s need for meaning; • Is preoccupied with purposes and values, morals, and ethics; • Transcends daily affairs; • Is orientated toward long-term goals without compromising human values and principles; • Focuses more on missions and strategies; • Releases human potential – identifying and developing new talent; • Designs and redesigns jobs to make them meaningful and challenging; • Aligns internal structures and systems to reinforce overarching values and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds on man’s need to get a job done and make a living; • Is preoccupied with power and position, politics and perks; • Is mired in daily affairs; • Is short-term and hard data orientated; • Focuses on tactical issues; • Relies on human relations to lubricate human interactions; • Follows and fulfils role expectations by striving to work effectively within current systems; • Supports structures and systems that reinforce the bottom line, maximise efficiency, and guarantee short-term profits.

(Source: Covey, 1992)

As recently as the 1970’s, transformational leadership first emerged as a (alternative) leadership theory in the field of leadership studies (Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000; Patterson, 2003; Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). This theory first originated with Burns (1978) and was then expanded by Bass (1985) and consequently refined further by Bass and Avolio (1994). Transformational leadership is a process of first building commitment to group objectives and then for leaders to empower their followers to achieve those objectives (Stone, Russell & Paterson, 2003, p. 350).

The transformational leader asks followers to go beyond satisfying their own self-interests and to consider their long term needs to develop themselves, as opposed to their immediate needs and to become more aware of what is really important for the group (Burns, 1978, as cited in Patterson et al., 2007, p. 3). These leaders motivate their followers by satisfying their high-order needs – physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation – elevating their interests (*ibid.*, p. 355). The focus of the leader is on people’s involvement and their relationship, requiring an approach that seeks to transform feelings, attitudes and beliefs (Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000, p. 33).

3.4.3 Post-transformational thinking

Since the 1980's, post-transformational trends demonstrate a change in leadership focus. There is "less hierarchy in organisational structures coupled with greater emphasis on follower empowerment" (Spencer, 2007, p. 2). Researchers Braffman and Beckstrom (2006) (as cited in *ibid.*) suggest that the followers in these organisations have a greater similarity to leaders and vice versa due to a more decentralised structure with shared intelligence. The members share their responsibility as a collective group with a more focused approach on values and norms, hence relationships develop into important extensions of these groups as there is a greater sense of belonging, being cared for and collegiality (Barry, 2005, as cited in Ross, Rix & Gold, 2005, p. 131). According to Fullan (Online), good leaders display the qualities of hope, they are selfless, serving others and are always learning.

Although there are many post-transformative leadership trends that have emerged recently, I have focused on two alternative leadership perspectives (alternative lenses) through which I am able to view and think about the changes in leadership thinking.

3.4.3.1 Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership theory provides us with an alternative lens through which leadership could be viewed and thought about. Researcher's Heenan and Bennis (1999) point out that "throughout history... those at the helm [have] relied on partnerships with a trusted other to execute leadership; co-leadership was the modus operandi" (as cited in Spillane, 2006, p. 12). It was a shared experience.

A distributive perspective on leadership differs conceptually with transformational leadership in two ways (*ibid.*, p. 24):

1. It does not advantage a transformational perspective over a transactional one. Leadership can be either transformational or transactional. A distributive perspective on leadership is agnostic on the mechanisms of social influence used in leadership practice;

2. It views leadership practice as being central rather than about individual roles and positions. It allows for others (followers) to be identified as key players in leadership practice either by design or by default.

Spillane (2006) explains that from a distributive perspective “leadership practice is first and foremost”. It is framed in a very particular way in that it is “a product of the joint interactions of the leaders, followers and aspects of their situation, such as tools and routines” which produce leadership practice (*ibid.*, p. 3). Spillane (2006, p. 4) also points out that there are three elements that are essential that are required when developing an understanding of this perspective and are described as follows:

- Leadership *practice* is the central and anchoring concern;
- Leadership practice is generated in the *interactions* of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for leadership practice;
- The *situation* both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice.

Spillane (2006) goes on to explain that the view of leadership shifts its focus from “the ‘Leader’ [(both formal and informal held positions)] to the web of leaders, followers and their situations that gives form to leadership practice”. He (*ibid.*) emphasises that, “distributive leadership is more than shared leadership” and “delegated leadership”. It is not just about multiple individuals taking on responsibilities (roles and positions) for leadership within their organisations.

Researchers (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001) point out that “leadership practice takes shape in the interaction of leaders, followers, and their situation”. This leadership practice is said to firstly take form in the interactions that take place between the leaders. Spillane (2006, p. 16) suggests that,

Leadership is a system of practice made up of a collection of interacting component parts in relationships of interdependence in which the group has distinct properties over and above the individuals who make it up.

Here it is emphasised that, “the leaders play off of and play into one another,” implying that, “what a leader does influences and in turn is influenced by other leaders” (Spillane, 2006, p. 16).

Although the individual actions of the participants are important it becomes essential to analyse the interactions that take place between them to be able to define the practice of leadership. Spillane (2006, p. 16) suggests that it is “in between” the leaders of the activity.

Secondly, both researchers Dahl (1961) and Cuban (1988) state that, “Leaders not only influence followers but are influenced by them” (as cited in Spillane, 2006, p. 17). Here the follower is distinguished from those in leader roles and from those involved in the routine of leadership. The follower identified as another essential element of leadership practice and recognised as “central to leadership”.

Thirdly, Ross, Rix and Gold (2005, p. 130) point out that as individuals engage in their actions they are either enabled or constrained by the situation that they work in, which includes routines and tools. Feldman and Pentland (2003, p. 96) describe these routines as “a repetitive, recognizable pattern of independent actions” that are part and parcel of everyday life (as cited in Ross, Rix & Gold, 2005). The tools used in the interactions between individuals “mediate how people practice, shaping interactions among leaders and followers in particular ways” (Spillane, 2006, p. 18).

However, there is more to just simply recognising the importance of routines, tools, and structures within an organisation and leadership practice. Spillane (*ibid.*, p. 19) argues that, “A distributed perspective necessitates understanding *how* aspects of the situation enable and constrain that practice and thereby contribute to defining it”. Although routines and tools are seen as “bundles of possibilities that shape leadership practice” Spillane (*ibid.*) also suggests that they “can also be reshaped by that practice”.

As work is being done, actors and artefacts become bound up in and knotted in what Engeström (1987) describes as a “collective activity system” whilst researchers, Ross, Rix and Gold (2005, p. 132), refer to it as a “web of activity”. These researchers (*ibid.*) point out that,

By attempting to show that leadership practice is a social process concerned with leadership thinking and action *in situ*, the focus switches to actions and the performance of tasks whereby leadership is stretched over people and situations, influence may be exerted to achieve successful outcomes.

Although distributed leadership has gained in popularity in research on leadership, Vennebo and Ottesen (2012, p. 256) warn that journal articles “reflect considerable conceptual ambiguity in defining the term”. For instance, they allude to Harris (2008) using the phrase “conceptual confusion and empirical reticence”, whilst Woods et al. (2004) discuss “variabilities and dualities” in distributed leadership (as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 315). Vennebo and Ottesen (*ibid.*) point out that, “Despite its popularity, the concept remains unclear”. However, Woods et al. (2004) do concur that research agrees on “three key elements: it is emergent, it implies an openness of boundaries and it requires distributed expertise” (as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257).

Nonetheless, “the understanding of leadership as distributed has had an impact on research” in a number of respects (Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257). They suggest that research methodology has been influenced, explaining that “earlier leadership studies often tended to focus on what school leaders reported about their work, or on ‘leaders’ actions” resulting in what Harris (2008) describes as ‘silver bullet advice’ (as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257). However, research carried out in a distributed perspective by Gronn (2003), Spillane et al. (2004) and MacBeath (2005) all included leaders, followers, and situations in the unit of analysis which has resulted in “the expansion of our understanding of leadership as an interactional process that is socially and culturally situated” (as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257).

It is further suggested that, “empirical research has shown how leadership in schools is dispersed or delegated among a number of people” (Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257). Vennebo and Ottesen (2012) point out that both Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2006) have advocated that “there has been a change in the focus from what formal leaders do to take note of leadership as ‘conjoint’ or ‘stretched-over’ practice or activity” (Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257). This has resulted in an increased curiosity being shown towards teacher leadership by numerous researchers (Harris, 2003; Timperley, 2005; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008); in the relationship between leadership and empowerment or democracy (Woods, 2005; Moller, 2006) and in the relationship between leadership and leading school subjects (Spillane, 2005, as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257).

Having said this, a distributed perspective on leadership provides an alternative lens through which one is able to view and think about leadership. It foregrounds leadership practice suggesting that the practice of leadership is constructed in the interactions between leaders, followers, and their situations. “It is the reciprocal relations and mutuality” of the interactions that take place within an organisation that makes leadership practice possible. “Leadership is not the embodiment of individuals” (Gronn, 2000, p. 331).

On the other hand, servant leadership has also recently emerged as a popular leadership philosophy that organisations are also using as a possible lens through which they could develop an understanding of leadership practice.

3.4.3.2 Servant leadership

In essence, transformational leadership has paved the way for the recent resuscitation of Greenleaf’s philosophy (1970) of servant leadership, which is an example of current thinking in the field of post-transformational leadership. As people search for a more ethical approach to leadership, Van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1228) suggests that maybe the “leadership inspired by the ideas from servant leadership theory may very well be what organisations need now”. Covey is convinced that “its [servant leadership] greatest influence is yet to come” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 1). Victor Hugo suggested that, “There’s nothing as powerful as an idea whose time has come” (*ibid.*).

Since the publication of “Servant Leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness” in 1977 – Greenleaf’s seminal work – a numerous number of researchers (Greenslade, 1984; Habecker, 1990; Hildebrand, 1990; Miller, 1987; Pollard, 1996; William, 1996) have all attempted to clarify and extrapolate the newly talked about leadership philosophy. Van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1228) suggests that it is, “positioned as a new field of research for leadership scholars”. Popular literature authors (Covey, 2002; Collins, 2001, 2005, 2009; Adair, 2002; De Pree, 1997; Schuitema, 1998) to mention a few, have embraced and demonstrated a high level of interest in this theory as it points to the leader’s first responsibility as being the development of relationships and the caring of people which take precedence over the task and product (Spears, 1995; Lubin, 2001, as cited in Patterson et al., 2007, p. 3). Wong and Page (2003) point out that many of these authors recognise the value of servant leadership for practising leaders

and future leaders. The emphasis is more on the moral and ethical dimensions of leadership. The focus here is that the servant leader leads due to an inward desire to want to serve rather than an outward desire to want to lead. Van Dierendonck (2011) further argues that, “Leaders who combine their motivation to lead with a need to serve display servant leadership” (p. 1228).

Spears (1995; 1996; 2004) on the other hand, clearly provides more than enough evidence for the practical applications of the thinking and the theoretical development of servant leadership and its practical implications. In his recently authored books, *Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf’s Theory of Servant Leadership Influenced Today’s Top Management Thinkers* and *Insights on leadership: Service, stewardship, Spirit and Servant Leadership* he attempts to make this clear.

However, Wong and Page (2003, p. 6) point out that, “The popular appeal of servant leadership has not translated into academic respectability, because of a lack of research base”. Van Dierendonck (2011) also points out that, “Despite its introduction four decades ago and empirical studies that started more than 10 years ago,” there is still “no consensus about a definition and theoretical framework of servant leadership” (Laub, 1999). Nevertheless, this void has encouraged researchers (Spears, 1995; Laub, 1999; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003; Russell, Stone & Patterson, 2004), to mention a few, to attempt to develop individual definitions and models, which epitomise the wide array of behaviours that have been stimulated by Greenleaf’s work.

Even so, the phrase ‘servant leader’ was first used by Robert K. Greenleaf in the early 1970’s applying it to business and educational institutions in his seminal essay, “*The servant as leader*”. Greenleaf (1977, p. 7) first suggested that:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. ... The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed.

Hamilton Bazley – in his foreword in “*The Servant Leader within: A transformative Path*” - reflects that after three decades “[Servant leadership] continues to fascinate us with its promise,

its paradoxes, and its intuitive attractiveness” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 1). Spears points out that the objective of Greenleaf’s work was to “stimulate thought and action for building a better, more caring society” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 15). In his writings, Greenleaf emphasised “going beyond one’s self-interest” as a core characteristic of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1230). According to Reinke (2004) the key to good leadership – for Greenleaf – is the need to serve others first, leading to a commitment by the leader to nurture individual followers and demonstrate a responsibility to the community (as cited in Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Nair (1994, p. 59) warns that, “As long as power dominates our thinking about leadership, we cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership”. However, in his work, van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1231) argues that this power can become an option to serve others and should be considered as a precondition for servant leadership: “Being a servant allows a person to lead; being a leader implies a person serves”. Nevertheless, Nair (1994, p. 59) does encourage the leader to, “place service at the core; for even though power will always be associated with leadership it has only one legitimate use: service”. Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006, p. 1) suggest that the “core focus of servant leadership is embedded in the concept that supervising has less to do with directing other people and more to do with serving them”, as identified by Greenleaf (1977).

Drury (2004, p. 8) proffers a working definition of servant leadership as he suggests that it is,

An understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organisation, and those served by the organisation.

The orientation of servant leadership calls for leaders to be of service to others, namely their employees, customers and communities. Accentuating this orientation, Spears (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 16) advocates that “it is about the increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community and the sharing of power in decision making. ... The leader is one who is a servant first”. The leader’s focus is on serving others and is based on a deep moral commitment to the values of the community (Koshal, 2005, p. 3), creating harmony and building emotional bonds.

According to Bass (2000) the servant leader's main aim is to recognise the needs of others and to serve them. "People come first", says Fullan (2001, p. 35). Although being described as having a people-centred approach, it is perhaps broader than this, in that it is being argued (Greenleaf, 1977; Graham, 1991; Paroline, 2008) that servant leadership focuses more on the individual than the group, making sure that the follower's highest priority needs are served. Graham (1991) also adds that the servant leader demonstrates allegiance or loyalty to the individual and follower autonomy.

In the same way, Burns (1978, p. 20) stresses that:

Transforming leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality...but transforming leadership ultimately becomes *moral* (italics in the original) in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, thus it has a transforming effect on both.

Wheatley (2005, p. 208) suggests that as leaders learn to humbly serve their followers, a dynamic inter-connective relationship begins to develop between them. However, van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1231) does warn that, "Working from a need to serve does not imply an attitude of servility in the sense that power lies in the hands of the followers or that leaders would have low-esteem". Although the leader is encouraged to work in partnership as a team, developing trust, foresight and insight and sacrificing self-interests, Bowie (2000) emphasises that, "it is the responsibility of the leader to increase the autonomy and responsibility of followers (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1231). Archbishop Tutu (Online) advocates that, "the leader's responsibility is the aspirations of the people... someone who can inspire and serve others".

Serving others is important but so too is serving the values and ideas that help to shape the organisation or community that they are part of (Koshal, 2005, p. 3). Servant leadership begins from within and is not just a style of leading, but becomes an attitude that the servant leader develops towards the responsibilities of leadership (Wong & Page, 2003). Whetstone (2002) recommends that, "There should be a strong commitment to treat each individual respectfully, with awareness that each person deserves to be loved" (as cited in van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1231).

The model of servant leadership (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 1997, p. 4) accentuates:

- increased service to others;
- a holistic approach to work;
- promoting a sense of community;
- and sharing of power in decision-making.

Spears (2002, as cited in Greenleaf, 2002, p. 16) cautions that this form of leadership must not be seen as a “quick fix approach” nor should one think that it will be instilled within an institution easily but rather that it be recognised as a way of life, a philosophy. Spears (*ibid.*) argues that at its core, servant leadership is a long term, transformational approach to life and work – in essence, a way of being – that has the potential for creating positive changes throughout society.

It was established in my recent Masters research study that the ‘secret ingredient’ for the embracing of servant leadership as an alternative form of leadership in an organisation or educational institution, was the ability of the participants to first develop a ‘sense of community’ within their environment (Knott-Craig, 2008). As Gittel (2003, p. xi) argues, “It would require the development of a set of organisational practices...characterized by shared goals, shared knowledge, and mutual respect”.

In all the diverse leadership styles (authoritarian, benevolent dictatorship, participatory, democratic, etc.), servant leadership is the one style that best represents the ideals embodied in the human factor (Wong & Page, 2003). According to Adjibolosoo (1995, p. 26) the term ‘human factor’:

refers to a spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic, and political institutions to function, and remain functional over time. Such dimensions sustain the workings and application of the rule of law, political harmony, disciplined labour force, just legal systems, respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life, social welfare, and so on.

In conclusion, the model of servant leadership is suited to educational institutions to explore policies, strategies and techniques that best enable their learners to reach their potential by becoming more responsible community citizens, as the institutions are supposed to be service orientated (Greenleaf, 1970; 2002).

Although these theories all promote Western understanding and practice of leadership, Khosa (2011, p. xxxiv) expresses the view that Africans should experience the liberation of their minds from imported and imposed frameworks and value systems, and free themselves to pursue their own identity. Apartheid has left deep scars on peoples' psyche and ability to rise to the challenges of the modern world (*ibid.*).

3.3 LEADERSHIP IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT

The African continent has often been viewed by the Western world as being plagued by “corruption; dictatorship; military coups; rebellious leaders; greediness; misuse and abuse of power; and incompetent, politically unstable leaders – in effect, suspicious leaders who undermine their own democracies” (Masango, 2002, p. 707).

However, the winds of transformation and change have become dominant themes on the African continent as leaders seek ways to address these unnecessary and relentless social ills. Former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, referred to it as the African Renaissance. Literature (Nkomo, 2006) also points to a growing need for the people of Africa to solve their own problems and look for answers within. The African continent is looking for leaders that can bring this ‘hope’ to its shores. It therefore becomes necessary to explore leadership in an African context – “Let Africa Lead!” (Khoza, *ibid.*).

Can this be achieved when Africa continues to adopt and apply generalised leadership and management principles that are foreign to its cultures? Is it not a case of ‘forcing a square peg into a round hole’? In a recent study, House and Aditya (1997) outlined that an overwhelming majority of leadership theory (98%) originates from the USA, having studied primarily American leaders (as cited in Nkomo, 2006, p. 3). Researchers (Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Nkomo, 1992; Prasad, 1997, 2006) point out that these theories of leadership and management have generally omitted the voice of the racial ‘other’ – whether African or other non-western – leading to the development of

stereotyped images of leaders in Africa and the solution to the continent's problems. This undoubtedly points to a faulty generalisation of leadership theories – ‘the knowledge of one group represents all’!

Nonetheless, a limited available body of literature reveals that a significant void exists in leadership theory applicable to the African context – it's one of deficiency and incapacity. Safavi (1981) argues that “the inability of African nations to train capable [leaders] and managers...has been the main inhibitive factor to real economic and social development” (as cited in Nkomo, 2006, p. 5). Ramphela (2008, p. 304) suggests that this ‘inability’ is due to the fact that many African governments have not been able to transform into democratic governments as the incumbent ruling party still clings to its liberation politics, imposing an authoritarian style of leadership. She argues that it is the conflation of a liberation movement's politics with democratic practices that pose serious risks to [any] democracy and these liberation leaders do not necessarily make good transformative leaders (*ibid.*, p. 304).

Nkomo (2006) also points out that a conflict exists between African reality (culture, resources, powers, education) and the use of Western knowledge in leadership and management development (Western concepts and assumptions in the design of leadership and management education). This points to the legacy of colonisation in the under-development of leadership and management and the inappropriate fit between African and Western values and ideas – yet there is a call for the implementation of self-same Western ideas and approaches. The success of African leadership is often benchmarked on Western philosophies and have also been used to evaluate leaders by using these ideas.

Although it is acknowledged that there are many shortcomings in leadership in Africa – due to miserable governance practices, exploitative company behaviour, uncontrolled corruption of politicians and business people – Africa still “has a fundamental moral contribution to make to principles of leadership in the world today” (Khoza, 2011, p. 12).

This is well demonstrated by South Africa's iconic leader, Nelson Mandela, who paved the way forward to changing this outlook on African leadership. Mandela had the ability to resonate with his followers emotionally and humanely, deliberating and developing a shared vision, declaring and achieving collective goals through sound ascendancy. “In essence he knew how to lead from

within rather than from above” (Khoza, 2011, p. 5). His ability to exercise moral authority was unrivalled (*ibid.*).

Even though “he emerges as an acme of leadership” (Khoza, 2011, p. 19), we are warned not to forget the valuable contributions that his colleagues made towards the transformation experienced in South Africa. Nonetheless, Mandela’s reputation as a leader grew as he treated his followers as a source of power and purpose, remaining effectively ‘reciprocally bound’ to them. Leaders need to “depend on their hearts and minds, eyes and ears of the others, and be capable of dealing with complexity in an intellectually and emotionally intelligent manner” (Khoza, 2011, p. 9). Mandela demonstrated his sensitive side and used this sensitivity to respond appropriately to the needs of his South African followers.

Mandela was born into royalty as a Xhosa prince in the Themba tribe on 18 July 1918 in a small village called Mvezo on the banks of the Mbashe River in the Transkei (Mandela, 1994). The Xhosa people are a proud and patrilineal people who demonstrate an abiding belief in the importance of laws, education and courtesy (Mandela, 1994, p. 4). The practices that he soon encountered and learned – in royal circles – lent him personal dignity and a sense of grand mission that marked him out for leadership. It is recorded (Mandela, 1994; Khoza, 2011) that as Mandela grew up into the stature of a strong young man he chose to relinquish his royalty for equality and democracy. However, he never surrendered his grass roots upbringing, giving him a personal self-assurance to face the challenges that life would throw at him.

The initial communal way of life taught him that to be an effective leader one had to develop harmony with the people. The leader had to have a connection with the people, needed to be compassionate, had to have integrity and have the determination to be effective. Mandela was able to develop these deep and lasting relationships with his followers. He developed the insight into his people by showing support, sensing and feeling their needs. Mandela strived to fulfil their hopes and dreams, by being their champion through their struggles for freedom (Mandela, 1994, p. 21).

At a young age the village council left an indelible impression on Mandela. Here he witnessed the African village assembly sort out issues through debate and dialogue. The community sought

social justice, based on consensus through the chief and elders. The village was directly involved through participation but the ultimate decision rested with the chief.

As Khoza (2011, p. xxvi) explains:

People at an African village council gathering do not stand mute. Much less are they admonished to be silent in court while a case is heard. In fact, voluble exchanges fill the air over a groundswell of muttering as everyone who has an opinion to express steps forward to say their piece. Argument rages to and fro. No one is barred from speaking and no person or position is exempt from criticism, although the authority figure [personhood] of the chief is always shown respect. As those in the assemblage take turns in expressing their individual views, nods of agreement around the circle begin to indicate where the consensus of opinion lies. For the chief and elders to reach a decision may be difficult – or not – depending on how closely the issues were argued and how the social justice of the outcome will be perceived in the community. Once the chief has ruled the community returns to its routines with a reinforced sense of the due process of traditional problem-solving.

Khoza (2011, p. 21) points out that the ‘personhood’ of the chief was important and well respected, for the chief served his people well and applied high moral principles respected by the village. This ‘personhood’ was earned by meeting the needs and expectations of the ‘community’ of the participants in a social movement (Khoza, 2011; Mandela, 1994).

3.4 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

3.4.1 Historical background to school leadership

In South Africa, the educational ‘landscape’ was one that was manipulated by the authorities marginalising many and “socialising the youth into an existing status quo of inequalities through conformity to authoritarian structures” (Mncube, 2008, p. 77). This gave rise to what Bloch (2009, p. 56) suggests, that “education became the site of resistance and schools became the places for struggle” against the apartheid system, particularly, the racially divided educational system.

Apartheid has had starkly different effects in ex-Model C and independent schools on the one hand, and ‘township’ schools¹¹ on the other. One of the many ways in which these different effects can be observed is in schools’ approaches to student or learner leadership, the focus of this study. On the one hand, the former schools saw themselves as institutions that had the responsibility of developing future leaders and adopted the notorious ‘prefect system’, which had its origin in England in the 1300’s. According to Bernard (1997) schools appointed a select, elite group of learners who were seen as “born leaders” (as cited in Horner, 1997, p. 270). Wheatley (2005, p. 64) believes that these systems have relied on autocratic leadership styles of “command and control”. Western (2008, p. 11) argues that these “elitist groups reproduce their hold on power making their views privileged while less privileged groups are silenced”.

By contrast, the notion of ‘prefectship’ was not readily accepted by historically black schools. According to Thompson (2004) it was seen as having “a measure of prestige attached to [the selected prefect]”, and very little in the way of true representation (as cited in Nongubo, 2004, p. 12). The highly politicised black learner population wanted to have a voice that had a mandate and would be able to represent their communities. The development of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) in the late 1970s potentially gave the learners a voice with which they could challenge the unjust and unfair practices within their schools.

However, the SRC was also ultimately rejected as being puppets of the authorities, clearing the way for the current system, the Representative Council of Learners (RCL). The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996; article 11(1)) states that every public school enrolling learners into the eighth grade and higher, must establish a Representative Council of Learners (RCL) (RSA, 1996, p. 10). The purpose of the Schools’ Act was to defend the rights of learners, affording them greater opportunities of participation and responsibility in the governance of their schools as they served as representatives on the School Governing Body (SGB) (Kok, 1997, p. 1).

¹¹ ‘Township school’ refers to a school that was established in the (often underdeveloped and under-resourced) urban living areas in South Africa that, from the late 19th century until the end of Apartheid (1994), were reserved for (black Africans, Coloureds and Indians). Townships were usually built on the periphery of towns and cities in which these schools existed. The schools often displayed characteristics such as poor academic track records, poor leadership, and lack of resources - including human and financial backing, in order for the schools to function adequately.

The Department of Education (DoE) issued RCL guides to endorse its policy of promoting democratic governance in South African schools. Whereas these guides appear to be helpful and descriptive of how the RCL should operate, there have been problems with regards to the implementation of the RCLs in schools (Mathebula, 2001; Nongubo, 2002). The guides are not clear as to the roles, functions and responsibilities of the RCLs, and the amount of authority or responsibility of the RCL is not clearly defined. It appears that the guides have a “narrow conception of participatory democracy” (Mathebula, 2001, p. 1), which contradicts the Act, and that the authors of the guides assumed a level of stability and normality in South African schools instead of focusing on the educative potential of participation. Nongubo (2002, p. 33) points out that the whole aim of the RCL guides was to promote orderliness, a sense of community and to establish conditions that are conducive to improved education. However, he argues that “the guides are generally shallow in their recognition of learner rights and are not a true reflection of what it means to educate through participation” (*ibid.*).

Current researchers (Mncube, 2008; Duma, 2010) suggest that despite the establishment of RCLs – the framework for learner participation in governance in schools – they are not functioning effectively. Mncube (2008, pp. 82-83) alleges that, “adult authority figures are still reluctant to enter into discussions with minors and are conventional in their approach” when working with the learners, positioning the learners as opponents against the political and social order associated with violence and destruction and are not to be trusted. In his research, Duma (2010) points out that in certain rural areas RCLs are dysfunctional in many schools and some schools have even reverted to using the ‘prefect’ system for leadership.

This is problematic because Nongubo (2004, p. 338) suggests that education for democratic participation should aim “to develop a broader sense of community and indeed the world at large”. Waghid (2005, p. 132) goes further and recommends that “spaces of responsibility, readiness and deliberation...be created whereby education could produce responsible, responsive and democratic citizens”.

In order for democratic citizens to be developed, researchers (Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999, p. xxii; Crippen, 2006) encourage educational institutions to look at providing the necessary platforms for learners to experience a more “collegial, cooperative, transformative and service approach” within schools in order for them to develop their capacity to lead. New areas of

responsibility need to be assigned, leadership roles defined and accountability enforced, resulting in what Sergiovanni (2000, p. 1) refers to as “a change in the mindscapes of educational institutions”.

3.4.2 The role of our educational institutions

In a climate of democracy in South Africa and the world, the top-down approach to leadership and institutional hierarchies deployed and practised in many organisations are “antithetical to democracy in action” (Riley & Seashore Louis, 2000, p. 42). This approach appears to be entrenched within these institutions and our schools are no exception. Although Shields (2004, pp. 109-110) recognises that educational leadership is “complex and challenging”, she does point out that it is also facing a crisis by maintaining its entrenched leadership “status quo”. This is an area of concern for Ramphela (2008) who states that, “Schools [have become] the site of struggle with the authoritarian ghost. Many of our teachers are products of authoritarian homes as well as authoritarian schools”.

Schank (2004, as cited in Dryden & Vos, 2005, p. 148) suggests that the possible cause for this approach today is that, “today’s schools are [often] organised around yesterday’s ideas, yesterday’s needs, and yesterday’s resources. And they were not even doing well yesterday”. Nonetheless, Daggett (1992, as cited in Dryden & Vos, 2005, p. 96) warns that, “The world our kids are going to live in is changing four times faster than our schools”. We need to change!

The hierarchical leadership status quo, currently practiced in schools, tends to marginalise a large number of students and their families, preventing them from being heard or even acknowledged. It disempowers the school learning community from actively engaging and participating collaboratively (Knott-Craig, 2008). According to Shields (2004, referencing Shields & Oberg, 2002; Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999), ethnicity, socio-economic status and minority group status have all played a role in marginalising students within schools, resulting in the learners not realising their potential and under-performing in many spheres of education (as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 111). Some researchers (Maxcy, 1994; van Alfen, 1993, as cite in Shields, 2004, p. 110) express anxiety about the lack of leadership being offered in schools and the failure to empower the people who work in them.

Educational leaders can become transformative, dealing with and establishing social justice within schools (Shields, 2004). Bogotch (2000, p. 2) defines educational leadership as being a “deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power”. Shields (2004) also suggests that leaders engage in moral dialogue that will facilitate the development of stronger relationships within the institution. Based on this dialogue and the development of relationships, leaders could provide opportunities for students to learn and develop democratically in socially just communities (Shields, 2004).

According to Herrnstein and Murray (1994) and Gould (1996, as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 112), the status quo of educational institutions is historical, genetically fixed and hierarchically structured. It comprises of our “assumptions, attitudes and language that are deeply embedded in the educational traditions, institutions, practices, and beliefs of our time” (Shields, 2004, p. 112). Bourdieu (1980, as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 112), refers to this as our “habitus”, which he defines as:

A system of circular relations that unite [*sic*] structures and practices; objective structures tend to produce structured dispositions that produce structured actions which, in turn, tend to reproduce objective structure.

According to Swartz (1997, as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 112), our attitudes and beliefs are “extremely resistant to change” because they have been developed over time. Shields believes that it is important to first recognize how “our habitus restricts equity and social justice” in our educational institutions, and then to “find ways to overcome these constraints” (Shields, 2004, p. 113). Bourdieu (1980) believes that “with considerable effort, innovative practices may help us create new and more equitable educational structures” (as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 113). The approach needs to be a collective one, focusing on the development of moral and ethical values in an organisation, within a social context. According to Astin and Astin (2000, as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 113):

The value of [educational] leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity; to strengthen democracy, civic life, and civic responsibility; and to promote cultural enrichment, creative expression, intellectual honesty, the advancement of knowledge, and personal freedom coupled with responsibility.

In order to keep abreast of these changes within modern society, education needs to reflect on the traditional bureaucratic stance that it holds, as education is one of the basic cornerstones (Figure 3) on which students are prepared for citizenship (Fullan, 2003). Shields (2004) suggests that these changes go well beyond institutional and organisational arrangements, while Hallinger (1992, p. 40) points out that with such changes comes the expectation that schools become “the units responsible for the initiation of change, not just the implementation of change conceived by others” (as cited in English, 2011, p. 90).

Sergiovanni (2001, p. 1) maintains that the challenge of leadership in any organisation is its ability to keep the learning curves of the people ahead of the change curves of society. One method of addressing this is to ensure that schools become more involved in the process of leadership, recognising the paradigm through which they view leadership so as to be able to shift it (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997).

As leadership acts as one of the supporting pillars for the development of the future “nation changers” of a country (Figure 10), educational institutions become increasingly important in keeping up with the changes that take place within society (Denton, 2006). They can provide the necessary platform for students to experience a more “collegial, cooperative, transformative and service approach” within their schools (Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999, p. xxii; Crippen, 2006). Students could be encouraged to become more reflective in their thinking processes, developing their moral reasoning and become self-sufficient decision-makers (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005, p. 156).

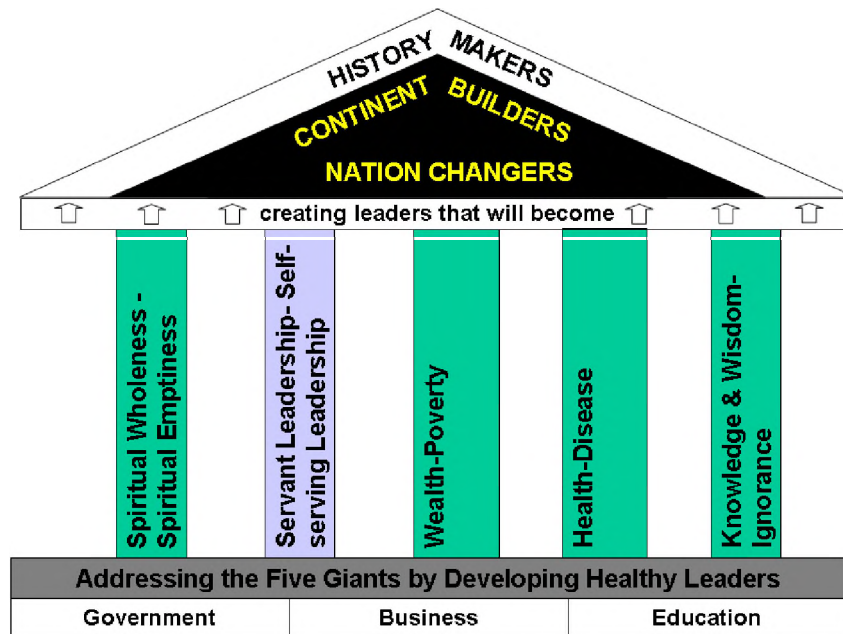


Figure 10: The five pillars of developing healthy leaders
 (Source: Mario Denton, 2006; Knott-Craig, 2008)

Institutions could encourage students to alter their thinking processes, develop new areas of responsibility, define leadership roles and become more accountable for the students under their leadership (Sergiovanni, 2001). In order that a paradigm shift take place where leaders are encouraged to place “service to others above self-interest and self-promotion” (Laub, 1999, p. 1), cooperation will be needed within an institution so as to enable its leaders honestly to reflect on their approach in developing future leaders.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Fullan (2001, p. 135) points out that, “Nowhere is the focus on the human element more prevalent than the recent recognition of the importance of strong and effective leadership”. If one was able to utilise some of the lyrics of Dylan’s song in his album – *The times they are a-changing* – and take them out of time, making them applicable to current leadership mind-sets, the words could suggest that change is necessary and that we need to reach out to our “*sons and daughters*” as the current practice of leadership is “*rapidly agin*”.

Although, the development of leaders at school level could determine the climate of a nation and the success of its people in time, leading them into the future and making the difference between success and failure (Denton, 2006; Bass & Stogdill, 1990, pp. 6, 8), the difficult task will be deciding what style of leadership needs to be practiced in order to meet the demands currently being made by society. However, Plato suggests in *The Republic* that the ultimate form of leadership is leadership that focuses on the good of the world and those in it (Williamson, 2008). Williamson (2008) and van Dierendonck (2011) suggest that servant leadership may come close.

In the next chapter I introduce the reader to the critical realist approach and I also show how I used the Cultural Historical Activity Theory as a cross-disciplinary framework for studying the development of learner leadership. The chapter also explains how I used it as a framework to collect data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



(A participant demonstrates the satisfaction of overcoming a hurdle.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear”.

(Nelson Mandela)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In striving to develop a theoretical framework for my research study I have been cognisant of the fact that I wanted my study to reflect a transformative interest in my desire to further understand learner leadership development. Yet, at the same time I also required an approach that would augment the agency and capacity of the research participants and understand what drives the youth to lead. Since schools are open, complex systems I needed an approach that would enable me to understand the nature of the reality of leadership outside of what we know about it and how we conceive it to be. It is for this reason that I have wrestled to come to grips and understand the Critical Realist approach as it offers a significant, stratified depth that would frame the enquiries into addressing the research questions.

Having read at length and re-read some of the works of Roy Bhaskar – which was further developed and elaborated on by the work of Andrew Sayer, Berth Danermark, Mats Ekstrom, as well as Margaret Archer (Sayer, 2000, p. 3; Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5; Houston, 2010, p. 74; Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008, p. 171) – I slowly muddled my way through this labyrinth of different types and various viewpoints that subsist within the realist paradigm. I slowly began to reach an untangled position that helped me to begin to make sense of and to develop a better understanding of Critical Realism (CR). Nonetheless, given the nature of my study I had decided to adopt the CR approach as I felt that this approach would best suit my study by providing a means to delve into the ontological depth of the study to surface and understand “what reality is, how it can be known and what ways are acceptable to do this” (Clark, MacIntyre & Cruickshank, 2007, p. 517) and how leadership is possibly developed in adolescence.

In this chapter I intend to describe and unpack basic CR within the parameters of simplicity, whilst maintaining a professional academic rigour that will do justice to the study – leadership development in adolescence. I will also explore concepts used in the study such as agency, structure and culture by briefly looking into Archer’s morphogenetic approach to Social Realism. Further to this I will unpack the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as it will form the epistemological framework to my study. The process of Expanded Learning will also be described and how CHAT will be used, acting as a framework in which data will be collected. Finally, I will briefly describe how adolescents develop as I draw on the work of researchers Bronfenbrenner (1977), Erikson (1963, as cited in Yelon, 1977) and van Linden and Fertman (1989) to develop a

basic, yet informative understanding of the process that takes place during this difficult transitional period of adolescence.

4.2 CRITICAL REALISM

Bhaskar's (1975; 1993; 1998) philosophical development of Critical Realism – as its name suggests – is a realist philosophy, which is to say that, “it claims that a world outside and independent of our conscious perception exists (reality) and that only some aspects of this world are objectively knowable via our senses” (Johnson & Smith, 2010, p. 6). Our senses are not always completely reliable, of course – for example, we can be fooled by illusions and we can misinterpret sense data. Nevertheless, Johnson and Smith (*ibid.*, p. 6) suggest that because reality is independent of our senses, when we misperceive an event, the happening and properties of that event are independent of our perception and understanding and the cause of the event operates even if we are not aware of its operation in a world that is described as an open system.

For the sake of this study I do not intend to elaborate in detail on the philosophy of Critical Realism but rather to describe the relevant and appropriate elements of the assumptions of the critical realist that I believe are apt for this study. In this chapter, I intend to focus specifically on describing (a) the nature of CR as the ‘under-labourer’; (b) the differentiated and stratified nature of reality; (c) causality and its mechanisms; and (d) structure and agency in this study.

4.2.1 The ‘under-labourer’

Bhaskar (1975) describes CR as an ‘under-labouring’ philosophical ontology – a meta-theory – that is aimed at human well-being and emancipation (Archer, 1998, p. 197; Price, 2008). In his work Bhaskar (2012) suggests that CR sets down a stratified and depth ontology whose social agenda is emancipation. Hartwig (2007, p. 96) explains that it is,

A movement in philosophy...that seeks to underlabour for science and other ways of knowing in order to promote the cause of truth and freedom, hence the transformation of social structures and other constraints that impede that cause and their replacement with wanted and needed ones, or emancipation.

Both Hesketh and Fleetwood (2006, pp. 683-684) and Houston (2010, p. 177) suggest that, “CR enables research to take place by interrogating the assumptions and presuppositions of any theory”. CR therefore describes and clarifies what reality is and the theories that can be formulated about it. By using CR, the researcher is able go beyond the subjective (reasons, thoughts, etc.) and observable reality – the empirical – to include thoughts, motives, intentions and the observable (Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008; Danermark et al., 2002).

In addition, Danermark et al. (2002, p. 108) state that, “Critical Realism concerns itself with acquiring knowledge of causal mechanisms that generate events and how the mechanisms actually generate the events”. Bhaskar (1989, as cited in Shipway, 2011, p. 54) defines this agenda as being,

The move from unneeded, unwanted, and oppressive to needed, wanted and empowering sources of determination.

Acting as an ‘under-labourer’ CR’s task is to expose and remove ideological obstacles and inconsistencies (*ibid.*) – allowing the researcher to ‘dig deep’ beneath the experiences of the participants, and possibly uncovering and discovering the ‘reality’ of leadership – providing an ontological depth to the study. According to Archer (1995, as cited in Wheelahan, 2007, p. 185), ontology will “act as both gatekeeper and bouncer of methodology” for the way we view and understand society affects the way in which it is studied. For example, the practice of leadership may appear to be healthy, however, this surface appearance could be potentially misleading since causal mechanisms – hidden in the ‘deeper’, surface layers – may have influenced behaviour differently to what is expected.

As an ontological framework, I believe that CR will provide the necessary scaffolding in which a balanced discussion of ontological questions could be made available through conceptual abstraction and realist causal analysis. The framework will speak to the questions: What is reality?; What is knowledge?; What is truth? – and for that matter, What constitutes leadership? This orientation argues that what is observed and experienced in social interactions is the result of the structures and mechanisms that exist in the *real*. CR will be useful in probing the emergent structures and regularities that arise out of learner leadership development in the school being studied.

CR could also help me to explain the processes of change that could emerge during the study, in order to acquire an ontological perspective of the organisation and the development of leadership. It may possibly allow me to probe deeper than the existing surface appearances of experience, into the history and culture, and the underlying levels of the participants to find the ‘real reality’ that exists beneath the actual and the empirical.

Researchers Tsoukas (1992, as cited in Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 27) and Benton and Craib (2001, pp. 120-121) suggest that CR, as a meta-theory, will be able to:

- Articulate a set of ontological and epistemological principles that will enable me to get beyond surface appearances that are often misleading and illuminate the real nature of the school (structures, events and processes) and the possible knowledge of it;
- Help to change unneeded, unwanted, unsatisfactory conditions and oppressive realities since Critical Realism is emancipatory;
- Create opportunities for participants to think, reflect and plan together (reflexivity);
- Help bring together a number of perspectives and functions of the school by specifying their individual domains of application, in a logically consistent way. Various relationships between various structures (Management Committee (MANCO), School Governing Body (SGB), RCLs and the individual members of those structures (headmaster, teachers, learners, parents) will be clarified and, ideally, the scope of application of these perspectives will be specified.

4.2.2 A differentiated and stratified reality

As a point of departure in understanding CR, I found that Bhaskar (1975; 1978; 1992;) displayed some concern about research that attempted to reduce reality only to the observable (collapsing actual events into the real) and that embraced the view that knowledge was derived from their experience of the world. He makes the point that “the world consists of generative mechanisms and not events” and that researchers should not attempt to conflate the actual events with the real (Bhaskar, 1975, p. 47).

According to Mingers (2004), Bhaskar distinguishes between transitive and intransitive objects of knowledge in the world. Bhaskar explains that “intransitive objects are the real things and structures, mechanisms and processes, events and possibilities of the world; and for the most part they are quite independent of us” (Bhaskar, 1975, p. 22). Mingers (2004, p. 93) points out that, “these events would exist whether or not they were observed or there were even observers”. Accordingly, “the existence of an intransitive object does not depend on our knowledge or perception of it... the world would exist whether or not humans did” (*ibid.*). Yet, on the other hand, Bhaskar (1975, p. 22) points out that transitive objects include theories, paradigms, models and methods. Mingers (2004) also argues that these objects are subjective and their existence is dependent on human activity (if people unexpectedly ceased to exist, transitive objects would cease to exist). Bhaskar (1989) points out that, “having established the intransitive *objects* of knowledge, we must recognise that the *production* of knowledge is very much the work of humans, and occurs in what we could call the *transitive* dimension” (as cited in Mingers, p. 94).

Table 4: Critical Realism ontology

	Real Domain	Actual Domain	Empirical Domain
Mechanisms	√		
Events	√	√	
Experiences	√	√	√

(Adapted from Bhaskar, 1978, p. 13)

According to Archer et al. (1998), Bhaskar regards, “reality [as] both intransitive (existing independently of humans) and stratified” (as cited in Mingers, 2004, p. 93). Nonetheless, Bhaskar (1975) in turn proposes a stratified depth ontology at studying reality (the Real, the Actual, and the Empirical), viewing the world as an open system (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 6). He postulates that the “world exists independently of humans and their investigation of them” (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 6) and that it is “structured, differentiated, and stratified” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5; Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000), which is susceptible to change. Critical Realists adopt the ontological assumption that reality is stratified into three specific

layers/domains/strata/levels: The Empirical, the Actual and the Real (Table 4), and are used interchangeably in Critical Realism.

According to Sayer (2000, p. 11) – in the context of the organisation – the *Real* represents social factors or phenomena which have certain structures (rules) and causal powers (control, co-operation) that have the potential to transform and to effect change. Kadyakapita (2013) suggests that our experience of such social factors or phenomena tends to be filtered by our socio-biographical characteristics and beliefs. In other words, according to Bergin, Wells and Owen (2008, p. 171), critical realists believe that, “a person notices and makes sense of social practices and objects through the theories that he/she embraces”. As a result, Kadyakapita (2013) suggests that, “we may observe certain experiences and miss other experiences for lack of theory to guide us in the observation or make us aware of the event”. The activation of these *generative mechanisms* or *causal powers* in the *Real* domain may give rise to patterns of *events* which take place in the *Actual* domain (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 13; Sayer, 2000, pp. 11-12).

The domain of the *Actual* is the sphere of events that do or do not occur. Additionally, we may experience or not experience the events. However, they still exist. Houston (2010, p. 75) explains that “the existence of social practices does not necessarily depend on our experiencing them”. Prowse (2010, p. 217) states that, “this includes the Empirical domain, but also includes those events that occur in the world but which nobody experiences”. As an example, if an apple falls from the apple tree but is not seen by someone, it occurs in the *Actual* domain.

When these events (social practices) are identified, they become *experiences* (Empirical domain), observable or measurable material effects such as social interactions, meetings, procedures, ceremonies, classroom practices and artefacts (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 13; Sayer, 2000, pp. 11-12; Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 20-21; Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008; Houston, 2010).

Kurki (2007, p. 365) suggests that, “The Empirical domain overlaps with the Actual in the sense that while the Actual domain comprises both the social practices that we may experience or may not experience, the Empirical comprises only those events which we actually experience”. Moreover, Mingers (2004, p. 94) also points out that, “the events or non-events (social practices) according to critical realists, are generated by causal mechanisms in the deeper domain, the domain of social structures, generative mechanisms and powers, the domain of the *Real*”.

According to Elder-Vass (2007, p. 161) the domain of the Real is the greatest of the strata of reality, encompassing the Actual and Empirical domains, however, they still “act as subsets of each other”. Mingers (2004, p. 94) reveals how the Real domain is the deepest and the widest of the three ‘subsets’ including the Actual (Figure 11). It is at this stratified level – the *Real* – that represents social factors or phenomena which have certain structures (rules) and causal powers (control, co-operation) that have the potential to transform and to effect change. Sayer (2000) explains that it is here that mechanisms and powers that produce and form events exist – “They have deep-lying invisible causes” (as cited in Kadyakapita, 2013, p. 70). According to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 55) these mechanisms are, “that which [would] cause something in the world to happen”.

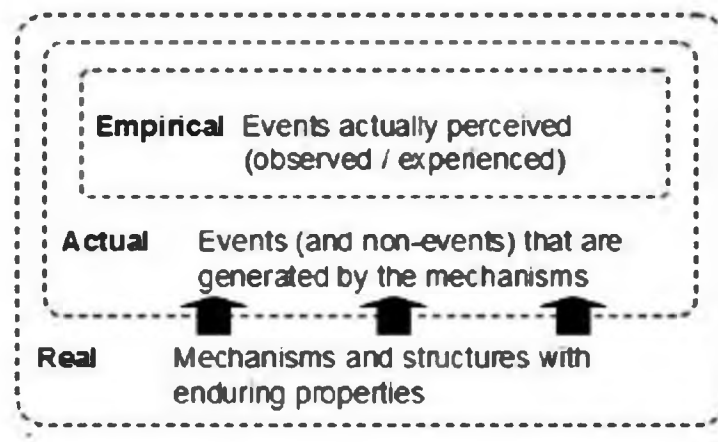


Figure 11: The three domains of the real (stratified ontology of critical realism)
(Source: Mingers, 2004, p. 94)

The power that is mentioned here, according to Hesketh and Fleetwood (2006, p. 68), refers to the “dispositions, capacities and potentials to cause certain things, but not others” but this is dependent on the structure of an object or type of a social relationship that takes place between people.

4.2.3 Causation and its mechanisms

Over the years there has been ‘keen’ debate that has centred around the concept of causation in the philosophical field of science and social science (Sayer, 2000, p. 13). According to Kurki (2007, p. 362) at the heart of these key debates has been the focus on the concept of causation. Here I attempt to summarise some of these key debates.

Sayer (2000, p. 16) points out that “social scientists are not only dealing with systems that are open but ones in which there are many interacting structures and mechanisms”. Although the critical realist attempts to seek the cause of an event within the ontological spectrum, Ackroyd and Fleetman (2000, p. 13) point out that “their attention is turned away from the flux of events and towards the causal mechanisms, social structures, powers and relations that govern them” – adding another domain, namely the (metaphoric) ‘deep’ or Real layer.

Sayer (2000) describes these causes as structural properties that produce or enable something, or in that matter, that lead to the resulting event, or even possibly restricting it. For Sayer (1992) it means “asking what causes something to happen is to ask what makes it happen, what produces, generates, creates or determines it, or, more weakly what enables or leads to it” (as cited in Danermark et al., 2002, p. 54). Researchers (Sayer, 2000; Danermark et al., 2002, p. 54; Kurki, 2007, pp. 364-366) suggest that these causes may include “material resources, social structures, social rules and norms, discourses – [the] reasons that agents have for their actions”.

Both Sayer (2000, pp. 13-14) and Danermark et al. (2002, pp. 34-35) agree that causation – in CR – has very little to do with the examination of the incidents of events but rather to “identify the mechanisms and how they work, and discovering if they have been activated and under what conditions”. Sayer (*ibid.*, p. 14) explains that in order to elucidate the reason for the existence of particular mechanisms it will involve having to discover the nature of the structure or object which possesses that mechanism or power (Figure 12). Causal analysis cannot depend on perception alone, for Bergin, Wells and Owen (2008, p. 172) and Sayer (2000, p. 14) argue that, “to be [and to cause] is not to be perceived [but] to be able to do”.

Sayer (2000, p. 14) points out that, “objects are part of structures” and suggests that these structures could be described as a “set of internally related elements whose causal powers, when combined, are emergent from those of their constituents”. According to Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000, p. 30) these “emergent powers [in social structures] are irreducible to those of their constituent parts” meaning that the causal powers – for example of leadership – cannot be explained by reducing them (leadership) to the powers of specific followers. Ackroyd and Fleetwood (*ibid.*) suggest that conceptualising the latter could connect them to the wider structure of relations of cooperation from which they could derive their existence.

It is also argued (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000, p. 30) that “these emergent powers are created when some entities are *necessarily* (or *intrinsically*) related to each other to form a structure” (e.g. the relationship between parent and child; or the relationship between a leader and follower). Both Berger (1987) and Sayer (1984, as cited in Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000, p. 30) suggest that these entities are essentially linked when their identity depends on there being in a relationship with the rest of the components of the structure. Ackroyd and Fleetwood (*ibid.*) describe structure as a set of simultaneously compelling and empowering rules and resources which are instigated within human interaction. Referring to the work of Giddens (1976; 1984) and Manicas (1980), Ackroyd and Fleetwood (*ibid.*) acknowledge that “these rules shape interaction while at the same time being reproduced in this very process of interaction”.

According to Hesketh and Fleetwood (2005, p. 687), “power in a structure or in a person or in an object may be inactive or dormant”, whereas, Sayer (2000, p. 14) points out that, “whether these powers are ever exercised depends on contingent conditions” (Figure 12). However, researchers (Sayer, 2000, p. 14; Danermark et al., 2002; Hesketh & Fleetwood, 2006; Kurki, 2007) do suggest that if these powers are activated or triggered, the results – which may or may not be observed – “will depend on other conditions”. Both Danermark et al. (2002, p. 56) and Sayer (2000, p. 16) note that different causal mechanisms may produce the same outcomes at different times. However, Sayer (2000, p. 15) makes the point that “sometimes, different causal mechanisms can [also] produce the same results – for instance, you can lose your job for a variety of reasons”.

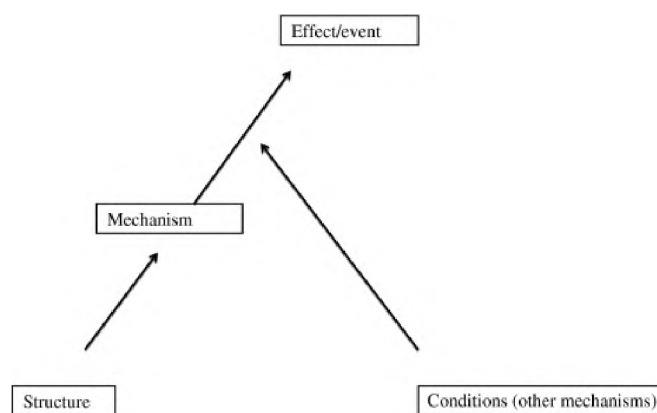


Figure 12: Critical realist view of causation
(Adapted from Sayer, 2000, p. 15)

Causal mechanisms are often deemed to be multifaceted and difficult to detect as they subsist deep within social structures originating in the domain of the Real (Kurki, 2007, p. 364). However, we could become aware of their being by observing or experiencing the effect/event or absence of them. There are numerous causes which are described as thoughts, motives, attitudes, beliefs, discourses or power.

The use of causal analysis should demonstrate how the generative mechanisms actually enable observed phenomena to be what they are. Danermark et al. (2002, p. 52) describe that a causal analysis deals with the explanation of “why what happens actually does happen”. From a critical realist perspective, researchers (Sayer, 2000; Danermark et al., 2002, pp. 88-97; Hesketh & Fleetwood, 2006; Kurki, 2007) suggest that the use of inference and more specifically abduction and retrodution (see Section 5) would be useful procedures in analysis cause in an event. For example, in the natural world, magnetism causes iron filings to stick to each other. We observe them stick to each other but not the cause itself, magnetism (Danermark, 2002, p. 58; Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008, p. 172).

4.2.4 Structure and agency

According to Archer (1982, p. 1) social structure is a human product which shapes individuals and influences their interaction. But she does warn that successive theoretical developments have tilted either towards structure or towards action, a ‘slippage’ that has gained impetus over time.

However, researchers (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloniemi, 2013, p. 51) argue that structural factors cannot be divorced from agency, pointing out that, “agency is shaped and constrained by the structures in question” (see Section 1.6.1). These structures are said to have influence on human activity and the degree of individual agency within the structures. Researchers agree that “structural factors such as social class, race, gender, economic, and occupational conditions strongly influence individual agency” (*ibid.*, p. 48).

In this study I focus on the relationship between structure and human agency and so will therefore be briefly referring to Archer’s Morphogenetic Cycle to explain the “complex interchanges that produce change in a system’s given form (structure or state) – a morphostasis – which has structural elaboration” (Archer, 1982, p. 458). According to Archer (*ibid.*) the morphogenetic viewpoint “is not only dualistic but sequential, dealing with endless cycles of – structural

conditioning/social interaction/ structural elaboration – unravelling the dialectical interplay between structure and action”.

Archer’s morphogenetic argument is that structure and action operate over different time periods which are based on two propositions:

- a. Structure logically pre-dates the action(s) which transform it;
- b. Structural elaboration logically postdates those actions (Figure 13).

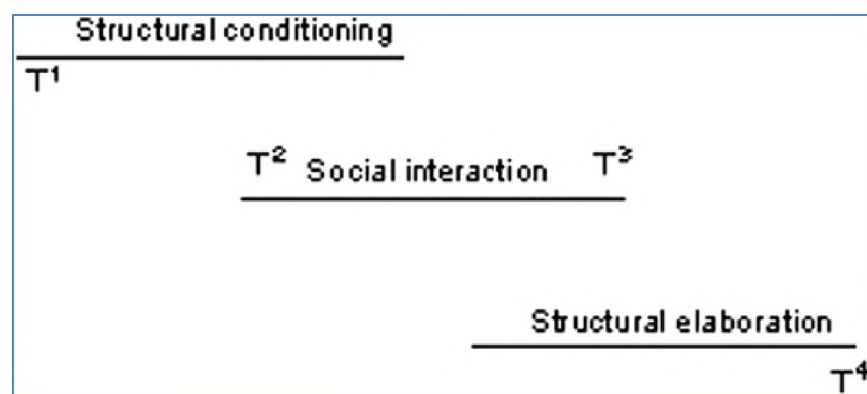


Figure 13: Morphogenetic Cycle
(Adapted from Archer, 1982, p. 468)

Archer (1982, p. 486) explains that, “Although all three lines are in fact continuous, the analytical element only consists in breaking up the flows into intervals determined by the problem in hand”. She (*ibid.*) points out that, “Given any problem, and accompanying periodization, the projection of the three lines backwards and forwards would connect up with the anterior and posterior morphogenetic cycles”. It is described as “the bedrock of an understanding of systematic properties, of structuring over time, which enables explanations of specific forms of structural elaboration to be advanced” – time is equally integral to morphostasis (*ibid.*).

4.2.5 Conclusion

Critical Realism makes it possible to ‘tease out’ the cause(s) of an event within the stratified ontological spectrum, identifying and interrogating the causal mechanisms, social structures, powers (e.g. organisational culture, collaborative learning), shaping how organisations function

and the relations that govern how leaders and co-workers function within the organisation (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000).

A key point of interest would be the extent to which leadership in the institution (school) is produced by the actors (teachers, parents, learners) and yet still exists externally to them, to shape their behaviour (*ibid.*, p. 11). It is the aim of this study to “penetrate behind the surface of experiences and perceptions and to account for what occurs in terms of an understanding of connections at the levels of structures” (*ibid.*, p. 13). In order to understand these connections, I will attempt to explore the possible relations (interactions) that exist between the social structures or phenomenon within the institution, in search of empirical evidence to:

- Identify the forms of relationships that exist;
- Identify the generative mechanisms/causal powers that are the source of the relations;
- Explain what happens when these forces are activated in the institution’s structure and its learners.

In searching for an epistemological framework, I found that the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) provided the necessary structural fibre needed that would complement the ontological framework that I would be implementing in this study (see Section 1.4). According to both Engeström (2001) and Daniels (2008) CHAT provides dialectics – in the notion of contradictions, reflexivity found through the expansive learning cycle, and agency – embedded in the idea of transforming activity systems which enable the participants to externalise their development by working more effectively on their object (Mukute, 2010, p. 89).

4.3 CULTURAL HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY (CHAT)

The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is described by Engeström as a “dynamic theory” which has become “a global multidisciplinary research approach” (Engeström et al., 1978; Engeström, 2000). Nardi (1996) points out that CHAT is used by a variety of disciplines today, whilst Daniels (2008, p. 115) suggests that the theory seeks “to analyse the development of consciousness within practical social activity”. It is a “philosophy and cross-disciplinary framework for studying different forms of human practices” (Kuutti, 1996, p. 7). According to

Engeström (1987), the practice can be seen as a combined set of developmental processes where both the individual and its social levels are interwoven and studied together, a “complex web of activity” (as cited in L. Ross, M. Rix, & J. Gold, 2005, p. 131). It is a new approach and is aimed at understanding the mental capabilities and transforming human life. It is important to note that the true meaning of the word ‘activity’, as associated with the German or Russian word is, “doing in order to transform something” (*ibid.*).

4.3.1 CHAT and its activity systems

The Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) will be used to organise the research study into an activity system as a unit of analysis, providing a rigorous framework for observing leadership development and action in the socio-cultural context of practising leadership in the school (Engeström, 1987). The subject within the activity system can consist of a group, of any size, pursuing a specific goal in a purposeful way (Peal & Wilson, 2001). I use CHAT in order to observe how leadership development is influenced through intervening agency in the case study of the school.

4.3.1.1 Brief background

The Cultural Historical Activity Theory is viewed as being contextual and transformative, generated through processes of reflexive investigation and learning. Learning takes place through combined activities purposefully carried out towards a common object, that being leadership development in this study (Figure 14). It will assist in examining and understanding the way the learners act when they engage, interact and learn in adopting servant leadership as an alternative form of leadership within their organisation.

When the participants in the study (subjects) take action within their school environment (activity system) in order to develop their leadership skills (purpose/object) (e.g. outcome-better community), the actors, artefacts, etc., become bound up and entangled in a web of activity (Ross et al., 2005, p. 132). According to researchers (*ibid.*) this would be mediated through psychological tools (signs, language) and material tools (physical instruments and artefacts), all having a historical origin and becoming meaningful and valued through their use in a culture. Therefore, through their use, they exert a cultural and historical influence. Engeström (1999, p. 8) believes that “local activity resorts to historically formed mediating artefacts, cultural resources that are

common to society at large”. The past exerts an influence on a situation. The subjects, consequently, “are able to solve problems, complete tasks through the means created by previous generations” (Engeström, 1999, p. 8). The stories of past situations could be drawn upon to inform our understanding and their use through talking exerts influence through their re-telling (Ross et al., 2005, p. 132). So the relationship could be: subject-instrument-object, in which what is done and how it is done will be mediated through tools and signs (e.g. Government policy, school policy, leadership workshop, etc.) regarding what is and is not appropriate to leadership development. Contradictions and tensions that arise during the mediation will provide the opportunity for learning. These are structural tensions that could subsist between related issues that pull in opposite direction, manifesting them as conflict on the surface – a disturbance/discord.

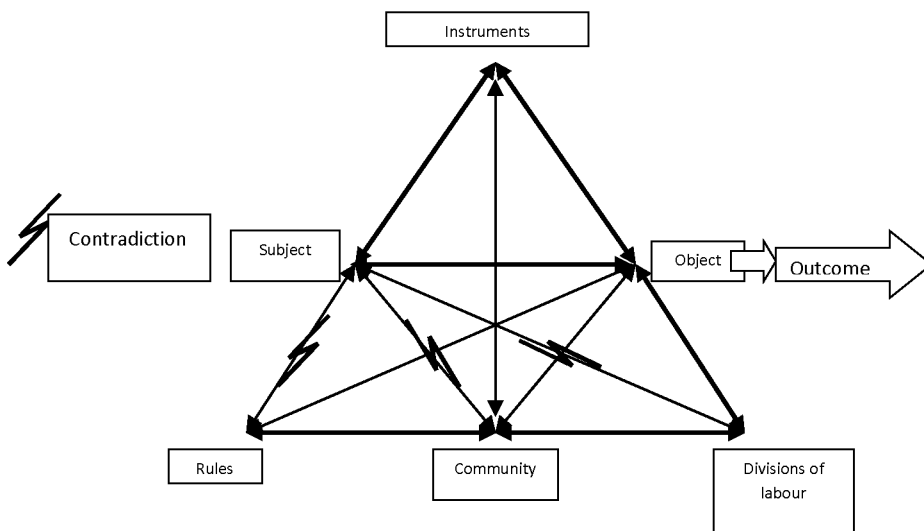


Figure 14: Engeström's human activity system (2nd generation)

(Source: Engeström, 2000b)

The study is concerned with how the learners will be able to transform themselves and to identify any effects that this transformation has on their school environment. Researchers Ross, Rix and Gold (2005, p. 133) and Gunter (2001, p. 132), suggest that CHAT is an ideal framework focusing on the dynamics of change, tensions and learning that may be engendered in the intervention, allowing the researcher to analyse activity as a continuous process of conflict and development, which does not have a linear cause-and-effect assumption. Gunter (2001, p. 133) elaborates on the elements of an activity system in CHAT in Table 5.

Table 5: Elements of an activity system

ELEMENTS OF ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION OF THE ELEMENT
Subject	An individual or collective group of people whose agency is chosen as a point of view.
Object	The orientation of the action being undertaken by the subject, a horizon never fully reached.
Instrument/Tools	The conceptual and material artefacts or tools – includes symbols and language – used for understanding or transforming the object.
Rules	The way actions are structured and which are often historically located, mediating the interaction between the subject and the community, and subject and object.
Community	The setting in which activity and action takes place. Seen as the group of people who share the same object.
Division of labour	How the activity is divided into separate actions (horizontal and vertical allocation of responsibility), understand-taken by individual(s) in co-ordination with others (relationship with others).
Outcome	The consequence/desired result of the activity.

(Adapted from Engeström, 2005; Daniels, 2001; Peal & Wilson, 2001; Gunter, 2001)

4.3.1.2 The development of Activity Theory (AT)

According to Engeström (1987) “an activity is a collective, systemic formation that has a complex mediation structure” (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 120). In attempting to understand CHAT it is necessary to describe and differentiate between the three theoretical generations of activity systems and understand how these activity systems have evolved.

A. 1st generation activity

The first generation of AT draws greatly on Vygotsky’s perception of mediation. This theory was first developed in the early 1920’s by a Russian psychologist, Vygotsky and his counterparts and further reworked and extended by researchers Leontiev (1978) and Engeström (1996).

Vygotsky (1978) argued that an individual never acts directly in response to their environment even with inborn capacity but rather through a mediating act (cradle). Engeström (1999b; 1999c, 2001, p. 134) points out that Vygotsky’s (1978) tripartite model (Figure 15) demonstrates that “the

conditioned direct connection between stimulus (S) and response (R) was transcended by a complex, mediated act”. Vygotsky (1978) believes that mediation occurs in the relationship between the subject (human agent) and objects by way of cultural means (tools and signs) – a mediating artefact. According to Engeström (1999b; 1999c; 2001, p. 134), the idea of Vygotsky’s cultural mediation of actions is “commonly expressed as the triad of subject, object, and mediating artefact”.

Vygotsky (1978, p. 40) believed that, “the individual could no longer be understood without his or her cultural means”. According to Engeström (1999c; 2001, p. 134), “Society could no longer be understood without the agency of individuals who use and produce artefacts” (*ibid.*). No longer were objects seen as raw material for the formation of logical operations in the subject – they needed mediation artefacts

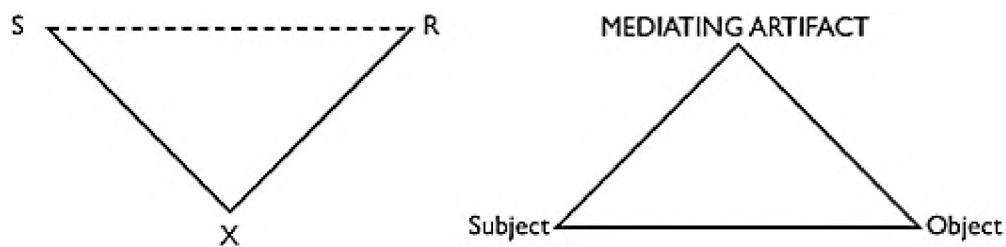


Figure 15: Vygotsky’s model of mediated act and (B) its common reformulation
(Adapted from Engeström, 1987)

The researchers were “concerned with psychological impacts of activity, social conditions and systems that were produced in and through such activity” (Engeström, 1987, p. 1). They argued that since creativity was identified as a social process it would require the necessary tools, artefacts and cultures in which to flourish (*ibid.*, p. 1). According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 40), the “objects became cultural entities and the object-orientedness of action became the key to understanding human psyche”.

Nonetheless, Engeström (2001, p. 134) argued that because the unit of analysis – in Vygotsky’s model – was too “individually focused it created some limitations”, thus it led to the development of the second generation activity system.

B. 2nd generation activity

The second generation of activity was influenced by the work done by Leontiev (1981, pp. 210–213) in particular in his illustration of the “primeval collective hunt” (cradle). Here it is explained that there is a critical distinction between the individual action and collective activity (*ibid.*). Leontiev (1978) clarified that the uppermost level of the collective activity is driven by an object-related motive; whilst the middle level of individual/group action is driven by an object-related motive; and finally, the bottom level of automatic operations is driven by the conditions and tools of the action at hand (*ibid.*).

According to researchers (Warmington et al., 2004, p. 2; Daniels, 2008, pp. 121-122), Engeström (1987) expanded the original Vygotskian triangle of activity to enable the activity system to be studied as a social relationship through the absorption of the elements of ‘community’, ‘rules’ and ‘division of labour’ and with an importance placed on the scrutiny of the mediation of the interactions/relationships between the system's components. Here systems of activity are examined at the macro level of the collective and the community in preference to a micro level concentration on the individual actor or agent operating with tools (Warmington et al., 2004; Daniels, 2008). It is also argued by Daniels (2008, p. 121) that these tools or artefacts act as integral and inseparable components of human functioning.

Ross, Rix and Gold (2005, p. 134) explain that, “The action of one person only makes sense as part of the pattern of relationships which form the collective activity”. It could be said that the leader’s actions are linked to the action of others who engage in other activities within the organisation. According to Ross et al. (Ross, Rix and Gold, 2005) the actions of individuals or groups are interrelated with the contextual elements, for example, the procedures and rules which guide behaviour, the community which makes sense of actions and the way work is organised and carried out. It is suggested that these elements within the activity system all have a cultural and historical formation, including a social context which mediate the actions of the participants in the system (*ibid.*).

The object that is depicted by an oval, points towards the object-oriented actions that are “always, explicitly or implicitly, characterised by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and

potential for change” (Engeström, 1999, p. 7; Warmington et al., 2004, p. 2; Daniels, 2008, p. 122). Daniels (2008) suggests that the restructuring and description of the object be seen as sources of change and development (Engeström, 1999). Significantly, Engeström’s model (Figure 16) draws upon Ilyenkov’s work (1977, 1982) which “foregrounds *contradictions* within activity systems (within and between components) as the driving force of change and development” (Warmington, et al., 2004, p. 4).

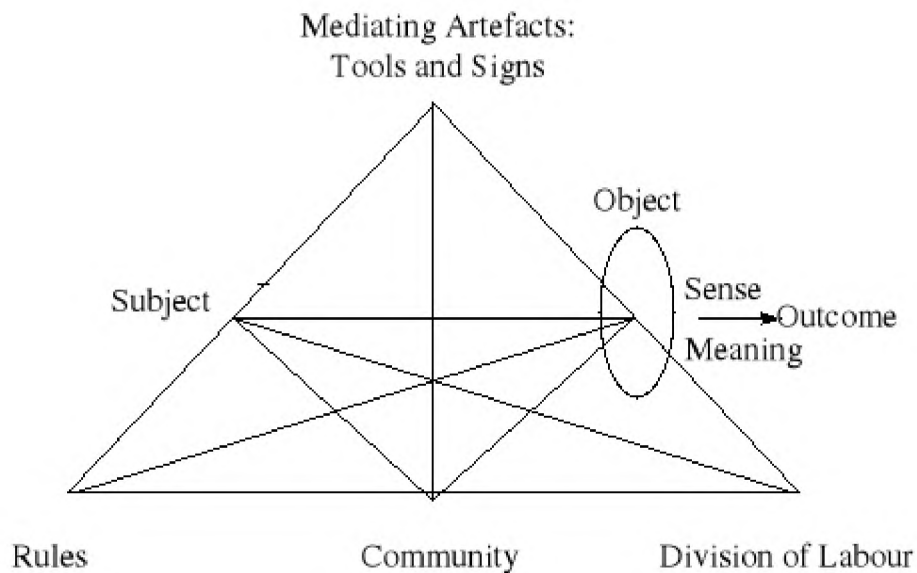


Figure 16: Structure of a human activity system
(Adapted from Engeström, 1987, p. 78)

C. 3rd generation activity

According to Daniels (2008, p. 122), Engeström’s (1999b) third generation of activity system “takes joint activity or practice as the unit of analysis for activity theory, rather than individual activity”. Engeström (*ibid.*) maintained that it was important to extend beyond the single activity system and to examine and work towards transformation of a network of activities. Engeström (*ibid.*) also points out that “analysis is concerned with the process of social transformation and incorporates the structure of the social worlds, with particular emphasis upon the conflictual nature of social justice” (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 123). He goes on to further state that “instability and contradictions are regarded as the motive force of change and development and that the

transitions and reorganisations within and between activity systems as part of evolution (*ibid.*). Engeström (1999) sees the potential in the exploration of “concepts of boundary object, translation, and boundary-crossing to analyse the unfolding of object-orientated cooperative activity of several actors, focusing on tools, and means of construction of boundary objects in the concrete work processes” (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 122).

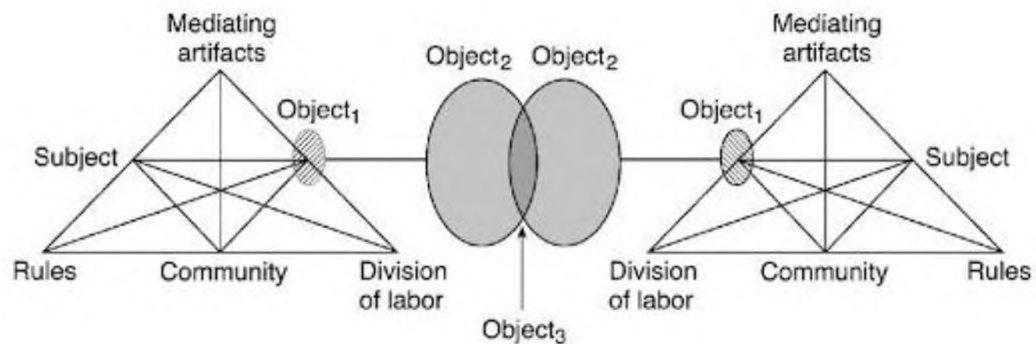


Figure 17: Two interacting activity systems
(Adapted from Engeström, 1999)

Daniels (2008, p. 123) suggests that the aims of the third generation of activity theory (Figure 17) are “to develop conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives and networks of interacting activity systems” – each of these activity systems possibly exhibiting contradictions and tension patterns. It is proposed that the third-generation activity theory endorses the fact that all activity systems are part of a network of activity systems that in its totality constitutes human society. Researchers, Roth and Lee (2007, p. 201) explain that,

Diverse activity systems are the result of a continuous historical process of progressive job diversifications and collective division of labour at the social level. Thus, during societal development... the network is formed as activity systems lose their self-containment and exchange entities, including objects, means of productions, people, and various forms of texts. The first activity system is understood as a concrete universal, which particularises itself into many mutually constitutive activity systems.

This 3rd generation activity system is said to develop conceptual tools of dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems, as it draws on the ideas of dialogicality and multi-voicedness expanding on the framework of the 2nd generation system (Engeström, 1987; Daniels, 2008, p. 123). It is suggested that contradictions and struggles take place in the network of activity defining the motives and object calling for an analysis of power and control (*ibid.*).

Activity Theory could be further summarised with Engeström (1999b; Daniels, 2008, p. 123) proffering five principles that describe the current state of Activity Theory.

4.3.1.3 Principles of activity theory (3rd generation)

A. The first principle

Engeström (1999) suggested that a collective, artefact-mediated and object-orientated activity system is identified as the prime unit of analysis, which is viewed in its network relations to other activity systems (Daniels, 2008). Referring to the work of Engeström (1999), Daniels (2001, p. 93) points out that goal directed individual and group actions are relatively independent yet still subordinate units of analysis. Engeström (1999) explains that, “They are eventually understood when interpreted against the background of the entire activity system which realise and reproduce themselves by generating actions and operations” (Daniels (2001, p. 93).

B. The second principle

Daniels (2008, p. 124) describes the multi-voicedness nature of the activity system – as “the nexus of multiple points of view, traditions and interests”. Within an activity, the division of labour creates different positions for the participants as they carry their own diverse histories (Engeström, 1999; Daniels, 2008, p. 124). Daniels (2008, p. 124) also points out that the activity system itself – brings multiple layers and strands of history which is fixed in the system’s artefacts, rules and conventions). In networks of interacting activity systems, the multi-voicedness is said to increase. It becomes a source of “tension and innovation which demands actions of translation and negotiation” (*ibid*, p. 124).

C. The third principle

The historicity of the system is the third principle. As the shaping and transformation of activity systems are developed over time, their problems and potentials are only then understood against

their own history (*ibid.*). It suggests that history not only be considered as local history of the activity and its objects, but also as the history of ideas and tools that have also shaped the activity (Daniels, 2008, p. 124).

D. The fourth principle

This principle is proffered as contradictions and they are described as not only holding the central role as sources for change and development but also as acting as the driving force. However, Engeström (2001) warns that contradictions must not simply be viewed as problems or conflicts but rather the accumulation of historical tensions that exist/develop within and between activity systems (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 125). Roth and Lee (2007, p. 203) describe these activity systems as being “open systems”. They suggest that “when these inner contradictions become conscious, they become the primary driving force that brings about change and development in and between activity systems” (*ibid.*). Engeström (2001) explains that when an activity system takes on a new element – from the outside – it often results in a secondary contradiction becoming irritated where an old element collides with a new one (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 125). Although this generates a disturbance and conflict, it also encourages change to take place within and between the systems in question.

E. The fifth principle

Finally, the fifth principle asserts that there is a possibility of expansive transformation in the activity systems that move through fairly lengthy cycles of qualitative transformation (Engeström, 1999; Daniels, 2008, p. 125). Some individuals – that are participating in the activity system – will begin to question and deviate from the system’s established norms as the contradictions are irritated (Daniels, 2008). According to Daniels (2008, p. 126) this could “escalate into collaborative envisioning and a deliberate collective change effort”. He (*ibid.*) affirms that an expansive transformation is only achieved when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a fundamentally wider perspective of the potential of the emerging activity.

4.3.2 Expansive learning

According to Engeström (2015), “Expansive learning distinguishes itself by its focus on learning within and between activities in society at large” (as cited in Sannino, Engeström, & Lemos, 2016, p. 6). Expansive learning involves the creation of new knowledge and new practices for a newly emerging activity – learning that is embedded and constitutive of quality transformation of the entire activity system. This transformation may be triggered by the introduction of new technology or a set of new regulations, but not dependable on them (Daniels, 2008, p. 136).

According to both Engeström (2001, p. 133) and Daniels (2008, p. 126) the learner (subject or organisation) acquires some identifiable knowledge or skills in such a way that a corresponding and relatively lasting transformation (change) in the behaviour of the subject(s) may be observed. It begins with the subject questioning an accepted practice which then expands into a collective movement (Engeström, 1987). Engeström (*ibid.*) further points out that that expansive learning is constructed on overcoming existing contradictions and is concerned with the resolution of tensions and contradictions in a system that involves objects, artefacts and perspectives of participants. Daniels (2001; 2008) sees it as involving the doing, reflecting and improvement of the practice – which essentially is praxis at one level, while at the same time it looks at how every day and scientific knowledge interact. It requires collaborative learning, seeking to address new and emerging problems, creating new knowledge and building local flexibility.

The presupposition that exists – the acquired knowledge or skill which is viewed as being stable and reasonably well defined – is violated in the kinds of learning that take place in work organisations without the presence of the instructor. Engeström (2001, p. 137) argues that “the challenge to expansive learning is being able to recognise that people and organisations are learning all the time and that it is not stable – not even defined or understood ahead of time”. For Sannino et al. (2016, p. 7), “It goes beyond the acquisition of well- established sets of knowledge and the participation in relatively stable practices”. With change/transformation of our personal lives and organisational practices, new forms of activity – that don’t already exist – must be learned.

The situation being studied is one in which the subjects are learning something that is not known. The knowledge being learned is being learned as it is being developed. “They are literally learned

as they are being created” (*ibid.*, p. 138). Engeström (Daniels, 2008, p. 126) acknowledges the importance of this form of learning and draws on Bateson’s (1972) framework of levels of learning (Table 6) arguing that learning involves the reformulation of problems and the creation of new tools for engaging these problems. The continued production of new problem-solving tools enables subjects to transform the entire activity system, potentially creating and transforming (expanding) the objects of the activity (Engeström, 1987, as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 126).

All three types of learning could take place within expansive learning, however, they gain a different meaning, motive and perspective as part of the expansive process. According to Engeström (1999a) a full cycle of expansive transformation (Table 7) may be understood as a collective journey through the zone of proximal development of the activity. The completion of a full cycle of expansive learning is said to take up to two to three years.

Table 6 : Bateson's levels of learning

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
LEVEL 1	Conditioning through the acquisition of responses deemed correct within the given context.	Learning the correct answers and behaviours in the classroom.
LEVEL 2	Acquisition of the deep-seated rules and patterns of behaviour.	Learning the ‘hidden’ curriculum of what it means to be a student.
LEVEL 3	Radical questioning of the sense and meaning of the context and construction of a wider alternative context.	Learning to change in organisational practices.

(Source: Daniels, 2008, p. 126)

For the purpose of this study and due to time constraints, it will be implemented for a year. The cycle will act as the framework where the data collecting process of the study will take place. The process is outlined below:

Table 7: Expansive learning cycle

ACTION 1-	<p>QUESTIONING:</p> <p>The individuals will be encouraged to question, criticise, or reject some aspects of the accepted practice of leadership within the organisation.</p>
ACTION 2-	<p>SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS:</p> <p>This will involve the mental, discursive, or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out the causes or explanatory mechanisms, evoking “why?” and “how?” questions and explanatory principles. This will be divided into two further stages within this action:</p> <p>A- HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: It will seek to explain the situation by tracing the organisation’s origination and evolution;</p> <p>B- ACTUAL-EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: It will aim to explain the situation by constructing a picture of the organisation’s inner systemic relations.</p>
ACTION 3-	<p>MODELLING THE NEW SOLUTION:</p> <p>The newly found explanatory relationship will be modelled through the use of publicly observable and transmittable means (workshops/focus groups) to construct an explicit, simplified model of the new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation.</p>
ACTION 4-	<p>EXAMINING THE NEW MODEL:</p> <p>The new model that has been created will be examined, run, operated, and experimented on in order to fully grasp its dynamics, potentials, and limitations.</p>
ACTION 5-	<p>IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW MODEL:</p> <p>This phase will concretise the new model by means of practical applications, enrichments, and conceptual extensions.</p>
ACTION 6-	<p>REFLECTION ON PROGRESS:</p> <p>The participants reflect on and evaluate the process that has been developed making changes where necessary.</p>
ACTION 7-	<p>CONSOLIDATION OF NEW PRACTICE:</p> <p>The outcomes of the process are now consolidated into a new, stable form of practice.</p>

(Source: Engeström, 1999, p. 383)

4.3.3 The argument for CHAT in leadership

According to Engeström (1999), behaviour – in CHAT – is viewed as being “embedded in [a] collectively organised, artefact-mediated activity systems” (as cited in Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012, p. 257). For Gronn (2003, p. 285) schools are object orientated systems and he suggests that CHAT could be a useful/ideal theoretical framework in which to study leadership, in such an environment.

Vennebo and Ottesen (2012, p. 258) describe schools as historic formations where education serves a dual purpose. Firstly, to meet society’s demand for labour; and secondly, to meet peoples’ needs for learning and development. It is further suggested – by Vennebo and Ottesen (2012, p. 267) – that leadership be recognised as “an emergent property which is played out as a complex chain of actions, orientated by purposes that are constituted in the inter-play of hierarchical and distributed dimensions of agency and authority”. The utilisation of resources and tools becomes fundamental in regulating and giving direction. Therefore, a means to explain ways in which agency, initiative and authority are engaged in is needed (*ibid.*). It is argued that CHAT could provide the necessary framework to “investigate leadership as emergent in historical activities and situated actions and operations” (*ibid.*, p. 286).

It is pointed out that as CHAT has been widely used to study ground-breaking work in many disciplines and backgrounds and given that educational leadership is expected to add to the transformation of practices, CHAT could be a promising approach in the study of leadership in schools (*ibid.*, p. 5).

4.3.4 Tools for learning

Ross, Rix and Gold (2005) suggest that as individuals are engaged in their actions they become either constrained or enabled in the situation that occurs. According to them, “this interdependence – between individuals and the context – provides for a distribution of understanding across a situation composed of other actors, artefacts, documents and tools” (*ibid.* p. 132). In his work, Rogoff (1990) points out that the distribution of cognition is “stretched over” material and cultural artefacts. It is explained that as the actors, artefacts, documents and tools all become bound up and entangled in an action – where a cultural and historical influence is prevalent – a web of activity

results (Ross et al., 2005, p. 132). Engeström (1987) describes this web of activity as a system of collective activity.

Earlier in the study, leadership was described as an action where influence is exerted (see Section 3.2) and according to Gronn (2000, p. 331) because leadership relies on the reciprocation of relations and mutuality, it “renders meaningless any assumption about leadership being embodied in just one individual”. Ross et al. (2000) suggest that in the production of an object, prominence is given to the mediation of action through social and cultural tools or artefacts in CHAT.

It is explained (Ross et al., 2005, p. 132; Engeström, 1999) that due to the development and expansion of the activity system from an individual approach to a joint activity or practice, the focus of the unit of analysis now changes to one that is “composed of social and collective elements with the focus now being on the practice of multiple subjects”. A participant’s actions are driven by individual motives and purposes but sense can only be made as part of the activity because other participants in the activity also have their own motives. Ross et al. (2005, p. 135) point out that “leadership occurs through exertion of influence” and suggest that although it requires a reciprocal interdependence to lead it is still, nevertheless, mediated by tools, signs, rules, the community and the allocation of roles, which all have a historical origin, a cultural construction and a social content.

It is argued that leaders that are appointed may not necessarily find that their inherited authority is readily accepted by their followers and it will only begin to change once the participants of an activity system are able to collaborate to develop local meaning and build interdependent relationships (*ibid.*). As this happens, disturbances, tensions and contradictions appear to surface. Blackler, Crump and MacDonald (1999) explain that the surfacing of contradictions and disturbances between the elements of the activity system could become a source of learning and change where problems that have been raised lead to a search for causes (as cited in Ross et al., 2005, p. 135). However, Engeström (1999, p. 381) suggests that participants could question and reflect on these problems and pursue them in what he calls a search action – a joint examination of causes.

Finally, I believe that it is necessary to briefly describe how adolescents develop as I draw on the work of researchers Bronfenbrenner (1977), Erikson (1963, as cited in Yelon, 1977) and van

Linden and Fertman (1998). Although my study is not positioned in a psychological paradigm I still believe that it is imperative to be able to develop a basic but yet informative understanding of the process that takes place during this difficult transitional period of time of adolescence. Adolescents are appointed to various positions as leaders and are expected to lead competently. However, there is an internal struggle that takes place within each individual and it is necessary to understand this when exploring learner leadership development.

4.4 UNDERSTANDING YOUTH/ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Although the focus of my study is not in the psychological discipline I do feel the importance of developing some theoretical understanding as to how young people develop. Here I will draw on the work of researchers Bronfenbrenner (1997), Erikson (1963), and van Linden and Fertman (1998) to develop a basic yet informative understanding of the process that takes place during this difficult transitional period of time of adolescence. Young people have always found adolescence a “very busy time of their lives as they attempt to sort out their lives and their futures” (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Researchers (*ibid.*) explain that it is a significant period of time for them as they are embroiled in a challenging and yet demanding transition during which they give up their childhood freedoms. Here they begin to wrestle with having to learn new adult roles and begin to experience the uncertainties of the future. They begin to “wonder and worry about whether they will fail or succeed” – will they be accepted and recognised (*ibid.*). Iannai (1998, pp. 22-23) explains that they interrogate the questions of “Who am I?” and “Where do I fit in?” On top of this, the youth are expected to take on various forms of leadership roles within their homes, communities and schools, and sometimes it is in difficult situations. Nonetheless, our youth will have to fill these roles in the future – either in families, sports teams or businesses – as leaders.

However, at this juncture of the study it would be useful to develop an understanding of how the child first starts to develop as he/she grows up to experience adolescence and then work towards the point where the struggles of adolescence are focused on.

4.4.1 The development of the child

Urie Bronfenbrenner was an American developmental psychologist, who was born in the Soviet Union on 29 April 1917. He is most known for his Ecological Systems theory of child development. His scientific work and his assistance to the United States government helped in the

formation of the Head Start program in 1965 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urie_Bronfenbrenner). Bronfenbrenner's research and his theory was key in changing the perspective of developmental psychology by calling attention to the large number of environmental and societal influences on child development. He was concerned with the social forces that "make human beings human" (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D06E5D81530F934A1575AC0A9639C8B63>) Bronfenbrenner (*ibid.*) also argued that an awareness of these forces, chief among them strong family ties, should underpin social policy affecting children and families. In an interview with the Syracuse Post-Standard in 1996, Bronfenbrenner stated that, "We think of the fact that learning is something you do in school, but what happens in a family enables you to learn in school". He goes on to explain that it is, "Not because your parents are teaching you arithmetic, although that won't do any harm; it's because you learn from them how to relate to very complicated things" (*ibid.*).

Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 514) also argued that:

The understanding of human development demands going beyond the direct observation of behaviour on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject.

Bronfenbrenner (*ibid.*) sees this interaction of systems as the "ecology of human development" and defines it as:

The scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life span, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate environments in which it lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded.

This system (Figure 18) that Bronfenbrenner proposed and first introduced in the 1970's is composed of five socially organised subsystems that help support and guide human growth. Berk (2000, pp. 23-38) explains that these systems range from the *microsystem*, which refers to the relationship between a developing person and their immediate environment, such as school and family, to the *macrosystem*, which refers to institutional patterns of culture, such as the economy and bodies of knowledge. Filling the in-between

systems are, firstly, the *mesosystem*, which provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem, secondly, the *exosystem*, which is the social system which impacts the child's development by interacting with some of their *microsystem*, and finally, the *chronosystem*, which encompasses the dimension of time, relating to the child's environment.

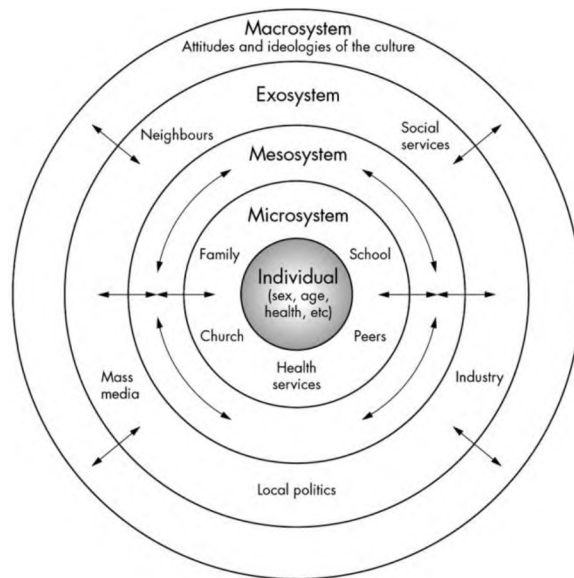


Figure 18: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development
(Source: Bronfenbrenner, 1997)

Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 518) suggests that, “If you wish to understand the relation between the developing person and some aspect of his or her environment, try to budge the one, and see what happens to the other... the only way to discover the nature of this *inertia* and its interdependencies is to try to disturb the existing balance”.

4.4.2 Adolescence and leadership

Research (van Linden & Fertman, 1998) has shown that adolescents seldom think about leadership as they often have other priorities that take up their time. It simply reflects the adolescent reality. Nevertheless, researchers (*ibid.*; Gardner, 1987) point out that leadership starts developing and forming early – before five years of age – and that the critical skills required for leadership develop in adolescence and especially in young adulthood. Yet on the other hand, Garrod (1988) suggests

that “it is not possible to predict exceptional leadership performance in adolescence” (as cited in van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 6).

In order to seize the initiative in developing learner leadership effectively, an understanding needs to be developed. Due to the fact that adolescents experience a drastic change in their needs, characteristics and tasks in this ten-year period of development, Van Linden and Fertman (1998) encourage the adult to develop a better understanding of the process in order to recognise how leadership develops in the average adolescent.

4.4.3 Developmental process of adolescents

Adolescence is a time of transition and change and in order to develop any form of leadership potential it becomes pertinent to understand the process of adolescent development. Van Linden and Fertman (1998, p. 11) explain that,

Individuals during this time exhibit tremendous diversity in their physical development, maturity levels, behaviour, and understanding of the world and of themselves.

The adolescent attempts to develop a sense of personal identity and self-worth through “a set of specific needs (Table 8 & Table 9) that reflect the primary tasks of adolescence” (*ibid.*). They are described as idealists. Have you ever heard a parent say, “If you need any problem solved, call on a teenager!” Van Linden and Fertman (*ibid.*, p. 12) argue that this is because,

With abstract reasoning, they also develop the capacity to envision possible solutions to social problems (untempered by actual experience).

Although, at times this behaviour might frustrate adults, Menge (1982, p. 419) suggests that,

Active imagination and the dreaming of ideals are not wasteful activities... but can be a constructive part of everyone’s life, making for the improvement of human functioning in a socially meaningful way.

Table 8: Some specific needs of the early adolescent (10-14 years)

1.	Understanding of physical and emotional change that take place during puberty. These are very personal and frequently troublesome matters. The child needs help in understanding himself during this period of change and in understanding the idea that it is healthy to grow and evolve.
2.	Self-acceptance. The adolescent is beginning to resolve the conflict between what he is and what he wishes to be. He is beginning to establish life goals and make reasonable plans to attain those goals.

3.	Acceptance of and by others. The adolescent is developing acceptable relationships with peers of both sexes, making friends, getting to know others, and understanding their differences. This includes realisation of the effect he has on others as opposed to the effect he wants to have. He begins to understand the dynamics of peer pressure.
4.	Acceptance, understanding, approval, and love from significant adults.
5.	Knowledge of responsibility to others. The adolescent is learning not to be completely self-centred and is learning self-control.
6.	Discovering how to make decisions, assume responsibility, use independent judgement, and recognise and accept the consequences of actions.
7.	Figuring out how to deal with feelings. Adolescents become aware that others experience feelings similar to their own.
8.	The beginnings of a personal value system.

Table 9: Some specific needs of the late adolescent (15-19 years)

1.	Sexuality: The adolescent needs to understand that sexual feelings are normal, needs to know about their reproductive capabilities, has to learn how sexual expression relates to their other feelings, and has to understand the emotional issues surrounding sexual intimacy.
2.	Status: The adolescent needs opportunities to gain a sense of competence in sports, academics, and social activities. He also must make more of his own decisions and then accept responsibility for those choices.
3.	Sociality: Adolescents need opportunities to try out different roles as they continue to form their identities.
4.	Values and Morality: As he or she forms the frame of reference through which to view the world, the adolescent needs to discuss opinions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings in an atmosphere of caring trust and acceptance with both peers and adults.

(Source: van Linden and Fertman, 1999)

Adolescents are embroiled in this unenviable wrestle with trying to understand who they are and where they fit into the greater scheme of life. Unfortunately, according to van Linden and Fertman (1999, p. 24) for many of them leadership development is so subtly demonstrated in so many different ways by adolescents that they may never realise that they have leadership skills, so they see it as distant and unattainable. However, there are those who are more active and find the process a lot more fulfilling. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in the tasks that adolescents perform they bring many strengths and useful experiences. Adolescents are said to have limitless energy and curiosity and tend to indicate that they have an intense desire to want to learn.

Leadership development is a dynamic process and it becomes our responsibility to provide the necessary space for them to develop an awareness of themselves (their potential) and an understanding of leadership knowledge, attitudes and skills.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to discover and develop a greater understanding about what mechanisms cause the learners to become responsible and accountable for their transformation as leaders. By using Critical Realism as an under-labourer and CHAT, a data collecting framework, I hope to be able to surface how learners are able to work collaboratively to develop a community of shared values and beliefs, transforming a group of individuals into a socially just community, using their ‘positions of power’ to serve others. Through expansive learning it is hoped that the participants will be able to create new knowledge and new practices within their activity system where leadership learning has been embedded and transformation has occurred. In the next chapter I focus on the method and methodology that the study followed.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS



(Participants moving into uncharted territories with their colleagues.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”.

(Nelson Mandela)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four I positioned my study with the understanding that Critical Realism and its assumptions would be the ‘under-labourer’, underpinning the study with the view that “entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of our theories about them” (Phillips, 1987, p. 205). I explained how CHAT would form the framework for collecting the data using a formative interventionist method which is embodied in the Change Laboratory (CL) intervention. In this chapter I will develop a methodological framework that will inform the reader of the positioning of the study, the methods and techniques that I used to gather the data; the analysis and interpretation of the data; the validity and credibility of findings; my role in the research study and ethical considerations.

5.2 POSITIONING OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is positioned specifically in the qualitative orientation focusing on the collection of data from a purposeful sample (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), anchored within the Critical Realist paradigm. Qualitative research is sensitive to what the participants’ experience, involving an empathic dialogue with the subjects and would contribute to their emancipation and empowerment (Kvale, 1996). Supporting this sensitivity is CR’s philosophical ontology which is aimed at human well-being and the emancipation of people (see Section 4.2.1). According to researchers Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000, p. 13), the central endeavour within the realist paradigm is to “penetrate behind [these] the surface of experiences and perceptions and to account for what occurs in terms of an understanding of connections at the levels of structures”.

Although Maxwell (2012, p. 45) warns that, “Some qualitative researchers (e.g. Lincoln & Guba, 1985) have seen deliberate manipulation as inconsistent with qualitative approaches”, he does, however, suggest that this observation is, “by no means universal”. Nonetheless, Maxwell (*ibid.*) points out that researchers (Lundsgaarde, Fischer & Steele, 1981; Milgram, 1974; Trend, 1978; Weisner, 2002) have indicated that the integration of qualitative methods with experimental interventions has a historical relationship in the social sciences. It is explained that the researcher’s presence in the research field is “always an intervention in some ways...the effects of this intervention can be used to develop or test causal theories about the group or topic studied” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 46).

This research study aimed to investigate and explore – through interaction – the participants’ experience of the role of leadership in their establishment, as well as involving them in the construction of an environment (space) that is conducive to the development of servant leadership. Although the CL provided the main basis for data collection, the study adopted a multi-method approach focusing on the collection of data from a purposively selected sample (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The goal was to develop a holistic understanding of the participants’ point of view and their willingness to change their way of thinking (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) in relation to an alternative style of leadership.

Kvale (1996) suggests that qualitative research would be sensitive to what the participants’ experience, to what they understand and how see their ‘world’. This would entail an empathic dialogue with them, aiming to contribute towards their emancipation and empowerment (Knott-Craig, 2008). The relationship that I established with the participants, on the one hand, was interactive and had the potential to empower those without power to create a sense of community within their school environment. But, on the other hand, I had to remain cognisant of having to be sufficiently passive or detached to be an ‘outsider’ in order not to jeopardise the validity of the study. Within this context, the “research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, as cited in Maxwell, 1996, p. 2), gaining an intensive, holistic description and analysis of servant leadership development within the organisation.

The research study focused on extracting information on the perceptions and development of leadership in adolescents through a formative intervention, using the CL (see Section 5.4.3) as a tool to generate data. The study also aimed to identify and explain underlying causal mechanisms of the challenges that learner leadership development is exposed to, exploring ways – through activity systems – that would encourage and sustain leadership development in adolescents at this school. As already alluded to in Section 4.2.3, these causal mechanisms tend to depend on the context to generate events and tend to exist in different systems in society (Danermark et al., 2002; Houston, 2010). Consequently, I cautiously decided to use the case study design as I believed that it would be appropriate for this research study as it would allow me to develop a better understanding of this “complex social phenomenon” and to better “retain the holistic and

meaningful characteristics of real-life situations” that the participants are exposed to through the study (Yin, 2003, p. 2).

5.3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

5.3.1 Developmental Work Research (DWR)

Engeström’s work on developmental intervention-based research provides a useful methodology in DWR that could enable learners to learn, linking them with their peers and community and providing opportunities for learning and development of leadership (Daniels, 2008, p. 131). According to Warmington et al. (2005, p. 1) the “intervention methodology draws on the Developmental Work Research (DWR)” and they suggest that “the DWR cycles are organised around Change Laboratory (CL) workshops – where evidence of concepts and practices is scrutinized by researchers and practitioners, and where contradictions are surfaced and new ways of working proposed”. The possible potential of DWR, according to Warmington et al. (*ibid.*), is its ability to “embed conceptual tools capable of expanding professionals’ thinking and practice by confronting ‘everyday’ concepts with ‘scientific’ concepts”. Engeström (2001) proposes DWR as a methodology for supporting and developing expansive learning (see Section 3.2) (as cited in Warmington et al., 2005, p. 8).

This method enabled me – the researcher – to intervene in the case study facilitating the opportunity for the participants to address some of the contradictions/tensions that had surfaced in their practice of leadership in their school previously and to be able to develop new processes in leading others in the future.

According to Engeström (2001) these interventions enable the participants to construct new instrumentalities bringing about – through externalisation – the transformative construction of new instruments and forms of activity at collective and individual levels. Daniels (2008, p. 131) suggests that the essence of DWR is that the participants (subjects) are placed in a situation in which a problem (contradiction/tension) is identified and that they are provided with tools with which to solve the problem or means by which they can construct new tools to solve the problem.

Change Laboratory (CL) workshops were used as an intervention and for data gathering – with the support and utilisation of CHAT tools – assisting the participants to collaboratively resolve

selected contradictions/tensions. This research intervention is based on the application of Activity Theory (see Section 4.4.1; 4.4.3), specifically the expansive learning cycle (see Section 4.4.2).

DWR allowed me to be both the researcher and participant, with my role being that of a facilitator. The intervention allowed me to encourage the participants to question the way in which they learn and develop as leaders in their school and community.

5.3.2 Formative interventionist methodology

Bronfenbrenner (1977, p. 528) suggests that,

The research on the ecology of the human development should include experiments involving the innovative restructuring of prevailing ecological systems in ways that depart from existing institutional ideologies and structures by redefining goals, roles, and activities and providing interconnections between systems previously isolated from each other.

Engeström (1999) hints that, “The time is ripe to explore this insight in our age of transformations that cannot be controlled but need to be influenced and shaped” (as cited in Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. xvi). According to Engeström (1999, as cited in Warmington et al., 2005, p. 3):

Instead of just benign achievement of mastery, developments should be viewed as partially destructive rejection of the old; instead of just individual transformation, development should be viewed as collective transformation; instead of just vertical movement across levels, development should be viewed as horizontal movement across borders.

Researchers Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) suggest that CL be recognised as a new progressive step towards the development of the traditions of transformative experiments, or formative interventions. Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. xvii) also advocates the need and feasibility for the interventionist methodology in social science for three reasons:

- All research intervenes. We cannot stay outside our research object as we tend to influence it through the observation, analysis and interpretation of social life. Virkkunen &

Newnham, 2013, p. xvii) suggests that, “Our actions interact with our research participants”.

- Interventions are taking place anyway. Virkkunen and Newnham (*ibid.*, p. xvii) explain that, “Any human activity system or organisation is bombarded with deliberate and incidental interventions from within and without”.
- By intervening deliberately and methodologically we generate new knowledge about what is possible.

The location of formative interventions in the field of research in the social sciences is illustrated in Figure 19.

In research work done by Long (2001, p. 21), he points out that,

The intervention is an on-going transformational process that is constantly re-shaped by its own internal organisational and political dynamic and by the specific conditions it encounters or itself creates, including the responses and strategies of local and regional groups who may struggle to define and defend their own social spaces, cultural boundaries and positions within the wider power field.

According to researchers Kelly, Lesh and Baek (2008) words like struggle, strategy, power and position are used in Long’s work – words that are conspicuously absent in recent literature on design experiments (as cited in Engeström, 2016). In fact, Long (2001) (as cited in Engeström, 2016, p. 215) suggests that not only are these words missing but also “the terms ‘agency’, ‘motivation’ and ‘resistance’ are missing”. Long (2001, p. 27) goes on to suggest that, “Crucial to understanding processes of intervention is the need to identify and come to grips with the strategies that local actors devise for dealing with their new interveners so that they might appropriate, manipulate, subvert or dismember particular interventions”. Engeström (2016, p. 215) also urges that resistance and subversion not be seen as “accidental disturbances that need to be eliminated” but rather recognised as “essential core ingredients of interventions, and they need to have a prominent place in a viable intervention methodology”.

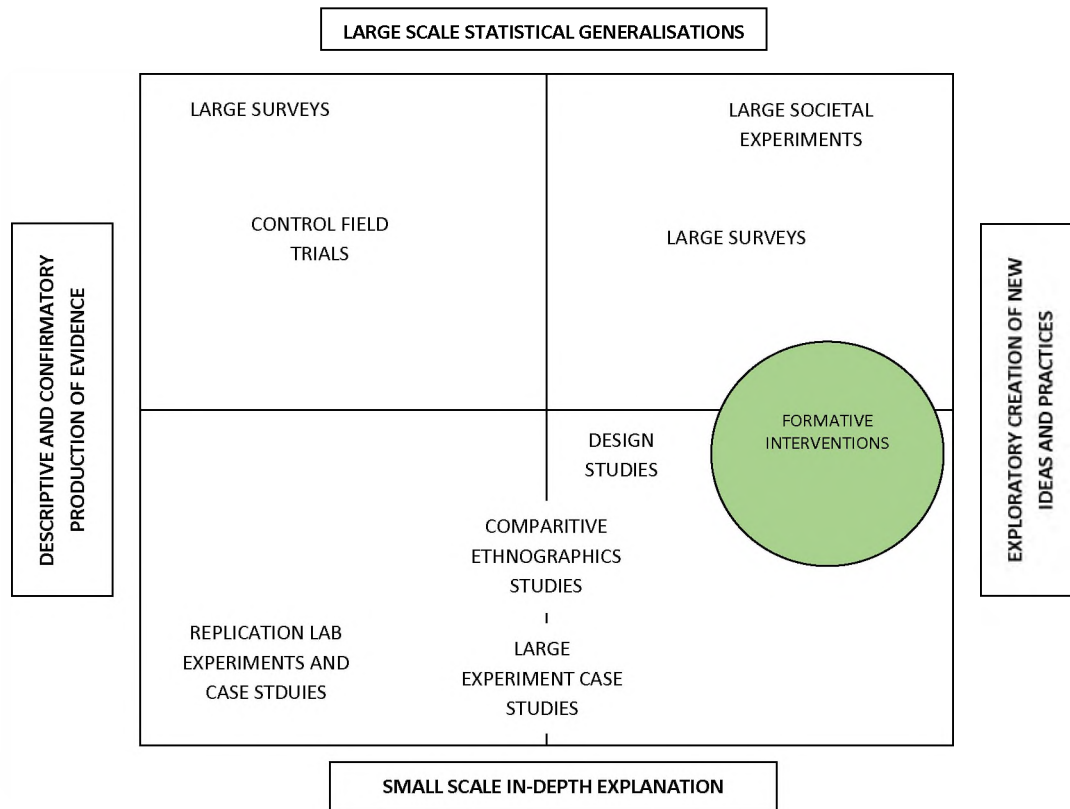


Figure 19: Formative interventions in the field of research in social science
 (Source: Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013)

In his work, Melucci (1996, as cited in Engeström, 2011, p. 603; Engeström, 2016, p. 215) expands on this point by suggesting a threefold methodological guideline for an intervention by recognising that:

- Actors themselves make sense out of what they are doing, autonomously of any evangelical or manipulative interventions of the researcher;
- The researcher-actor relation is itself an object of observation, that it is itself part of the field of action, and thus subject to explicit negotiation and to a contract stipulated between the parties;
- Every research practice which involves intervention in the field of action creates an artificial situation which must be explicitly acknowledged...a capability of meta-

communication on the relationship between the observer and the observed must therefore be incorporated into the research framework.

In other words, according to Melucci (1996, as cited in Engeström, 2011, pp. 388-389), “interventions in human beings’ activities are met with actors with identities and agency, not with anonymous mechanical responses”. Melucci (*ibid.*) also points out that, “If agency is not a central concern in the methodology, [then] there is something seriously wrong with it”.

According to Mukute (2010), Vygotsky’s methodological principle of double stimulation leads to a concept of formative intervention and the crucial differences can be condensed into four points which are illustrated in Table 10.

Intervention may be simply defined as “purposeful action by a human agent to create change” (Midgley, 2000, p. 113; Engeström, 2016). Researchers (Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 3) suggest that these formative interventions are, “The collective efforts to understand and face contradictions and the problems that they engender”. However, Mukute (2010, p. 140) makes a pertinent point stating that he not only worked with the research participants to surface contradictions to make change but also strove to empower the participants to continue working reflexively together after the research was completed. The above definition makes it clear that the researcher does not have a monopoly over interventions but empowers the participants to be more accountable for the change. Inside these activity systems, practitioners and managers incessantly make their own interventions. Organised activity systems such as schools and workplaces are bombarded by interventions from all kinds of outside agents (consultants, administrators, customers, competitors, partners, politicians, journalists).

Table 10: Crucial differences between interventions

	In linear interventions	In formative interventions
1. Starting point	The contents and goals of the intervention are known ahead of time by the researchers, and the intervention itself is commonly detached from vital life activities of the participants.	The subjects (whether children or adult practitioners, or both) face a problematic and contradictory object, embedded in their vital life activity, which they analyse and expand by constructing a novel concept, the

		contents of which are not known ahead of time to the researchers.
2. Process	The subjects, typically teachers and students in school are expected to execute the intervention without resistance. Difficulties of execution are interpreted as weaknesses in the design that are to be corrected by refining the design.	The contents and course of the intervention are subject to negotiation and the shape of the intervention is eventually up to the subjects. Double stimulation as the core mechanism implies that the subjects gain agency and take charge of the process.
3. Outcome	The aim is to complete a standardised solution module, typically a new learning environment, which will reliably generate the same desired outcomes when transferred and implemented in new settings.	The aim is to generate new concepts that may be used in other settings as frames for the design on locally appropriate new solutions. A key outcome of formative interventions is agency among the participants.
4. Researcher's role	The researcher aims at control of all the variables.	The researcher aims at provoking and sustaining an expansive transformation process led and owned by the practitioners.

(Adapted from Engeström, 2011; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013)

5.4 THE CASE STUDY

I chose to use the exploratory case study which is positioned in the field of Educational Leadership and Management (ELM), and informed by leadership theory. The rationale behind my choice is discussed below in Section 5.4.1. The unit of human activity in this study was in an educational institution that provided secondary education to learners of the ages ranging from 14 years to 19 years. The case study method has been used as it was important for me to explore the development of learner leadership, using servant leadership, by studying the way it influences and is influenced by and through its practice within the school environment.

5.4.1 The rationale for using the case study

Case studies have been used extensively in many fields – psychology, sociology, political science, social work, business, education, nursing, and community planning – which “contribute to our

knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomenon” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). Yin (*ibid.*) suggests that, “a distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena”.

According to Gilliam (2000, as cited in Anaf, Drummond & Sheppard, 2007, p. 1310) a case study is a “unit of human activity embedded in the real world”. Kadyakapita (2013, p. 85) suggests that, “as a unit of activity in the real world, a case affords a holistic, non-reductionist approach to the study of phenomena”. Researchers Luck, Jackson and Usher (2006) describe the case study as being a “bridge across paradigms” (as cited in Anaf, Drummond & Sheppard, 2007, p. 1310; Kadyakapita, 2013). They explain that this approach facilitates researchers employing diverse techniques so as to achieve an in-depth understanding of human knowledge and practices.

According to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 170), ‘cases’ are the empirical basis for studies that have intensive designs, whilst Yin (1984; 2003; 2009, p. 1) suggests that cases “contribute uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organisational, social, and political phenomena”. The case study is also described by Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p. 16) as being “richly descriptive utilizing quotes from the research participants, anecdotes and prose composed from interviews”. This method allowed me to retain the “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” – e.g. cycles, processes, change and relations, that existed in the school environment (*ibid.*; Yin, 2009, p. 4). As a result, this method enabled me to explore causal links and patterns of the relationships that occurred in the development and practice of leadership within the school environment. In other words, according to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 166), “investigating how mechanisms work in a concrete situation involves tracing the causal power and describing the interaction between the powers that produce a social phenomenon”.

Since the purpose of my study was to explore ways in which learner leadership development took place within the school environment, surfacing and understanding these mechanisms that drove leadership and its practice within the school environment, my choice for the case study was directed by the observations made by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 256) in that they view:

Case studies [as] ‘a step to action’. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for

staff or individual self-development, for within-institutional feedback; for formative evaluation; and in educational policy-making.

Although numerous researchers (Danermark et al., 2002, 2006; Anaf, Drummond & Sheppard, 2007, 2009; Gilbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Sharp et al., 2012) have expressed their doubts and concerns about case studies in respect of rigour and the researcher's inability to generalise, others (Gilbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Anaf, Drummond & Sheppard, 2007; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Danermark et al., 2002) have challenged these concerns (as cited in Yin, 2003; 2009).

Nonetheless, Yin (1984, p. 14; 1993; 2003; 2009, p. 2), suggests that the method's unique strength is its ability to collect an empirical variety of data – hence the use of documents, interviews, and observations in this study – allowing me to produce a rich and detailed, critical account of learner leadership development, through the implementation of servant leadership. Kadyakapita (2013) suggests that case study research is a highly appropriate method for critical realist research in that it is always situated in the 'concrete'.

As I was only able to access one of the three research sites approached – to explore learner leadership development and its practice – I decided to focus my methodology on using the single-case study.

5.4.2 The single-case study design

Although Yin (2009, p. 61) warns against the vulnerability of the case study by “placing all your eggs in one basket”, he does suggest that there is an argument for the single-case study which he describes as, “an appropriate design under several circumstances” (Yin, 2009, p. 47). He argues that “a single-case is analogous to a single experiment, and many of the same conditions that justify a single experiment also justify a single-case study” (Yin, 2003). The strategy for a case study allowed me to investigate some present-day leadership events which occurred within the school, whose time-space configurations were not that easily influenced (*ibid.*).

Due to the nature of my research site (see Section 2.6; 2.7) I opted for the single-case study which satisfied two of the rationales proposed by Yin (2003; 2009, pp. 40-42). Firstly, that it is representative, as the study's objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of the “every day” development of learner leadership in the school. It provided me with opportunity to meet them and to learn about their lives, the problems that they are exposed to even though they are

seen as common problems across South Africa (Yin, 2003; 2009). It was assumed that the study was informative about the experiences that the participants experienced within the school (Yin, 2003; 2009). Secondly, that I as the researcher had access to the leadership situation within the school that was possibly previously inaccessible to others.

Although the research study was constituted as a single-case study, it was comprised of three units of analysis (networked activity systems) (Figure 20). The case study (outer square) focused on the development and practice of learner leadership within the school. The three units of analysis (three triangles) were made up of three activity systems within the case study which surfaced tensions that existed between the activity systems within the school. The first activity system was made up of the adolescent boys, the second activity system was that of the adolescent girls, and finally, the third activity system comprised the group called eBhuti (see Section 2.7). These three activity systems are all connected to each other through a shared, common object (grey oval shape) of learner leadership development.

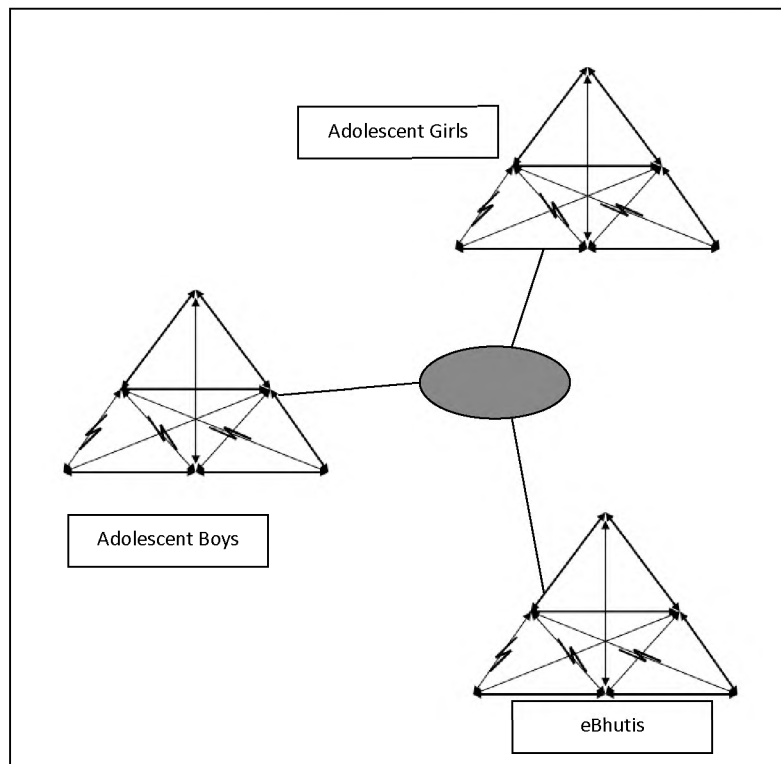


Figure 20: Research study's holistic, single-case study design with three activity systems within the case

5.4.3 Selection of research site and participants

As I alluded to in Section 5.4.1, I chose to use the case study research design because of a distinctive need that had arisen in me to explore and understand the complex social phenomena of learner leadership development within each research site. In the selection of these possible case study sites and participants, I chose to use non-probability sampling, in particular purposive sampling, because my choice of site and participants were based on my judgement about what would be most beneficial and realistic for the study (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Mukute, 2010).

5.4.4 Types of research questions

According to Yin (2003; 2009, p. 2) case study research methods are often selected to address one of the following purposes in case studies: (a) exploratory, (b) descriptive, and (c) explanatory. Case studies are best utilised when phrasing “how” and “why” questions (*ibid.*). This is underpinned by the critical realist’s interest in wanting to know “how” and “why”. Yin (2009, p. 8) explains that, “In general, case studies become the preferred method when (a) “how” or “why” questions are posed; (b) the extent of control that the researcher has over the events that occur; and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary phenomenon as opposed to historical events, within a real-life context”. He (*ibid.*) also suggests that the preferred research methods choose to ask “how” and “why” questions which are more exploratory and more likely to lead and favour the case study. However, Mukute (2010, p. 121) argues that, “What is missing in this classification of questions is the interventionist research efforts”, which he suggests “are concerned with *so what* questions beyond the exploring, understanding and explaining”.

5.4.5 Developing a protocol for the study

Yin (2003, p. 67) suggests that the development of a case study protocol is essential in that “it is a major way of increasing the reliability of case study research”. He (*ibid.*) explains that it serves as a “guide to the investigator in carrying out the data collection from a single-case study”. To be able to collect rich data in the field “a need to have explicit and well-planned field procedures” becomes imperative (*ibid.*). Using the suggestions of Yin (*ibid.*) as a guide, I developed my protocol for the study:

a. Overview of the research study:

This overview formed part of my research proposal that I submitted to the Rhodes University Education Department's Higher Degrees Committee for approval (Appendix C). It formed the background information (summary) to the case study, highlighting the purpose for the study, its positioning, substantive issues that were being investigated and the relevant readings that were used about the issues being discussed. It included the context and the perspective of the study. In selecting my three case-study sites that I wished to work at, I submitted it, with a letter of introduction (see Section 5.4.5), to the headmasters of the selected schools to inform the prospective participants of the purpose for the study.

b. Field procedures:

To gain access to the organisations and the participants I created and delivered a letter of introduction, asking for permission to do research in the school. However, in order to introduce myself, and to deliver the letter and the overview, I had to telephonically make appointments with the proposed research sites. This proved to be very difficult at times as the telephone was often not answered. It was pointed out by a principal interviewed that it was possibly due to the fact that the telephone accounts had not been paid. It was explained that this was due to the fact that the schools had not received their monetary allocation from the DoE (see Section 2.6; 2.7). I did try to e-mail the documents, hoping to speed up the process, but also discovered that some of the schools did not have Wi-Fi connection due to routers being stolen.

Nonetheless, as only one school was interested in the research study, a letter was designed, summarising and stating the outline and purpose of the study and was presented and handed out to the prospective research participants who had to have it signed by their parents as they were still seen as minors. I held a meeting with the prospective research participants, outlining the purpose of the study and expectations for the study. Numerous questions were asked pertaining to these expectations – one being confidentiality and the option to withdraw at a later stage in the course of the study.

Thank you letters were delivered to the school that chose to participate as well as the families of the participants.

At each interview session, the purpose was clearly explained, recorded and then transcribed. Transcripts were shared with the interviewee for approval. In order to keep the participants informed and interested I compiled a report at the end of each Change Laboratory session and then shared the observations with the group before the next contact session. This process allowed me to get rich feedback from many of the participants.

One of the areas that I did have difficulty in – due to incorrect assumptions made about the school – was the availability of a resourced space (classroom) in which I could run my contact sessions in. I needed a place that was quiet and in which we were not going to be disturbed. This proved to be a major challenge. The environment outside was often very noisy and the provided venues echoed, making recording difficult; classrooms were very hot and dirty and seldom did I find an electricity plug that worked which affected me using the computer and data projector. Writing resources (chalk and flip chart sheets) were also hard to come by. Consequently, I quickly learned to plan for the unimaginable and make sure that I had sufficient resources when out in the field.

c. Case study questions:

I developed a set of substantive questions which reflected my focus of inquiry for the study. The set of questions were developed before I ventured out into the research field but I first shared them with a number of colleagues for critiquing. Once this had been done I then ran a pilot test with a group of adolescents that were from a similar background that were attending a leadership workshop that I was facilitating. Guided by Yin (2003, p. 74), I focused on phrasing questions at two levels as they were said to be specific for data collection purposes:

- i. Level 1 – questions that were asked of specific interviewees – the verbal line. Here I focused on individual behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of leadership and its development;

- ii. Level 2 – questions asked of the individual case (these are the questions answered by the investigator during a single case) – the mental line. Here I specifically asked myself questions as to how and why the organisation works.

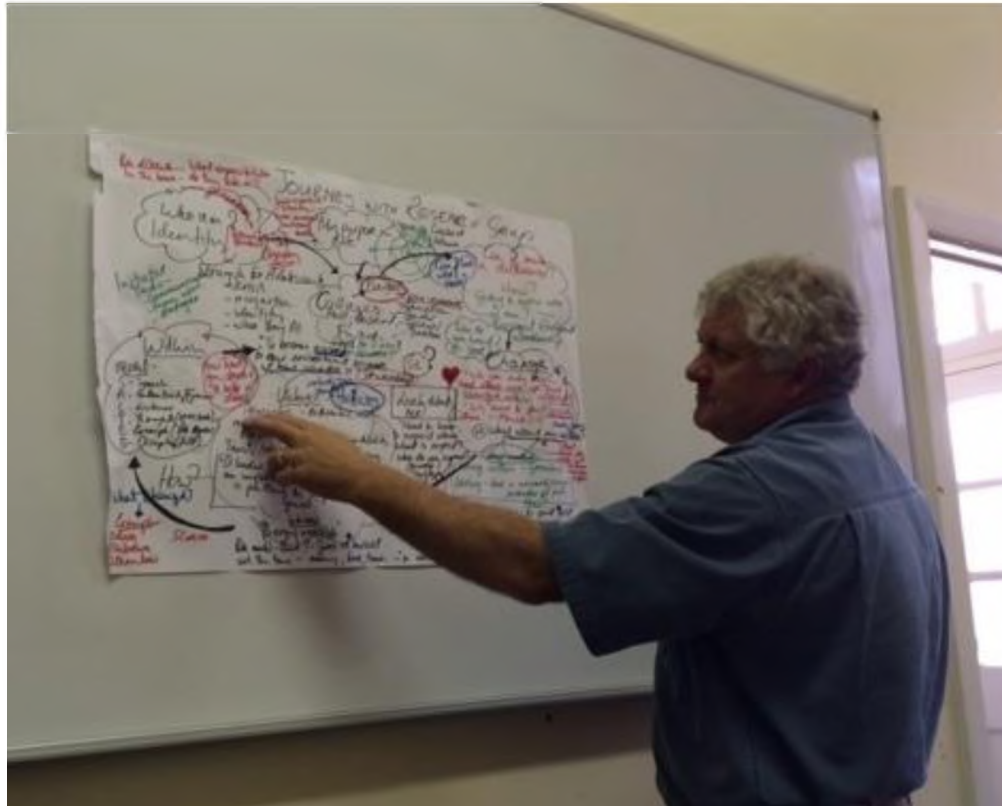


Figure 21: Presentation of the summarised case study journey to supervisor

- d. A guide for the case study report:

For this case study, I had to ensure that the data collected was methodically accumulated and filed for future use, especially when it came to writing up my thesis. In order for me to develop a guide for the case study and for this to happen I needed to develop a framework for analysing the data from the study which was informed by the research questions posed (see Section 1.5) and the theories (see Sections 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7). This proved to be useful when I started to reflect on the study – as a researcher and with the participants – and compiled a mind-map (Figure 21; Section 5.10) outlining this incredible journey. I was able to create a case record of the following documentation and information:

- Key communication examples of the various research participants;
- Samples of interview records and transcripts;
- Change Laboratory workshop plans and selected transcripts;
- Feedback and comments from research participants;
- My reflections – mind-map – on the research journey;
- Bibliographical information.

5.5 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

5.5.1 Screening and selecting the research study site

The selection of the selected “sites” or individuals who would participate in my research study became a very important yet challenging process for me. Yin (2003, p. 77) states that, “It is the final preparatory step” in preparing for data collecting. However, as straightforward as it may appear “it does come with its challenges” (*ibid.*). In order to make sure that I had identified my research study sites properly, on the one hand, I carefully sought the advice from a number of my critical friends and teaching colleagues. On the other hand, Mukute (2010) advises that the researcher should make sure that the selection is strategic and kept within the bounds of the critical realists’ intensive research design. Danermark et al. (2002, p. 120) also suggests that one also considers sites that have a different approach or emphasis on how and why leadership is practiced or not practiced under different conditions. Following Yin’s advice (2003), the selection for my case study was going to be deliberately purposeful in sticking with the requirements of qualitative research.

Unfortunately, only one of the three sites approached responded in a positive way in wanting to be part of the research process. In screening the individuals at the site, I collected relevant qualitative data from the participants who showed an interest. This was done by requesting that they write a motivational letter stating why they should be selected to be part of the research (Appendix D). This formed part of a list of criteria that I developed that would assist me in ascertaining which case/individual qualified to serve as a participant.

This list of criteria used was:

- The practice of leadership was evident at the site/individual and that there was the potential for development and growth;
- The site/individual was willing to entertain the idea of challenging the practice of leadership;
- Demonstration of a willingness to participate in the study with the understanding that change could be experienced;
- That there was diversity within the site/individual in terms of age, gender, grade and position held in the site and that the participants would be respectful of each other;
- Individuals were prepared to make a commitment that could span over a year.

5.5.2 Negotiating access to the site

I soon learned that it would be quite an undertaking to gain access to the site and the individuals. Being an educational site it was very bureaucratic in its processes - the paper work and red tape that preceded access - was quite overbearing. Nonetheless, Bloor and Wood (2006) point out the importance of being able to negotiate access when doing social research.

I followed a specific bureaucratic process in which I had to firstly obtain permission from the Grahamstown Education District Office to have access and to carry out my study in a Grahamstown school (Appendix E). Secondly, I then had to obtain the permission of the principal to use their school as a research site (Appendix F). Thirdly, part of the process was the need to obtain permission from the parents in order to have access to their children who demonstrated a willingness to be part of the research study (Appendix G). This had to be done as they were all deemed to be minors. I achieved this through letters that I created. To accomplish this, I made a telephonic appointment with the head of the District Office and the principal to deliver the letters. This served a dual purpose in that I not only made sure that the ultimate decision-maker had received the letter (because the South African postal service is in such disarray and the letter could have gotten 'lost') but I was also able to introduce myself to them in a personal capacity. In turn I received positive replies of acceptance via electronic mail (Appendices H and I).

Reaching the parents was more of a challenge in that the expectation was that the keen participants – once chosen – would pass on the letters to their parents to be read, the consent forms completed and returned. As the letters were written in English I went to great lengths to make sure that the participants knew what was being said and that they were able to make sure that their parents understood the contents, signed and then returned the consent forms (Appendix J).

One of the key ingredients to successful engagement (access) into the community is the ability to develop a healthy relationship of trust with the individuals with which you are working. Mukute (2010, p. 123) encourages the researcher to “get on” with the research site by “developing trust by respecting local customs, listening carefully [*intently*] and keeping promises” (Italics is my own emphasis). I recall in my second contact session that one of the male participants leaned over to another in the classroom and said, “*The Malungu¹² won’t last longer than 3 weeks with us!*” (Translated from isiXhosa). Well, I have been there for almost four years and we still have a healthy relationship and texting takes place between us.

5.5.3 Intervention phases in the study

In developing the research process for the study, it was important for me to understand that I needed to activate two phases of my intervention, the first being the exploratory phase (Table 11) – a situational analysis – but it required an immense amount of planning and organising. In this stage I was cognisant of the need to develop a framework that guided me to focus on the organisation of a suitable venue for contact sessions and the preparations leading into the study – the setting up of questions, the collection and storing of the data from interviews, focus groups, observations and Change Laboratory workshops, getting tape recording and videos transcribed and creating feedback sessions with participants. This was truly the exploratory phase of the intervention.

I first designed a survey that was completed by a randomly sampled group in the school. I used this as a method to develop a greater understanding of the thinking and behaviour of the participants in their complex environment. This I followed up with the design of the interview questions needed for the actual intervention which I was able to pilot test at a leadership workshop

¹² Malungu is an isiXhosa word that denotes, “The white man”.

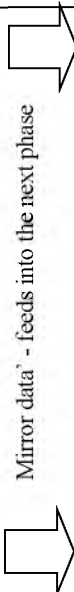
with some of the participants from similar backgrounds. The interviews that followed were carried out in a neutral venue (quiet and in a non-threatening environment) which meant that I had to ensure permission from the parents and the safe transport to and from the selected venue. These interviews were then transcribed and approved by the interviewees. I followed the same procedure with the focus group meetings that were held in venues that were provided in the school. Unfortunately, these venues proved to be difficult venues for recording due to the nature of the classrooms (noisy, as they echoed). Nonetheless, I was still able to record and generate accurate transcriptions from the proceedings. In all the proceedings from interviews to focus group activities I was able to make copious notes which I filed as observations. At times this proved difficult as the participants discussed issues in isiXhosa. I learned from this and later appointed an interpreter which worked rather well.

In moving into the second phase – the expansive learning phase (Table 11) – I started to implement the CL workshops at the school, about one month after the interviews. Due to the nature of the environment, each CL could only run for a maximum of an hour before school finished for the day and children then needed to go home or attend extra lessons. As the school approached the examination period, time became more precious and attendance often dropped so I had to postpone these sessions. These time constraints resulted in less ground being covered as I would have liked but this is not evident in a normal CL workshop environment. What I decided to do was to run shorter sessions about three weeks apart, with a focus group meeting in between in order to maintain some form of continuity. Some of these focus group meetings I used as feedback sessions with the participants. Due to this short timeframe available to me to run the CL workshops, I occasionally joined two sessions together – separated by a week – due to the crucial level of discussion that had been reached by the participants. I was able to carry out six CL workshops over the period of the year bearing in mind that during the school holidays the participants were not available.

Initially the participants struggled to engage due to the fact that we had agreed to converse in English and not their mother tongue, isiXhosa. However, with an interpreter at my side we agreed to allow the group to engage in their mother tongue, with the interpreter explaining to me what was being said. The limitation of this decision was that I was not able to engage fully in the group discussions. Quite a challenge! Nevertheless, the participants were now enabled to engage more

fully with each other, with more energy and conviction. Fortunately, with the translated transcripts it allowed me greater insight into what had unfolded in the discussions.

Table 11: Two-phased implementation plan for the single-case study design

SINGLE-CASE STUDY – Implementation Plan			
PHASES OF DATA COLLECTING	 Mirror data - feeds into the next phase	MULTI-METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	MODELLING of SOLUTIONS
PHASE 1 EXPLORATORY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey analysis • Document analysis • Semi-structured interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual • Focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field work observations (individual and group activities) 	
PHASE 2 INTERVENTION/EXPANSIVE LEARNING		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change Laboratory workshop sessions • Focus groups • Feedback sessions with participants • Observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development process - Practice of leadership 	

(Adapted from Mukute, 2010)

During each CL workshop the participants would start by discussing how and why leadership was practiced individually within the school and in the community. Contradictions that surfaced were then discussed by the group and they were then encouraged to select one that was appropriate to them and that the participants wanted to work on. The group then engaged with each other to develop a plan of action that demonstrated what they would implement in relation to the solution(s) that they had devised. Frequently these action plans only materialised after a few more CL workshop sessions due to the limited time frame.

5.6 RESEARCH METHODS

In order to understand how the participants organised themselves and their settings, I decided to use a qualitative approach, utilising “multiple methods of observation” (Figure 22), because each

research method employed disclosed different facets of empirical reality (Denzin, 1970, as cited in Berg, 2004, p. 5; Yin, 2009). This approach is supported by Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 23) as they maintain that it is:

An attempt to map, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint.

Utilising this method allowed me to share in the understandings and perceptions of the participants and to explore how they structured and gave meaning to their daily lives within their community and school environment (Berg, 2004). It also increased the depth of understanding that this research investigation produced in the field of organisational and leadership research.

The “multi-methods approach” also provided me with opportunities for triangulation. Fielding and Fielding (1986) suggest that it forms one aspect of what is called triangulation (as cited in Maxwell, 2012, p. 106). This is an “attempt to map, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 233). Maxwell (2012, p. 106) argues that, “this strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source method...allowing you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating”. It is a way of dealing with threats to the research study’s validity (*ibid.*).

Greene (2007, pp. 98-104) suggests that the rationale for using triangulation in research is “corroboration or convergence on a single conclusion (validity), but that using different methods is often far more valuable for complementarity (revealing different aspects of a single complex phenomenon), expansion (investigating different phenomena that interact and need to be understood jointly), or initiation (to create divergent or contradictory interpretations, generate fresh insights, or force the researcher to seek a deeper and more complex understanding)” (as cited in Maxwell, 2012, p. 107).

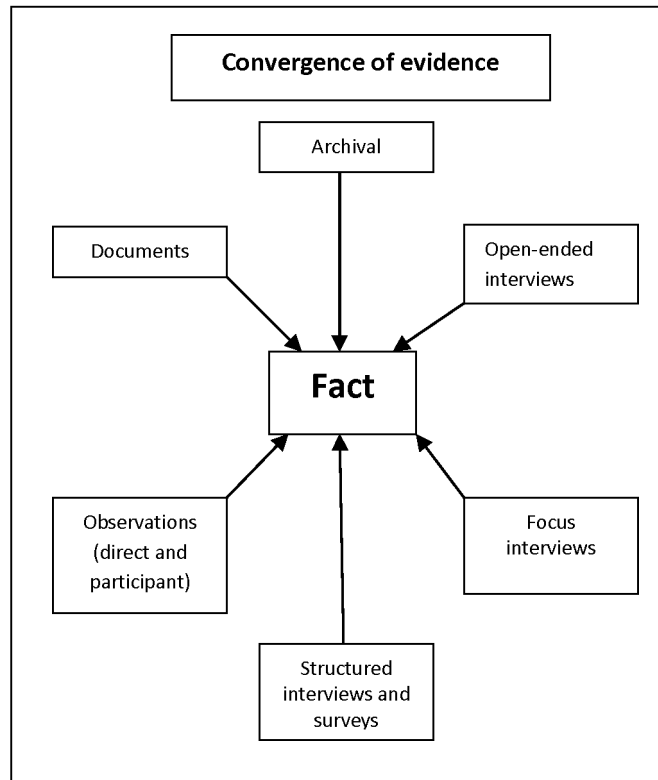


Figure 22: Convergence of multiple sources of evidence
 (Adapted from Yin, 2009, p. 117)

In order to obtain a clearer picture by observing social and symbolic reality (Berg, 2004, p. 5), I chose to use an “across-method triangulation”, as suggested by Denzin (1970, as cited in Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 23) to measure the ability of the participants’ capacity to develop a framework in which leadership was established. This method was used as it measured the same trend but from different angles (*ibid.*, p. 23). The data that I collected – from the intervention, the interviews, the focus group interviews and the Change Laboratory – were complemented by the series of observations that I carried out during the research within the school environment. The data gathered was used in a comparative manner to determine how the participants had been enabled to develop their leadership skills.

Yin (2003; 2009, p. 101) does point out that the most frequently used sources of evidence are “documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artefacts”. However, Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggest that “a complete list of sources could be quite extensive – including films, photographs, and videotapes...life histories” (as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 101). Although there are many suggested sources, they do, nonetheless, complement each other. Yin (*ibid.*) argues that, “A good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible – multiple sources of evidence”.

A data collecting framework (Table 11) was implemented. The first phase, the exploratory phase, sought to gain insight and information from the participants using different methods (survey, interviews, observations and document analysis). This rich data acted as ‘mirror data’ that fed into the second phase, the expansive learning phase (Change Laboratory – see Section 5.4.6.1).

5.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing is described as an efficient and valid way of understanding someone’s perspective, providing additional information that was possibly missed in an observation. Yin (2009, p. 106) states that it is “one of the most important sources of case study information”. It could also be used to check the accuracy of the observations (Maxwell, 2012). Maxwell (2102, p. 106) suggests that in order for interviews to be useful the researcher needs to “ask about specific events and actions, rather than posing questions that elicit generalisations or abstract opinions”. Yin (2009, p. 106) suggests that, “The interview will be guided conversations rather than structured queries”. Although I pursued a consistent line of inquiry during the interview process, my aim was to keep the actual stream of questions flexible, rather than rigid (*ibid.*).

Researchers (Kvale, 1996; Bloor & Wood, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) describe interviews as being purposeful conversations which involve the exchange of views between the participants and interviewer and thus their role is seen as inter-subjective.

In the exploratory phase of data collecting (Table 11), I conducted unstructured individual interviews, using open-ended questions as this created an open situation so that the participants could reflect on their experiences. The reasons that I utilised this method was because, firstly, it gave the participants a greater flexibility and freedom to express themselves. I focused on the experience of the participants and the expectations that they had of their leaders and their ideas of

how they should function. Secondly, it allowed me to obtain rich data from different sources which was relevant to the scope of my research study.

My intention during the interview process was to ensure depth and rigour by asking open-ended questions and being able to cross-check important issues or statements that surfaced during the conversation. This was all captured through transcripts from tape and video recordings depending on the availability of electricity in the venues provided. Interviews lasted about an hour each. Notes were taken during the interviews, recordings were then transcribed and these transcriptions were finally taken to the participants for approval. This process made sure that the data was accurate and reliable. Once again, an interesting occurrence surfaced in that I could only get a verbal agreement and not a signatory approval of the correctness of the transcript, from many of the participants. One of the possible reasons for this was highlighted by the principal when she stated in an interview (20/02/14) that, “*They are not willing to put pen to paper as they are too scared of victimisation*” (see Section 2.7).

5.6.2 Document analysis

Documents have an unambiguous function when accumulating any data when carrying out case studies. According to Yin (2003, pp. 86-87) their overall value is in their ability to be stable, unobtrusive, exact and have broad coverage. Documents were accessed in the school, such as minutes of meetings, correspondence (letters, reports, circulars, and directives), photographs and journals (learners) were studied. These documents – although poorly filed – did give some insight into the understanding of the organisational life of the school and ascertained amongst others the historical and cultural issues that emanated from learner leadership development.

However, given the state of many of our previously disadvantaged schools I did assume that these would be hard to come by, and this was true in the case of my research site. I was presented with a box of documents that had been collected over the years of meetings. In order to generate this data, I attempted to encourage staff (who were non-starters) and learners to record their leadership stories (experiences) within the school, in a journal. This also proved to be a great challenge as the participants often failed to arrive with their journals or otherwise just lost them. This situation has already been highlighted in Section 5.6.1 and in an interview (20/02/2014) with the principal

in Section 2.7. Nonetheless, in order to complement the single-case study process, questions (when? how? why?) were asked, aiming to develop an understanding of what actually happens in the school with regards to learner leadership development.

These documents did provide me with limited insight into understanding the leadership structures and functions, inter-relations and inter-connectiveness that existed within the school, as well as the perception and support of the participants. The purpose of using these documents enabled me to establish how the school leadership system had evolved, how it was currently being managed and how it was perceived within the community.

5.6.3 Direct observation

Due to the “natural setting of my case study” the opportunity arose for direct observation being used as I felt that the situation in which I was doing my research would surface “some relevant behaviours and environmental conditions” allowing me to collect additional rich data (Yin, 2003; 2009, p. 109). Yin (*ibid.*) suggests that these observation data opportunities could range from being formal to being fairly casual.

My observations did not only centre on data collected during classroom meetings and playground activities, but also during group activities out in the field (Figure 23). I was also fortunate enough to complete a situational analysis of the physical state of the school and its work space allowing me insight into the history, climate and the impoverishment of the setting (school and community) (see Chapter Two). As I was in the employ of Rhodes University Education Department at the time, I was able to encourage the practising student teachers that visited the school for teaching practice to record some of their observations. This process increased the reliability of the observational evidence collected (Yin, 2003; 2009).

In the course of engaging in the situation I also made use of photographs that I took at different stages of the study, which according to Dabbs (1982) “helps convey important case characteristics to the outside observer “(as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 110).

5.6.4 Participant-observation

Observation is a “quick and unobtrusive way of recording aspects of behaviour” (Macintyre, 2000, p. 62) as they occur in the learning environment. This allowed me to establish insight into how

and why the individual(s) participated and interacted within the group. The process gave me access to what the participants were doing, rather than what they said (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Mukute, 2010). The rich data notes illustrated how the groups engaged, interacted and developed with each other, as well as what occurred in specific areas and times of progress and/or regression during the research process (Macintyre, 2000, p. 62).



Figure 23: Using photographs as a data collecting tool

These pictures illustrate the various activities and environments that were used to expose the learners to various problems. They had to use their leadership skills to solve them. Participants had to work out how they were going to work together to do this. Collaboration, networking, team work was the order of the day. They had to generate new ways of learning to work together by being willing to listen to each other, following instructions, developing a plan, supporting each other. Feedback sessions, as depicted above, helped the participants to understand how each member could complement the other in order that they succeed as a team.

Although the assumption of observation is seen as a useful tool to describe behaviour and events, Maxwell (2002, p. 106) argues that “generating an interpretation of someone’s perspective is inherently a matter of inference from descriptions of their behaviour (including verbal behaviour)”. Observations enabled me – the researcher – to “draw inferences about the participants’ perspectives” that I would not have obtained by relying exclusively on interview data (*ibid.*).

5.6.5 Focus group discussions

Although Berg (2004, p. 123) suggests that focus groups should not be bigger than seven members I decided to allow 12 members to participate in these discussions (Figure 24; Figure 25). The reason for this was the availability of time of the participants and issues surrounding getting them back to school on an alternative day.

The members of these groups were randomly selected (small random sample) from the Grade 9, 10 and 11 classes. Meetings were held once a month, at a time suiting the participants. This proved to be an ideal method of collecting data as it allowed me to learn more about their ‘lived world’, their relationships, the interactions among the participants and how they made decisions. In these interviews, the interactions expected between the participants stimulated in-depth discussions, generating greater ideas, issues, topics and even solutions to the establishment of a community. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, as cited in Berg, 2004, p. 124) describe this dynamism as “synergistic group effect”. It allowed the participants to collectively draw from each other as well as brainstorm ideas on issues being discussed.

The data collected through interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and videoed, and the observation notes captured.



Figure 24: Focus group in session

5.6.6 The Change Laboratory

Change Laboratory (CL) workshops lie at the core of DWR (Warmington et al., 2005; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013), the essence of the Change Laboratory workshop is to enhance the expansion of shared collaborative views of the changing object and activity system, in order to build and develop new practices, tools and models. Mukute (2010, p. 137) notes that the method, developed by Engeström is based on double stimulation – purported by the work of Vygotsky – and “supports the CHAT and critical realism objective of research that seeks to transform and improve the conditions of the research participants”. According to researchers (Vygotsky, 1987; Sannino, 2015), it is “a principle of volition and agency that underlies the procedures and analysis of formative interventions” (as cited in Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 7).

Daniels (2008) posits that the purpose of the workshop is to surface and address the challenges of the new forms of learning by:

- Encouraging the recognition of areas in which there is a need for change in working [leading] practices;
- Suggesting possibilities for change through re-conceptualising the ‘objects’ that professionals [learner leaders] are working on, the ‘tools’ that professionals [learner leaders] use in their multi-agency work and the ‘rules’ in which professional [leadership] practices are embedded.

As has been alluded to already in Section 4.4.2, Engeström (2003, p. 2) explains that, “The Change Laboratory (CL) workshop is a joint journey through the phases of expansive learning”. He (*ibid.*) also notes that, “The change laboratory method focuses on historically emerging tensions and contradictions in the activity system” and the method’s aim is to “expand the understanding of practitioner’s activity through experimenting and reflecting and to promote peoples’ possibilities to utilise their multiple understandings and identities” (as cited in Mukute, 2010, p. 140).

Engeström (*ibid.*) further points out that that expansive learning is constructed on overcoming existing contradictions and is concerned with the resolution of tensions and contradictions in a system that involves objects, artefacts and perspectives of participants. Daniels (2001; 2005) sees it as involving the doing, reflecting and improvement of the practice – which essentially is praxis at one level, while at the same time it looks at how every day and scientific knowledge interact. It requires collaborative learning, seeking to address new and emerging problems, creating new knowledge and building local flexibility.

Engeström (2001, p. 137) argues that “the challenge to expansive learning is being able to recognise that people and organisations are learning all the time and that it is not stable – not even defined or understood ahead of time”. With change/transformation of our personal lives and organisational practices, new forms of activity – that don’t already exist – must be learned.

The situation being studied is one in which the subjects are learning something that is not known. The knowledge being learned is being learned as it is being developed. “They are literally learned as they are being created” (*ibid.*, p. 138). Engeström (1987, as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 126)

acknowledges the importance of this form of learning and in this study, I draw on Bateson's (1972) framework of levels of learning (see Section 4.4.2) to explain how learning involves the reformulation of the identified problems and how the participants create new tools in order to engage these problems. According to Engeström (1987) the continued production of new problem-solving tools should enable the participants to transform the entire activity system, potentially creating and transforming (expanding) the objects of the activity (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 126).

5.6.6.1 Workshop design and implementation

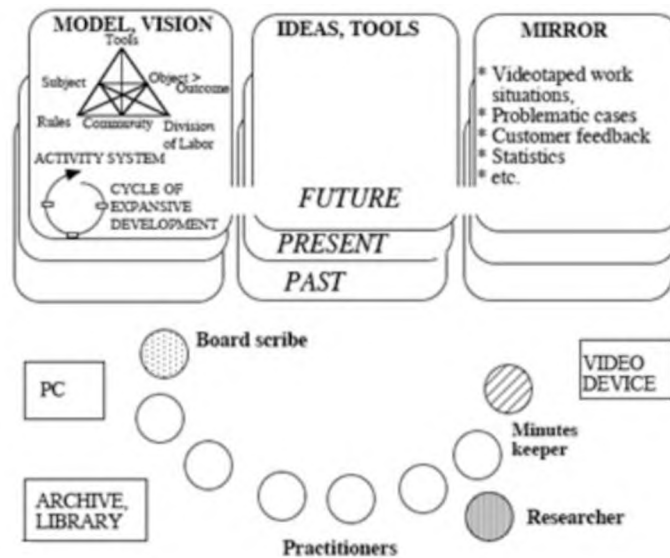


Figure 25: Suggested layout for a CL workshop
(Adapted from Engeström, 1996, p. 11)

Following the design that was developed by the Centre for Activity Theory at the University of Helsinki (Figure 25, Figure 26; Figure 27), I conducted six workshops in the case study, each session running over a period of a few weeks, for a year with intervals of around three to four weeks. It was a place where ‘disturbances’ of daily activities and materials were used for analysis and interpretation (Ala-Laurinaho & Koli, 2007, p. 26 as cited in Mukute, 2010, p. 137). Warmington et al. (2005, pp. 16-17) suggest that the workshop layout and its dynamics could

contribute to researchers and practitioners developing and sharing the same conceptual tools in the process of analysing, repositioning and redesigning practice. Engeström (1999) argues that “DWR workshops are designed to support collaborative application of new tools” (Warmington et al., 2005, p. 17) and “becomes the change mechanism within the intervention activity”.

Due to prescribed limitations (discussed below), I decided not to complete all the stages in one day. This was due to time constraints placed on the participants, as explained and highlighted in Chapter Two (see Section 2.6; 2.7), as well as only having access to all the participants once a week for an hour (if I was lucky). I also needed more time to be able to view and digest all the ‘rich data’ collected through the audio and video recorded materials that were collected in the CL workshops. This allowed me to have the data translated and transcribed, and then for me to determine further mirror data necessary for subsequent workshops which lead into the further discussion phases. During the week – when I did not have access to the whole CL workshop group – I was able to interact and engage the participants on an individual basis dealing with specific issues that had surfaced during the workshop discussion.

Borrowing from Daniels, Visser and Cole (1999, as cited in Warmington et al., 2005, p. 17), I implemented and worked with a similar analytical pattern (Table 12) in my CL workshops.

Table 12: The analytical pattern of CL workshops

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drawing on ‘mirror’ evidence/data to question existing practices;• Analysing the historical origins of existing practices (past and present);• Modelling new practices (future);• Interrogating the proposal practice model;• Implementing and monitoring the model;• Reflecting on the process and outcomes. |
|--|

(Adapted from Daniels, Visser & Cole, 1999, *ibid.*)



Figure 26: A typical Change Laboratory layout used at the research site

As has been alluded to, each session ran for about one hour and sessions were organised around the presentation of mirror data that was derived from the analysis of the audio and video recordings that had been transcribed. Most of the workshops' data was presented in text format due to the unpredictable nature of venue allocations each day. Occasionally video clips were viewed based on the availability of electricity in the venue. As was suggested by Warmington et al. (2005, p. 17), I presented the data that was first supported by an explanation of Engeström's 2nd and 3rd generation activity systems. This proved to be quite a challenge due to running sessions in English but with isiXhosa conversant participants. Nevertheless, as was recommended by Engeström (2007, pp. 374-375), we were still able to navigate through and analyze the mirrored data through the three layers of time (past, present and future) and develop solutions. Double stimulation was employed in the study – the mirrored data provided the first stimulus whilst the expanded learning practice offered the second.

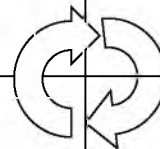


Figure 27: Participants collaboratively engaging with each other within the Change Laboratory setting

This mirror data presented contradictions/tensions in the current practice and first hand data of leadership in the school and community. Here where first hand data is represented and experiences examined (past, present and future), specifically problem situations and disturbances that have surfaced and possible emerging solutions. Warmington et al. (2005, pp. 16-17) explain that, “These ‘everyday’ understandings are defined as *intermediate* conceptual tools predicated upon highly situated concepts. The ‘situated’ nature of these concepts is unpacked through critical reflection upon their historical development in the evolution of professional practice (‘past ideas and tools’)”. In unpacking these concepts, Seppänen’s (2002) problem solving model (Table 13) proved to be a useful framework which provided the participants with an opportunity to engage with both the discernable and indiscernible extents of the stimulating situations that arose in the study (as cited in Hill, 2005).

Table 13: Problem solving processes in CHAT

LEVELS OF FOCUS	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
INVISIBLE SYSTEMIC STRUCTURE OF THE COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY	<p>2 Disclosing the systematic causes of the visible problems in the activity.</p> <p>Developmental process to identifying systems contradictions.</p>	<p>3 Finding a way to overcome the problems by expansively re-conceptualising the idea of the activity.</p> <p>Designing new forms of the activity (e.g. new rules, new tools).</p>
IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE EVENTS AND PROBLEMS IN INDIVIDUALS' ACTIONS, WITHIN THE JOINT ACTIVITY	<p>1 Identifying the obvious (visible) problems.</p>	<p>4 Taking new kinds of actions; implementing new instruments, rules, ways of dividing labour and collaborating.</p> <p>Implementing the obvious or (new) solutions.</p>



(Adapted from Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 10; Seppänen, 2002, as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 364)

Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. 10) explain that, “The process moves from individual actions and immediately visible problems to the analysis of the systemic causes of the problems and proceeds to an expansive re-conceptualisation of the idea of the activity and reconfiguration of its structure. It then returns to the level of individual actions by developing and implementing corresponding new instruments, relationships of collaboration, rules and principles of division of labour”. They (*ibid.*) point out that, “The CL method is not aimed at producing just an intellectual solution or change of practice, but also at building up the practitioners’ collaborative transformative agency and motivation based on a new understanding of the idea of the activity and a new perspective of its future”.

5.7 VALIDITY OF THE STUDY

According to Smith (1991, as cited in Kumar, 1996, p. 137), “validity is defined as the degree to which the researcher has measured what he has set out to measure”. It refers to the reliability and credibility of the research findings. Validity relates broadly to the extent to which the measure achieves its aim, i.e. the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure, or tests what it is intended to test” (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 38). In her work, Tracy (2013, p. 842) indicates that interested readers of a research study would want to know if they can use the same findings to act on and make decisions that would give the same kind of result. Bloor (2001, as cited in Tracy, 2013, p. 843) observes that:

All research findings are shaped by the circumstances of their production, so findings collected by different methods will differ in their form and specificity to a degree that will make their direct comparison problematic.

In order to develop validity for this study, I worked through a process of establishing triangulation, respondent validation (member checking), thick description and self-reflexivity.

5.7.1 Triangulation

A common method used to ensure “agreement” between various sources and methods of information is triangulation. Fielding and Fielding (1986) suggest that through triangulation I attempt to relate the combination of the different kinds of data (get the data to speak to each other) collected in the school so as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each (as cited in Berg, 2004, p. 5).

As I explained in Section 5.6 – research methods – I decided to use “multiple methods of observation” or as Yin (2009) puts it a “convergence of sources” (Figure 22), because each research method employed disclosed different facets of empirical reality (Denzin, 1970, as cited in Berg, 2004, pp. 4-6; pp. 26-127). This approach is supported by Cohen and Manion (1994, p. 23) as they maintain that it is:

An attempt to map, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint.

The “multi-methods approach” also provided me with opportunities for triangulation. In seeking to share in the understandings and perceptions of the participants and to explore how they structured and gave meaning to their daily lives within their community and school environment it also increased the depth of understanding that this research investigation produced in the field of organisational and leadership research.

Fielding and Fielding (1986) suggest that it forms one aspect of what is called triangulation (as cited in Maxwell, 2012, p. 106). This is an “attempt to map, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 233). Maxwell (2012, p. 106) argues that, “this strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source method...allowing you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating”. It is a way of dealing with threats to the research study’s validity (*ibid.*).

Tracy (2013) detects that the application of more than one source of data, theoretical frameworks or different researchers intending to derive the same conclusion could be problematic when reality is assumed to be multiple, fractured, contested, or socially constructed and social practices are socially constructed. Nonetheless, Sayer (2000) and Danermark et al. (2002) point out that in CR, reality exists independent of our identification and although we may not understand it in its entirety, by utilising different theories and approaches, we are more likely to attain the same conclusion.

The motivation for using triangulation in research is to validate or merge a solitary deduction or inference but using different methods which are far more valuable for complementary, expansion, or initiation purposes, ensuring validity (See Section 5.6).

5.7.2 Respondent validation (member checking)

For this study, I employed multiple strategies (see Section 5.4; Figure 22) to ensure and enhance validity. For one, I carried out an initial investigation (a survey study) in the school – using any

intended data collecting instrument – to check the authenticity and relevance of data produced by the participants (Birley & Moreland, 1998, p. 42).

According to Maxwell (1996, p. 13), “validity is not a commodity that can be bought. ...Rather, validity as integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances”. In order to achieve this, I ensured that there were participant reviews/member checks (respondent validation; ‘member checking’) that ensured that the data collected was dependable as participants were given the opportunity to review their responses in the transcripts created.

During this study, I had to have the recordings translated after I had conducted the interviews, then they had to be transcribed and interpreted. Each interview text and CL workshop session text had to go through the same process. I then proceeded to take copies of their transcripts to each participant individually to check and scrutinise thoroughly, encouraging them to make any comments on the accuracy of the transcription or the manner in which it had been interpreted. The participants were also encouraged to challenge any assertion or suggestion which they thought they had not stated clearly or to provide me with additional data when it was necessary.

5.7.3 Thick description

A ‘thick description’ is described as being an interpretation of what is being observed or witnessed. According to Denzin (1989), “It is the qualitative researcher’s task to thickly describe social action, so that thick interpretations of the actions can be made, presented in written form, and made available to a wide audience of readers” (as cited in Ponterotto, 2006, p. 542). Ponterotto (*ibid.*) argues that, “without ‘thick description’, ‘thick interpretation’ is not possible” which results in loss of credibility and resonance with readers.

To guarantee ‘thick description’ in this research study I aimed to:

- Accurately describe and interpret the social actions within the context of the study in which the social actions took place;
- I aimed to capture the thoughts, emotions, and web of social interaction among observed participants in their operating contexts – focus groups;
- I attempted to assign motivations and intentions for the social actions that took place in this study;

- In order to develop a “sense of verisimilitude”, I aimed to ensure that the social actions were well described. I intended to ensure that the reader felt that they had experienced, or could experience, the events being described (Denzin, 1989, as cited in Ponterotto, 2006, p. 543).

5.7.4 Self-reflexivity

The relationship that I had established with the participants, on the one hand, was interactive and had the potential to empower those without power, to create a sense of community within their school environment. But, on the other hand, I had to remain cognisant of having to be sufficiently passive or detached to be an ‘outsider’ in order not to jeopardise the validity of the study. I had to be fully aware of the “dangers of allowing selective observation, personal attitudes, preferences and feelings to get in the way and affect interpretation of data” (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, pp. 500-501).

This was well demonstrated on one particular day that the participants arrived for a CL feedback session. A group of 14 participants settled down in the venue as I began to get the workshop started. I began by asking a number of questions relating to mirror data that was displayed on the board at the front of the class. The responses were very slow and I felt that many of the participants were unresponsive at that stage. After about 20 minutes it became evident to me that the participants were really not interested. I dismissed them and began to pack up. I began to build up a personal observation of what had transpired, which was very negative. However, one of the participants asked for lift back home which I agreed to. On the way to his house I enquired about the lack of response during the sessions. He then went on to explain that most of the participants had not had a meal for the day. The passenger pointed out that the last meal that many of them had was possibly breakfast. The feeding scheme that normally provides a midday meal for the students had not taken place due to some administration glitch. They were hungry and listless. I had just allowed my personal feelings and attitudes to cloud my observations. I realised that I was going to have to be very reflexive in the future and get to understand the context of each day before participants arrived.

Within this context the “research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, as cited in Maxwell, 1996, p. 2), gaining an

intensive, holistic description and analysis of servant leadership development within the organisation. I had to continually scrutinise my intentions for carrying out the study, regularly reflecting on the processes that I was planning to implement. Tracy (2010, p. 842) also encourages the researcher to develop an “audit trail” by keeping a strict record of all resources used during the study.

5.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

To ensure that the procedure was ethically sound the participants were informed of their right to privacy and confidentiality, and of the role that each one would play and how the data was going to be collected. They were made aware that they could withdraw at any stage during the research process if they so choose.

The Collins Dictionary (2006, p. 502) defines ethical as being “in accordance with principles of conduct that are considered correct, especially those of a given profession or group”. As the research was of an interactive nature, between the researcher and the participants, I had to consider certain ethical issues that could arise which could have affected the overall outcome of the study. As Schwandt (1997, p. 4) clarifies:

The ethics of qualitative inquiry...are concerned with the ethical principles and obligations governing conduct in the field and writing up accounts of fieldwork.

Scott and Usher (1996, p. 69) point out that:

Gathering information bestows certain obligations on the gatherer and yet they are motivated by conflicting impulses. Their account needs to be credible: that is, it must reflect, refer to, or in some sense illustrate what is happening or has happened, and yet fieldwork is social activity, which demands a level of trust between the researcher and the researched.

All participants were informed about the nature and expectations of the study in order for them to develop a clear understanding of what the research study was going to entail; who were going to be involved and the means/manner by which the data was going to be collected (Macintyre, 2000). The participants needed to be aware of any risks that they could be exposed to due to the processing and dissemination of the data (Andrew, 2005).

It is deemed to be unethical if information is collected without the knowledge of the participant, their informed willingness and expressed consent (Kumar, 1996, p. 192). Kumar (*ibid.*) states that informed consent:

implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information you want from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them.

This consent (individual, parental and educational authority) was voluntary and no pressure was placed on the participants to get involved in the process. Schinke and Gilchrest (as cited in Kumar, 1996, p. 192) write:

all in-formed consent procedures must meet three criteria: participants must be competent to give consent; sufficient information must be provided to allow for a reasoned decision; and consent must be voluntary and un-coerced.

All participants – and parents in the case of minors – were asked to complete and return consent forms which laid out the aims and expectations of the research study (Appendix J). Since this study was being conducted on site it was necessary for me to inform the principal and educational authorities (Grahamstown Education District Office) of the aims and expectations of the research, and to obtain a letter of consent (Appendices E and F).

As most research has a sensitive side to it, it was important for me to address confidentiality with all the participants in order for them to “act and reply ‘as honestly as possible’ so that a true picture of an event could be obtained” (Macintyre, 2000, p. 47), without them feeling threatened or being intimidated. At the beginning of each interview the issue of confidentiality and anonymity was addressed to ensure that the participants understood that their names would be changed so that no-one would identify where the data came from (Macintyre, 2000, p. 47).

My intentions were to be as ethically responsible as is humanly possible. Just out of curiosity, I found it interesting that Berg (2004, p. 31) points out that, “all of us consider ourselves to be ethical, not perfect perhaps, but more ethical than most of humanity”.

5.9 DATA ANALYSIS

When I began to develop the research process (see Section 5.3) for the study, I had decided to divide the process into two phases (Table 11). The data that had been generated through the various methods applied (document analysis, individual interviews, observation and field notes, focus group meetings and intervention workshop), were analysed and organised into different categories through a qualitative analytic approach of coding and classifying the data (Table 14).

It was here that I was mindful of Maxwell's (2005) observation when he stated that (as cited in Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 481):

The experienced qualitative researcher begins data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation, and continues to analyse the data as long as he or she is working on the research, stopping briefly to write reports and papers.

In the first phase (exploratory phase) – using the rich data collected through surveys, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and the first of many focus groups – I used analytic coding and induction which helped produce themes and categories that facilitated the development of theoretical abstraction. It allowed me to note any irregularities, patterns, explanations, causal relations, configurations and propositions (Scott & Usher, 1999, p. 85) assisting me to make inferences. I was then able to discuss these findings with the participants in the focus group which generated further data. This was an attempt “to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesise information and explain relationships, theorise about how and why the relationships appear as they do, and connect the new knowledge with what is already known” (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 481).

In this phase, I wrestled with the rich data as I developed and contrasted themes that emerged which would provide me with mirror data leading into the second phase of the study – the intervention phase – where I implemented the CL workshops. It is important to note that this phase had an additional six phases of itself as depicted in Table 11.

In both phases, through abductive inference, I attempted to re-interpret and re-contextualise these themes as they surfaced in the data. As I alluded to in Section 5.2.4 – where I was developing a protocol for the case study – I used a mind-map strategy (Figure 28) to unpack the surfacing

themes. Doing this allowed me to attain a broader insight into understanding how and why the research journey was unfolding/materialising. My goal here was to elucidate the causal links and relationships that surfaced in the challenges of leadership development in the research site.



Figure 28: Setting up complete mind-map of research journey

Table 14: Alignment summary (research questions, data sources and analysis)

RESEARCH QUESTION	METHOD/INSTRUMENT	DATA SOURCE	DATA ANALYSIS	
OVER ARCHING QUESTION:				
What role does / can servant leadership play in developing learner leadership in a previously disadvantaged school community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • School/classroom observation • Interviews (SGB; SMT; teachers; learners; parents) • Written leadership stories • Document analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • Observation schedule/field notes • Interview transcripts • Documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical analysis • Develop and coding of themes • Document analysis • Analytic coding • Induction analysis • Abduction analysis • Retrodution analysis 	
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:				
1. What underlying or causal mechanisms (systemic, historical, social and/or cultural) facilitate or obstruct the development of learner leadership and community within the school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews (principal; learners; parents) • Focus groups/workshops (Video + tape-recordings) • School/classroom observation • Written leadership stories • Learners' journal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation schedule/field notes • Transcripts of video of focus groups/workshops and interviews • Photographs 		
2. How and why do students collaborate to provide leadership in their school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/classroom observation • Interviews (principal; teachers; learners; parents) • Focus groups/workshops • Learners' journal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation schedule/field notes • Transcripts 		
3. How and why does working with/engaging with servant leadership affect the development (agency and capacity) of learner leadership in the school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners' Journal writing • Focus groups/workshops • Interviews (Principal; Teachers; Learners; Parents) • Learners' Journal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation schedule/field notes • Transcripts • Video + Photographs of group work 		
4. How and why does the change in leadership style/philosophy impact on the culture, behaviour and interpersonal relationships in the structure of the school, and between its members and the school community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/classroom observation • Interviews (principal; teachers; learners; parents) • Focus groups/workshops • Learners' journal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts • Video + photographs of interactions • Observation schedule/field notes 		
5. How can the principles of servant leadership be optimised to yield improved and sustainable leadership practices and community development in the school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of focus groups/workshops • Interviews • Learners' journal writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts • Observation schedule/field notes • Reflection of research participants 		

I also drew on the Critical Realist analysis framework and employed induction, abduction and retroduction as modes of inference in order to facilitate a move from the empirical level to the epistemological level. According to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 93), abduction analysis is a mode of acquiring knowledge of how a phenomenon “can be part of and explained in relation to structures, internal relations and contexts which are not directly observable. This is characterised by a movement from the concrete to the abstract”. This mode of analysis enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the structures and mechanisms in the school in relation to leadership theories (*ibid.*). Retroduction analysis is concerned with establishing explanations of what must be the case for things to be the way they are (*ibid.*). Houston (2010, pp. 82-83) points out that retroduction engages development from “a description of something that produces it or is a condition for it” by responding to transcendental questions like, “What must be the case in order for events to occur as they do?” This meant questioning the challenge that the research site was exposed to so as to identify the causal mechanisms that tended to generate the challenges.

Researchers point out that although causal mechanisms are unobservable in CR (see Section 4.3.2) they do agree that one can detect their effects (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 58; Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008, p. 172). In his observations Bhaskar (1976, as cited in Houston, 2010, p. 83) points out that, “mechanisms are not unknowable, although knowledge of them depends upon a rare blending of intellectual, practico-technical and perceptual skills”. Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) provide a useful framework (Table 15) in which I have used the surfaces to analyze data in the CL workshops.

Table 15: The use of the surfaces of representation in a possible course of the analysis and design in the Change Laboratory

MODEL/VISION	IDEAS/TOOLS	MIRROR
<p>7. Visioning the future structure of the activity system in which the current contradictions would be overcome.</p>	<p>8. Modeling the new tools and ways working necessary for realizing the vision.</p> <p>Designing first experiments with the new tools and new ways of working.</p>	<p>9. Follow-up data about the feasibility of the designed new tools and ways of working as well as about needs for their future development.</p>
<p>6. Modeling the most important changes taking place in the elements of the activity system as well as historically evolved inner contradictions the changes have created with the activity system.</p>	<p>2. Shared concerns, identified problem areas in the joint activity.</p> <p>Ideas for further analysis.</p> <p>Solutions ideas to identified problems.</p>	<p>1. Samples of problem situations in the participants' daily work with the object of the joint activity – leadership (for instance disturbances and ruptures in serving followers or in central processes of the joint activity).</p> <p>Videos, interviews, documents.</p>
<p>5. Modeling the central features of the past structure of the activity.</p> <p>Analyzing the nature of the current phase of the transformation of the activity.</p>	<p>4. Identification of periods and turning points in the development of the activity (servant leadership).</p>	<p>3. Data concerning important historical changes in the activity system.</p>

(Adapted from Virkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 18)

5.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to develop a methodological framework informing the reader of the positioning of this single case study; the methods and techniques that I used to gather the data;

the analysis and interpretation of the data; the validity and credibility of findings; my role in the research study and ethical considerations.

In this study, I implemented a two-phase strategy to surface a rich collection of data. The first phase, was the exploratory phase, which was implemented in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the research site by collecting data on the infrastructure, facilities, resources, intentions, motives and meanings that members in the case study add to their behaviour, actions and events.

The second phase introduced the intervention methodology as it draws from DWR with CL workshops acting as the core framework for data collecting. These enabled participants to learn how to link themselves with their peers and community, and provided opportunities for learning and development of leadership. Evidence of concepts and practices was scrutinised collaboratively by me and the participants, focusing on surfacing contradictions and developing new ways of working together in the activity system.

In order to collect rich data I needed for the study – I employed multiple sources of evidence, namely, a survey, semi-structured interviews, observation, focus groups and Change Laboratory. In addition, I also attended to the concerns that arise when doing qualitative research, namely, the issues of validity, ethical issues and the positioning of the researcher.

In the following chapter I will be focusing on analyzing the rich data and the findings and illuminating the challenges that the research site has towards learner leadership development.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPLORING THE PROCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



(A participant discovers that one can overcome a challenge even though it appeared to be impossible.)
(Knott-Craig, 2013)

“It always seems impossible until it’s done”.

(Nelson Mandela)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I set out to explore and describe the processes and challenges that the learners experienced in developing their leadership skills in the case study. Here an attempt is made to present a point of view on these processes and challenges by making use of Engeström's three layers of causality of human action which is concerned with understanding situations and establishing the sense of why things are the way they are.

In order to do so, I used data generated – as described in the previous chapter – that was generally based on document analysis, semi-structured individual and group interviews, and the Change Laboratory (CL) workshop which was conducted in the single-case study.

Essentially, a Critical Realist (CL) research approach could be followed (Oltman, 2009, p. 88):

1. To observe phenomena, and explain relationships and connections;
2. Suggest mechanisms and structures that could explain why the phenomenon, the connections, and relationships exist or don't exist;
3. Demonstrate that the mechanisms exist.

I started the analysis by first providing a short description of the activity system under analysis and its processes, which was then followed with a description of the journey that the participants experienced which reflected in themes that emerged – highlighting some of the structural and contextual factors which had a bearing on the agency of the participants in the learning and practice of leadership in this single-case study.

The chapter then unpacks and explores the motivation of the participants in wanting to transform and develop their individual practice of leadership. Mukute (2010, p. 184) points out that, “Object or motivation is a strong force that determines the direction of the activity system”. However, this motivation (agency) could be constrained and/or shaped by the structural forces that exist within the activity system.

Drawing on the data collected – from document analysis, semi-structured individual and group interviews – I discuss factors that shaped the learners' ability to develop their leadership skills

providing explanations of why and how leadership is being practiced and learned which is underpinned by causal mechanisms of leadership development.

As indicated in the previous chapter (see Section 5.8), I made use of induction, abduction and retroduction to analyse the data collected. Inductive analysis allowed the data to speak for itself, whilst abduction utilised the various theoretical lenses to develop an understanding of what is emerging from the collected data. Retroductive analysis explained what the case should have been for things to be the way they were. Here I used a metaphor to develop an understanding of what this process means. I liken this process to a little boy who has just received a gift. It first begins with the expectation of what is underneath that gift-wrap as he feels the gift that is in his hands (induction). He begins to unwrap the gift with an inquisitive eagerness before beginning to play with it. As he begins to play with the toy he begins to develop an understanding of what it is and how it works (abduction). He will then mostly likely start to take it apart to develop a better understanding of the working parts before trying to put it all together (retroduction).

This chapter lays the groundwork for the next chapter, concentrating on the surfacing of contradictions – using the CL – and how they worked on these contradictions to model solutions to enhance their development and practice of leadership.

6.2 DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY SYSTEM IN CASE STUDY

The activity system (see Section 4.4) formed the basis for the exploration of the development and practice of learner leadership, the processes and challenges that were faced within the single-case study. The development and practice of leadership in this system can be seen as a combined set of developmental processes where both the individual and its social levels are interwoven and studied together in a ‘web of activity’ created by the participants. This is aimed at understanding the mental capabilities and the possibilities of transforming human life – doing in order to transform something which in this instance, is the practice of leadership which is under review in this case study.

The activity system is presented for the single-case study (see Section 5.4) but in this activity I have included three activities that emerged that were interwoven as they interacted and developed a shared object which had a strong bearing on the development and practice of leadership in this case study.

6.2.1 The single-case study activity system

Within the school – Ntsika Secondary High School (see Section 2.6; 2.7) – I worked with predominantly one activity system (2nd generation) which was composed of my research participants who volunteered to participate in this research project. Within the activity system the research group was made of participants who were adolescent boys’ (‘young boys’), the adolescent girls’ (‘young girls’) and the eBhuti (‘young men’; see Section 2.7 footnote 5), who were keen to develop and promote leadership within themselves, their school and their community. There is a direct learning relationship between the learner participants in the research group which covers their sharing of leadership ideas and experiences, including leadership skills.

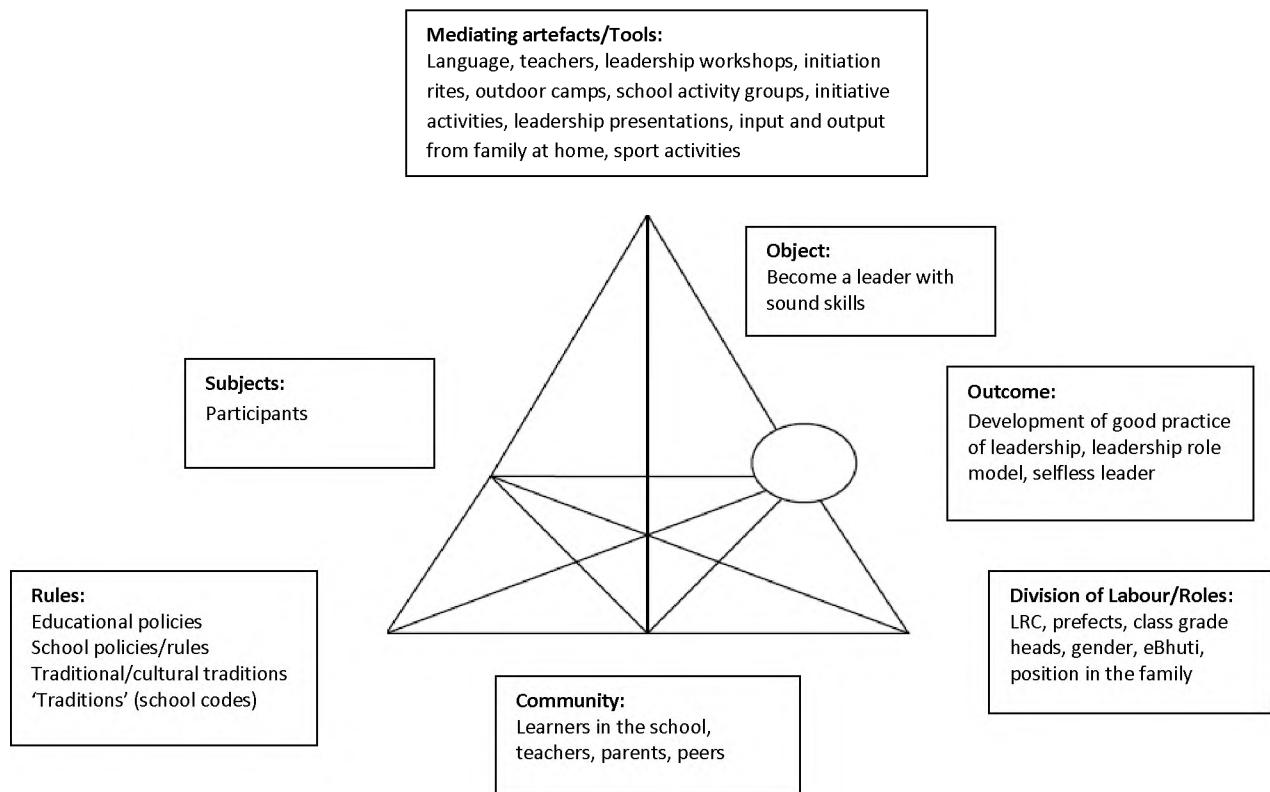


Figure 29: 2nd generation research group activity system

In Figure 29 I illustrate the elements of the research group activity system, based on the 2nd generation CHAT, without surfaced contradictions, tensions, culture and histories. One observation that I made was that within the element of eBhuti’s, the characteristics of their division

of labour/roles changed slightly. This was due to the influence of cultural traditions in that after their initiation rites they become young adult men. The position of the eBhuti's in society and their family changes and affects their responsibilities, expectations and rights. They are to be respected as 'young adult men'.

6.2.2 The description of the elements of the activity system

In introducing the activity system to the participants, I ensured that they were reasonably versed in the concepts used, hence, I utilised the following table (Table 16) to explain these concepts that were synonymous with the activity system.

Table 16: Explanation of activity system elements

ELEMENTS OF ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION OF THE ELEMENT
Activity System	This is the composition and interaction of all the elements that make up the activity. Each element has a specific role to play but is dependent on the other elements in order for the system to function effectively.
Subject	It is an individual or collective group of people (learners) whose agency is to learn and do things in order to become leaders.
Object	As subjects who are driven towards wanting to develop and learn leadership skills in order to become effective leaders. You are driven by a desire to want to lead, to influence, collaborate, and interact with others in order to take the organisation forward in a positive manner.
Instrument/Tools	In order for learners to become effective leaders and do their job correctly they would require a number of resources that they would need to use. This would be the knowledge and various skills to lead, such as, communication skills, decision-making skills, ability to manage oneself and others. In order to do this, one would require leadership development workshops. These tools/resources are used for understanding or transforming the object.
Rules	The learning and practice of leadership is done in a social and educational setting and is affected by numerous factors. Government and educational policies will dictate how leadership should be implemented and practiced in the school, as well as cultural and traditional norms. These human made conditions influence how leaders will lead within the school environment and they are called rules. These are all mediated by the interaction between the subject and the community, and subject and object.
Community	This is the setting in which the activity and action takes place, the school. Here the leader works with many other people, such as other leaders, followers, teachers, parents, principal, etc. They are seen as the group of people who share the same object.
Division of labour	In order to lead effectively, leaders need to learn how to delegate some of their responsibilities. This gets everyone engaged and feeling that they are important components to the organisation. The activity is divided into separate actions (horizontal and vertical allocation of responsibility), understand-taken by individual(s) in co-ordination with others

	(relationship with others). Division of labour allows a leader to lead more effectively through delegation and involvement of others.
Contradictions/Tensions	Many times these elements don't fit together and cause a disturbance within the activity system. These disturbances are called contradictions or tensions and by attempting to sort them out leads to the strengthening of the practice of leadership and improving our understanding of the purpose of what we are doing. These tensions may exist within the individual elements or between them. Clashes could also arise between different activity systems that are focusing on a common object. These tensions create a rich space in which solutions could be developed improving the conditions within the organisation through the engagement of the participants of the activity system.

My research study was activated in two phases: the exploratory phase (situational phase) and the intervention phase (expansive learning phase) using the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a framework (see Section 5.5.3). Based on this explanation the remainder of this chapter focuses on developing an understanding of the learners' landscape that they find themselves in using both CR and CHAT.

6.3 THE EXPLORATORY PHASE– What is happening?

In Chapter One (see Section 1.1) I described that the learner is born into a complex system, a world that the learner tries desperately to understand and asks critical questions in order to develop a sense of personal identity and self-worth. They are ‘idealists’ and with abstract reasoning they are able to develop the capacity to envision possible solutions to social problems, untempered by the actual experience (see Section 4.5.3). Engeström (1999, p. 23) elaborates this succinctly in that he explains that,

The child as a newcomer is born into a complex system, in a system of her world she is born into a family, she then enters a school, later a workplace. She tries to understand the system: “What makes it tick?” What moves the system? What are its mechanisms, its interconnections? ... It is a question of solving this puzzle, of letting it gradually take shape, of understanding what are its structural features and the motives functioning within it.

The learner in the research study has been born into an environment/social structure which ultimately is a human product which shapes individuals and influences their interactions – “people make structures but at the same time structures mould people” (Oltman, 2009, p. 65). According

to Archer and Giddens (Archer, 1982), “action and structuration presuppose one another”, they can only exist by virtue of one another (as cited in Danermark et al., 2002, p. 179) (see Section 4.2.4).

In this section – using CR as an under-labouring meta-theory – I ‘tease out’ the causes within a stratified ontological spectrum of the research site, attempting to identify and interrogate emerging causal mechanisms, social structures, powers – looking at organisational culture and collaborative learning – shaping how the learners function and studying the relations that govern how these learners function within the organisation in order to develop their leadership skills (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000) (see Section 4.2 and 4.3).

CHAT is used as a framework (see Section 4.4) to collect the data and the activity system being used can be seen as an onion – from a CR perspective – which is layered, in order to develop an understanding (make meaning) of the case study’s situation. According to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 164), “Social phenomenon emerge from deep underlying real structures, become actual, and then empirical”.

Our understanding of these social phenomena goes in the opposite direction: from the empirical to the actual, to the real (Oltman, 2009). I work from the seen (external influences), through the actual to the deep – internal layers of the ‘real’ – where often hidden causes (unseen) exist. By unpacking the data – using abduction, induction and retroduction – I hope to gain a deeper understanding of what is actually happening and how the learners’ agency is shaped and/or constrained by the existing structures and finally, why the learners want to change. Tensions do emerge in their storytelling but the study provides the space for the learners/participants to make meaning and to stimulate/encourage the development of agency.

6.3.1 ‘My world’ - The learner leaders’ perspective

In Chapter Two, the reader was allowed to develop an understanding of the effects of apartheid but in this chapter the participants begin to reveal a personal struggle that ensues within their own lives. Ross et al. (2005, p. 132) suggest that the learners’ stories – of past and current situations – need to be told which could be utilised by the research study to draw upon informing our understanding and their use – through talk – would exert influence through their re-telling. These individual and group stories – taken from focus groups, interviews, both semi-structured and

informal – are used to develop a common framework in order to make sense of the social structures that exist and how they influence and shape the learners for learning.

The stories unfolded by the learners, highlighted the dire circumstances they found themselves in, wrestling constantly with trying to step out of the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that was their lives. The way in which society has influenced intuitions and culture in the past must not be shrugged off but rather used to channel the perceptions and shape the possibilities of today (Bloch, 2009). In order to shake off these negative influences of the past, the research study has attempted to encourage the participants and reader to become more reflexive, becoming aware of and understanding how these influences have shaped them individually (*ibid.*, p. 30).

6.3.1.1 What is being experienced?

In this section the research study explores how social structure – which is a human product – shapes the individual participants/learners and influences their interaction in their environment/community (Archer, 1982). It is important to note that these structural factors not be separated from individual agency, as agency is shaped and/or constrained by the existing structures found within the activity system (see Section 1.6.1; 4.2.4). Researchers argue that structural factors such as social class, race, gender, economic and occupational conditions strongly influence individual agency (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloniemi, 2013, p. 51).

Bloch (2009, p. 30) suggests that we start by understanding that,

While we are never victims of the past, we cannot simply shrug off the way the society we inherited has influenced the institutions and the culture of the present. Institutions and attitudes from the past channel the perceptions and shape the possibilities of today.

Although the focus of the research study was on exploring learner leadership development, it began becoming sensitive to the context of the research site and then further to explore the changing shape of different themes that emerged during the research phases. I did this to illustrate how the structure of the community and the school has a bearing on the agency (constraining and/or shaping) of the learners to develop their leadership skills.

6.3.1.2 The structure and its influences on the learners' agency

In one of the first contact sessions that I had with the research group of learners, they were requested to create life collages (see Section 5.6.5) that depicted their lives, showing their past and present histories and to reflect on what their future lives could be like (Figure 30). “Social practice is ineluctably shaped by the acknowledged conditions of action and generates unintended consequences which form the context of subsequent interaction” (Archer, 1982, p. 456).

To illustrate the effect and consequences that these structures exert on the learners, I used their stories to communicate what life is like and to understand how they have been affected in various ways. Through these collages (Appendix K) – that each individual created and presented to the participants in the focus group – a stark portrait emerged illuminating how they had been affected by a wide set of national political turmoil and community struggles that had left their parent(s) struggling, yet they still they remained positive and still had their dreams.

A. Community

The research data revealed that the families of the research participants have been left with many inadequacies due to decades of inferior socio-economic living conditions and struggles, undoubtedly caused by the inhumane practice of segregation during the Apartheid era (see Section 2.2). According to Danermark et al. (2002, p. 164), “social phenomena emerge from the deep underlying real structures, become actual, and then empirical. Our understanding of these social phenomena goes in the opposite direction: from empirical to actual to real” (as cited in Oltman, 2009, p. 158). This impact influenced and shaped both the community and the learners in such a way that the learners and their families have grown up and remain in an entrapped environment – in poverty – which has been described as, “the degree to which an individual does without resources” (Kamper, 2008) (see Section 2.5). The inaction (powerlessness) of the community and the learners seem to perpetuate their dire financial situation. The social capital of families has had a direct influence on many of these learners, shaping them as individuals in so many different ways – especially learning.

Although many live in conditions of poverty, these participants are still able to remain resilient and present themselves as children of great dignity (always neatly dressed) and character (smiling, helpful). Their interviews revealed that they looked after younger family members and they spoke

about how they were going to matriculate and eventually become lawyers, doctors, chartered accountants in order that their families – one day – did not live in shacks, in abject poverty. For them, education is their ticket out of poverty and many of their parents make the necessary sacrifices in order for this to happen.

Extract 1:

Participant: *When I have matriculated I want to study to become a Chartered Accountant...to be like the picture...a lovely house, and car, and a beautiful wife and children. I don't want my family growing up like me.*

Inequalities and relatively weak outcomes that exist in these communities are due to a family's poor social capital which has been influenced by the historical practice of Apartheid (see Section 2.5). Theorists (Shields & Oberg, 2000; Alexander, Entwisle & Olson, 2001; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Maxcy, 1994) claim that people that have been marginalised through the process of social injustices and that have been prevented from realising their potential/dreams because of it, will lack the opportunities to develop as part of society (Knott-Craig, van der Mescht & Maritz, 2010) and they could be trapped in a cycle of poverty which – in this case – has led to the disintegration of families, in a marked manner.



Figure 30: Participant presenting his collage

Data shows that communities are prepared to send their children to places where they believe they could get the best education and also be safer from negative effects found in the community. This often results in the learner being separated from the family and its structure to live with relatives.

Extract 2:

Researcher: *Welcome Participant #3. It is your turn to share your story.*

Participant #3: *Hi sir. Thanks sir. I don't have a father...he left us...he died...when I was young. I live with my mother who lives in East London. I go to Ntsika School and I live with my aunty. My mother still lives in East London. I like it here in Grahamstown.*

Researcher: *Why does your mother want you to stay in Grahamstown while she stays in East London?*

Participant #3: *My mother wants for me to get a good education. I want to be an engineer.*

Researcher: *Why do you think that you mother wants you to stay in Grahamstown?*

Participant #3: *Because she says that it is safer and that I won't get mixed up with the wrong boys.*

The learners also pointed out that the adults in their households are often jobless and possibly uneducated and have to survive off pensions and social grants that have been provided by the government, placing more stress on the family situation. There are strong indications that some of the learners come from single parent homes where the quality of education is lacking. Many of these learners fall prey to wrong influences due to poor role models.

Extract 3:

Participant #5: *My mother is not educated and doesn't have a job. We live on a social grant.*

Extract 4:

Participant #7: *My mother is educated. She has a matric certificate. She does not work but looks after me using a social grant.*

Bloch (2009, p. 78) points out that the order and structure – that once existed in these homes – has been “sucked away and slowly disintegrates further” resulting in dysfunctional communities which often give rise to alcoholism and drug use. The order and regularity that has normally established boundaries and discipline – which created the structure and a framework to improve their lives – has disintegrated (*ibid.*) (see Section 2.1.4).

These young learners revealed that they found themselves living in single parent households or where both parents had died, living with their grandparents or other relatives, who live off their pensions or child support grants.

Extract 5:

Participant #7: *My father left when I was young. I don't know him. We stay with my grandfather who has a job on a farm just outside of Grahamstown. My uncle also works there. I now stay with my other family with my mother having gone back to live on the farm.*

In some instances, they themselves (the participants) have become the head of the home at a young and tender age. With this breakdown in family structure comes the scourge of social evils that beset families in negative ways, as explained in the following extracts:

Extract 6:

Researcher: *Hello Participant #2!*

Participant #2: *Hello Mr. Ian...and class.*

Researcher: *Well, it's your turn to tell us about yourself, your story.*

Participant #2: *Thank you, meneer. (Claps his hands together a few times) Well, my family lived in a small town in the Transkei before coming to eRhini (Grahamstown). When I was born my father left us...and then my mother struggled to look after me so she...dropped me off at the hospital when I was still a baby... (Long pause) ...but my grandmother came to fetch me and looked after me. My mother now looks after us.*

Researcher: *Who is “us”?*

Participant #2: *It is my siblings. Well...it's me, my aunt, cousin brother, cousin sister, my older sister and my younger sister. My cousin brother who stays with us...he is always doing the wrong things.*

Researcher: *What are these wrong things that he does?*

Participant #2: *My cousin brother...is drinking alcohol. Makes it hard for us. He is also smoking...and smokes dagga as well...with his friends.*

Their histories underpin the conditions of their daily lives. The community and the families have been overwhelmed, even to the point of becoming powerless to do anything about the current situation, due to the legacy of Apartheid. The impact of the forced removals under the Group Areas Act (see Section 2.2) has had a detrimental effect on these learner leaders' families whose dignity has been trampled upon through their disenfranchising and marginalising. The above extract reveals that families tend to break up leaving children to grow up in single parent families. The learner leaders' families have left the rural areas to seek a better life in the urban areas. They escape from the degradation of the rural land and farming to live in informal settlements located in the urban centres looking for better opportunities (Bloch, 2009). This has resulted in families becoming extended which often results in poor influences on the learners.

Once living in patriarchal home environments, where leadership was strong and role-models set examples, many families are said to have fragmented due to poor socio-economic factors that have undermined the structure of the home. It became more apparent in these interviews that these communities are becoming more dysfunctional – due to a lack of leadership and role models in the home – resulting in high rates of alcoholism and drug use.

The principal of the school alludes to this situation:

Extract 7:

Principal: *Although we say that parents are involved in the school...obviously there are a lot of grandmothers and grandparents that try to support the learners.*

Researcher: *Obviously?*

Principal: *Many of the learners come from broken homes where parents have died or live with the mother or father. Sad...but I think that they are more involved than*

what the teachers actually realise. Parents are away, not there, so grandparents are involved, a lot!

Researcher: *How are they able to support these children?*

Principal: *We've got probably 100 different grants and so on, and they will be mostly living with their grandparents.*

Some learners – girls in particular – are exposed to sexual violence and inappropriate sexual relationships in the home, especially when families are extended. Data shows that these learners are exposed to much peer pressure to partake in drugs and alcohol, crime and gang-related violence within the community. Within the school, it is no different. Similar factors have an effect on the agency of the learners robbing them from possibly realising their true potential and reaching their dreams.

B. School

It becomes almost impossible to include and separate all the structural factors that influence the agency of the learners in their learning environment. However, Bloch (2009) does argue that many of these problems that are being experienced at a school – which negatively impacts on the learners' education – are not necessarily caused by anything that occurs in the school but rather they are mechanisms that are brought in from society to the classroom.

As a result of the interaction of personal self-interest of the learners, individuals demonstrated that they can make decisions based on their self-interest and community. However, Bloch (2009) points out that with this social disintegration of families many of the learners are making wrong choices and have joined gangs due to the fact that their lives are without structure and direction, beginning to engage in many anti-social activities. They belong to these groups for the reason of structure and from it they hope to receive acceptance, identity, protection and belongingness.

The data points to a group of individual learners living in the community who have chosen not to conform to the principles and the rules of both the community and the school. These learners break rules and misbehave which has led them to bunk classes and/or leave school prematurely. Many

of these boys end up in gangs and are called ‘tsotsies’¹³, resulting in unacceptable behaviour. They spend their time harassing and disrupting the other learners to stop them from attending school. These decisions that have been made by these learners (agents) have resulted in them remaining uneducated (possibly with criminal records already) and living in poverty. Their decisions have in actual fact reproduced existing social structures in the community.

From an observation (observation #4, 12/05/2014), one of the participants pointed out a group of these ‘tsotsies’ to me that were standing outside the school and at the ‘spaza shop’¹⁴ after school one day after the contact session. The principal pointed this out in an interview that these groups had a negative influence on the learners and often hung around the gates after school waiting to intimidate the learners which often resulted in fights.

Extract 8:

Researcher: *How prevalent are gangs in the Ntsika community?*

Principal: *We often have tsotsies hanging around outside the gates and they threaten our kids. So that’s what is so difficult for these kids who run past trying to get away from them at the gates after school. That’s what is so hard. It’s almost living two lives...school and community.*

Researchers: *And the girls? How are they affected when they leave the security of the school premises?*

Principal: *I think that they have tough lives. You just have to think of the distances that they have to travel on foot to and from school each day...so there is always the danger of being physically assaulted. And then...the sex amongst the kids is just unbelievable.*

Interestingly enough, after a contact session I measured the approximate distance that one of the learners walked daily – through the conglomeration of low cost housing and through open patches of unprotected land – and it came to 5 kilometres.

¹³ Bhuti (See Section 2.7)

¹⁴ Spaza shop – It is a small shop that sells a range of goods to the community.



Figure 31: Informal settlement housing and unprotected land

However, the impact of gangsterism in the school does have a negative and destructive impact on learning in the school and is clearly pointed out by the principal and learners:

Extract 9:

Principal: *Because of the fights that take place it affects the learners in so many ways...like fear, injuries due to fights, some of the gangsters don't attend classes...and of course the girls have the problem of abuse...sexually. Understand that this happens in most if not all the schools.*

Although learners have taken the initiative for their learning, individual learners still face intimidation and victimisation outside the school gate and even in the school grounds. These gangs have terrorised many of the school going learners with negative consequences:

Extract 10:

Participant #5: *Learners bunk school and lessons to be recognised by the gangs and they have started arguing with the teachers.*

Extract 11:

Participant #4: *They impact in a negative way because we as student[s] we feel scared when we go to extra classes with our bikes [at another school]. I remember last week they took one of our bikes from us.*

The interviews also revealed that some learners who live in extended families (parents have died due to AIDS or violence) had added responsibilities in the home when they got back from school.

Extract 12:

Principal: *You know ...I just don't get it! Yes, they are affected and then having to care for the households, and time ...time, kids just don't have enough time anymore for themselves.*

Researcher: *What do you think the reason would be for this?*

Principal: *The school day is long and we try and get them to do their school homework or extra lessons then. Then they go home and they then have to start cleaning the home or doing chores, so they have someone to do the housework and to cook, look after the children. The kids are expected to do the housework. There are some parents that take responsibility in the home and allow the kids to study and obviously there are kids that are abused, that as well. Alcohol is a problem as well, the drinking and then the drugs. Pregnancy is a problem too...but it's not like other schools in Grahamstown.*

One of the participants revealed how difficult learning was due to a lack of family support and living apart from his parents. This constrained the learner in a number of ways affecting him on a few levels. In talking to a participant in an informal meeting (which he had called) he pointed out these difficulties that he was currently experiencing in his relatives' home.

Extract 13:

Researcher: *It's great seeing you again. What's the trouble? You don't seem to be in a good space today!*

Participant #7: *Yes, meneer! Not good. Thanks for wanting to see me.*

Researcher: *No problem. You know that I am there for you. Let's chat.*

Participant #14: *Things aren't going well at home. Things have changed.*

Researcher: *What has changed?*

Participant #7: *This is hard. It's like this. I stay with my relatives, my cousins, and I stay in a room in their house. Its small but this is where I need to stay until I finish my matric. My mother has gone back to her village as she doesn't like living in Grahamstown. I miss not having her with me...her support. I have to give my cousin R200 for food each month. We all put R200 into the tin for food. But the past two weeks my older cousin has been taking the money from the tin, which is for food, so that he can go and drink at the tavern. There has not been much food in the house and I am hungry. I can't work as I am so tired. I can't concentrate on my school work.*

Researcher: *Don't you get a meal that is provided from the food kitchen that the school provides?*

Participant #7: *I do... but not always!*

Researcher: *Why not?*

Participant #7: *Because of my church. I belong to a church...my belief practices are that I don't eat any meat and this becomes difficult.*

From the extracts above it becomes apparent that a number of these learners that live away from home lack the necessary family structure that is required at this age. This has either resulted in shaping the learner – empowering them to be effective – or has constrained the learner, which causes the learner to become powerless in their situation. These learners have shown signs of struggling to adapt to being separated from their families which has resulted in feelings of being lonely and homesickness.

According to Bell and Bromwick (1998) when the learners are unable to overcome the feeling of being separated from the family, this could result in feelings of loneliness, depression and set off health problems, possibly leading to an inability to “assimilate new experiences” – described as a “ruminative activity”. Oltman (2009, p. 193) suggests that this could result in a “psychological state that makes learning and socialization difficult”.

Nonetheless, the learners have demonstrated that they have the ability to overcome these feelings and inability to take action. The semi-structured interviews and focus groups revealed that a number of the learners had turned to a few varied activity groups (structures) to help them to grow and succeed, e.g.: Youth activity groups: Environmental Club, Leaders4Tomorrow Leadership Group, Columba 2000 Leadership Group and Church Group Affiliation.

The reason for them belonging to one of these groups is that they were able to make friends with people who were ‘like-minded’ and shared similar experiences. However, some learners have also turned to some unsavoury groups (gangs) in order to be recognised and to belong. Nevertheless, these learners are at a distinct disadvantage due to the social dynamics of families that hinder any form of development, in particular, that of good leaders.

What became evident from these extracts is that families have gone to great lengths – making big sacrifices – to ensure that their children receive a quality education that will enable them to get a job one day, bringing them out of the cycle of poverty. This is their hope. They have dreams and aspirations of one day seeing their children succeed.

Extract 14:

Researcher: *Participant #1, tell us about your life story.*

Participant #1: *Well...it was like this...I was born in Grahamstown at Settlers Hospital. My mother was staying at extension 2 in Hlalani Location in the township at the time...and if I had to go deeper than that...my mother told me that there was something wrong with me at my birth. The doctors told her that I was not a normal baby. They said to her that I needed to be taken for tests four days after birth and...my disability was confirmed. I was deaf in both ears and my one leg had not...grown. The other leg was okay but I would not be able to move...er...walk. They suggested that my parents leave me in hospital or send me to a special hospital where they could take care of me as I was not going to be like other guys.*

Researcher: *What did your mother do?*

Participant #1: *They decided to take me home. My dad said to me many years later that he was not going to just leave me there. He wanted me to grow up and go to school...to get an education. My parents could not afford to take me to the Disabled School.*

Participant #1: *But, hey sir...it is hard...because they make fun of me and don't trust me...cause...of my deformities. I have been lonely...people didn't want to associate with me...instead they were bad mouthing me.*

Research data also sheds light on what far reaching effects some of these external mechanisms have on the school and how they have impacted on the school and the learners. The service delivery by the government has been poor and tedious – nationally – which creates great angst in schools as the pressure is on them to produce the results. Both parents and learners have high expectations.

Extract 15:

Researcher: *How much support do you get from the State or Department of Education?*

Principal: (Snigger) *No, they don't, not much...or should I rather say that I do get support from the District Office. For the rest it's unreliable.*

Researcher: *How big an issue is finance in the school?*

Principal: (Stifled laugh) *It's a big problem. They say they support us but they don't. It's fine for them to say that education is free but it is more than that. Just from a parents' point of view they still have to buy school uniforms, the pupils have to get to schools and have to pay to get to the school. This is the single most expense in the household here. They [Department of Education] say they give out enough money for textbooks and stationary but this is absolutely not true. Our budget is so tight. Our allocation for textbooks for last year [2013] was R209, 000.00...we had to buy textbooks for grade 8, 9 and 12. It's just not possible. You try and make that miracle work. It's not going to happen or work. We have other constraints such as the photocopier and paper, that we had to pay and there was short payment of the budget by the government. We only have R2, 000.00 left for the telephone until May [interview was done at the beginning of February, 2014]. Fortunately, the nutrition programme is supported. Don't forget that we still have to pay the salaries of a few teachers [Science and Mathematics].*

Another tension that surfaced is that the parents who send their children to the school in order for them to receive a good education often find that they are unsupervised at times. The teachers – who they rely on to provide the education for their children – are all registered South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) members and strikes often take them out of the classroom for periods of time leaving the learners without teachers. Schools and teachers are often threatened with violence and disruptions by the organisation if the teachers participate in ‘unauthorised’ Saturday or out of hour’s programmes (Bloch, 2009, p. 107).

Extract 16:

Principal: *You just can't rely on many of the teachers. After running a meeting and talking about maintaining our academic progress the teachers were called away for a 7-day strike due to demands that were made to the District Office about a policy, which had not been met. It's difficult in places. They [teachers] talk the talk of cooperating, they participate in those workshops but just to get it to materialise, it just doesn't happen.*

Data points to the effect of the presence of the Council of South African Students (COSAS) within the school (see Section 2.7). In the first place, the organisation presents the learner with a space to lead from, probably in a negative form. In the second place, the mobilisation of the learners by the organisation tends to destabilise the functioning of the school, negatively impacting on the education and learning of the learners, as the principal of the school alluded to in an interview:

Extract 17:

Principal: *COSAS is a problem in the school. I don't have a problem with it in the school but last year there were big arguments between the old COSAS members and the new COSAS members...I think that there is a big move to mobilise COSAS and destabilise [the school] and that is definitely happening. They were the ones who came to our school also to disrupt the classes and to have the kids in the township on the march...that was ugly. Some of the younger staff members have used this organisation as an avenue to get support for their own agendas.*

However, data from the research study shows that in situations like these the resilience of the learner is demonstrated in that they are willing to take the initiative and responsibility (agency)

for their learning and attend extra lessons provided by various community support groups or study groups that they have formed. The causal mechanism that sparked off this approach was due to the fact that the learners lived in near survival mode in the township and out of possible desperation knew that if they didn't take action nothing would happen.

Extract 18:

Principal: *The learners take responsibility for their learning for themselves. It happens a lot. There are kids [learners] that stand out...those that study on their own. This is the only reason why the learners achieved such a pass rate last year [2013] and this has filtered down. There is almost a sense that they have to do something about it themselves.*

Cole-Henderson (2000, p. 84) argues that socio-economic and sociological problems – that have been created by social structures – that relate to poverty, entails specific challenges as regards the orderly, effective and equal provision of education (see Section 2.5). What has emerged from the research data (Table 17) has been the impact of socio-economic factors on the community and school, which Cole-Henderson (*ibid.*) highlights in Section 2.5. According to researchers (Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloniemi, 2013, p. 51) these structures have the potential to shape and/or constrain the agency of the learners.

Table 17: Emerging structural factors and effects/events that influence agency

STRUCTURAL FACTORS	CAUSAL MECHANISMS (Thoughts, attitudes, feelings)	EFFECTS/EVENTS	IMPACT
Segregation Poverty Race Social class Gender Age Roles (position in the family) Apartheid Migratory labour Trade unions Educational policy (Bantu Education)	Despair Hopelessness Helplessness Desperation Despondency Loneliness Poor self-image Poor self-esteem Lack of confidence	Sociological problems: Absent parent homes Single parent homes Extended families Drunkenness Drug addiction Socio-economic problems: Uneducated Poor education Underdevelopment/sickness Economic depression	Adolescent run homes Unemployment Hunger Tiredness Absenteeism Lack of role models Bad influences Crime Gangsterism/physical abuse Bullying Physical abuse/rape

C. The effects on the learner

Researchers (Sayer, 2000; Danermark et al., 2002; Hesketh & Fleetwood, 2006; Kurki, 2007) point out that these causal mechanisms are often deemed to be multifaceted and often difficult to detect as they subsist deep within the social structure, originating in the domain of the ‘real’. Kurki (2007, p. 364) suggests that we could become aware of the mechanisms being used by observing or experiencing the effect or event, or even the absence of them.

Learners live in broken homes, are often hungry and ill, do not have the proper clothing, lack study facilities, parental support (many supported by relatives), study motivation, have a poor self-image, poor self-esteem and language proficiency (English) (see Section 2.5). These all have an injurious, ‘wheel spinning’ effect on the learners wanting to learning. What’s the point of it all? How can one remain motivated living in an environment like this? Despite all these factors, these learners appeared to be able to keep motivated!

Utilising an adapted diagrammatical representation of Bhaskar’s transformational model (Figure 32), I describe existing mechanisms, explaining relationships and connections that exist within the research site. I suggest mechanisms and structures that could explain why the phenomenon, the connections, and relationships exist or don’t exist.

Data collected from the research site indicated that some of the learners appeared to have developed ‘box like’ approaches (attitude) to life – like a fish not knowing that it is living in water. Social structure (Table 17; Figure 32) has had a constraining influence on the learners in many different ways, in such a manner that they have learned to accept their lot in life and become content in their environment or they have rejected it and been willing to make changes, creating transformation. They showed a lack of agency which resulted in the social structure being reproduced. Although accepting the conditions that they were exposed to – within the social structure – many of the learners in this activity system were willing to use their agency to transform their learning environment.

Observations made (19/03/13; 04/03/13; 25/03/13) point out that the learners appeared to be content in their environments, yet not in the cause itself, but the lack of motivation, lack of trust, lack of self-confidence, or poor-self-esteem still appeared to be palpable. These structures have

had an influence on the learners’ activity and likewise the degree of their individual agency within the structure that they exist in.

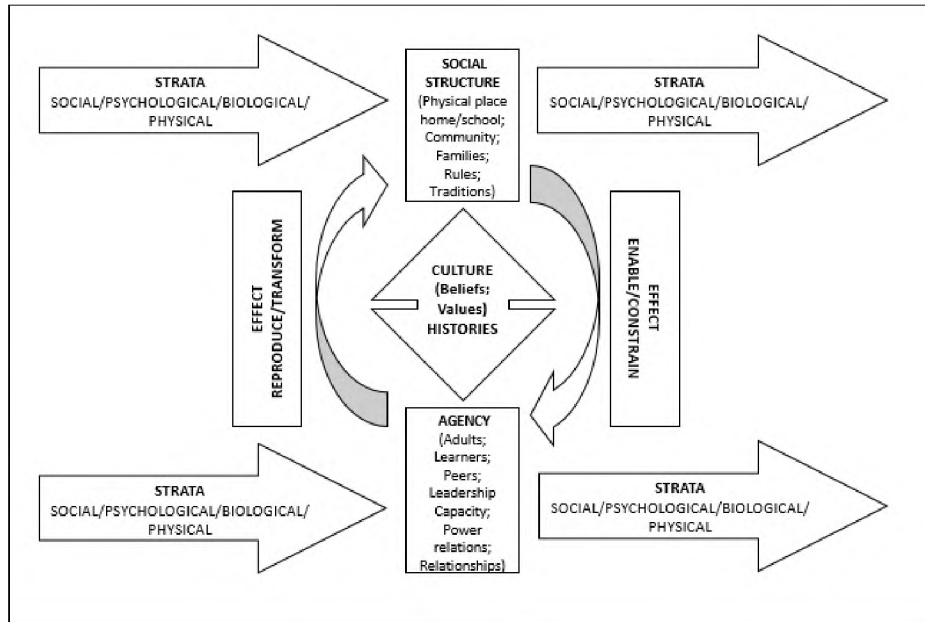


Figure 32: Diagrammatic representation of Bhaskar’s transformational model
(Adapted from Bhaskar, 1993, p. 155; Oltman, 2009)

However, having earlier said that learners – through their decision-making – could perpetuate social structures and be happy with the status quo, the following section attempts to demonstrate that the motivation (agency) that the learners displayed towards change could result in personal transformation. Leaders (agents) can change and alter existing social structures. Bass (1990) describes leaders as agents of change that do have choices which could either be at the conscious or unconscious level, but it is also suggested by Greenleaf (1970) that in order to lead one needs to make the conscious choice to serve. The change must first start within – personally. An example of this was the Soweto riots that learners were engaged in, in order to break down the oppressive structures of Apartheid (see Section 2.4). Hays (1994, p. 64) explains that:

Technically speaking, people are agents on a daily basis. Structures, in this sense, are in the process of constant readjustment. Further, in view of the logical systematicity of structures, this constant readjustment at the surface level can potentially, though infrequently, lead to the possibility of change at the deeper level.

However, Hays (1994, as cited in Oltman, 2009, pp. 72-73) does warn and allude to the fact that:

- Choice does not necessarily imply intentionality because choice may be at the conscious level;
- Choices should not be seen in isolation. Rather, we should see choices as being “socially shaped” (Hays, 1994, p. 64);
- Social structures influence the choices that agents make.

In order to achieve buy-in from the learners, the research study required that the learners all submit motivational letters to me motivating why they felt that they needed to be selected to be a part of the research group for the duration of the study. The learners had to be prepared to make the choice to be involved in a process that could lead to transformation at a personal level as well as at a school level.

6.3.1.3 Personal motivation of the learners to want to lead

Although the research study was involved with an open educational system, the aim was to surface interacting structures and causal mechanisms that had shaped or influenced the learners within this research site. Causal mechanisms are described by Sayer (2000) as structural properties that could produce or enable something, or lead to the resulting event, or even possibly restrict it. As I was interested in what caused leadership to happen, I wanted to discover what made leadership happen, what produced, generated, created or determined it, or what enabled or led to it.

Although the structure(s) initially stifled the learners’ agency, the learners began to utilise the space that was created by the research study to engage and empower them to realise that as fish, they are living in water and that they can do something about their situation to unleash their agency in leadership (see Section 6.3.1.2. B). However, it had to be a personal choice.

A. The challenges faced in developing a sense of self-worth and personal identity – Who am I?

Adolescence is a very busy transitional time for young people as they attempt to sort out their lives and futures (van Linden & Fertman, 1998) (see Section 4.5). According to researchers (*ibid.*) it is in this phase of their lives that they are entangled in a challenging and yet demanding change during which they are said to give up their childhood freedoms. Nonetheless, it is here that they investigate questions such as “Who am I?” and “Where do I fit in?”

I believe that when adolescents are provided the space in which they can begin to understand who they really are through self-reflection, they begin to learn to differentiate themselves from the adult world and its responsibilities and to see themselves as children (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). However, the learner leaders in this study had great difficulty in getting to this point as so many of them had already shouldered adult responsibilities in the home due to ‘absent parents’ or ‘single-parent’ homes. As the principal, “*Many of the learners come from broken homes where parents have died or live with either their mother or father*”. It was also pointed out that, “[When] they go home and then they have to start cleaning the home or doing chores...someone has to do the housework and to cook, look after the children”. To many of these learners it has become the way of life and the cycle is perpetuated.

They are adults in children’s bodies shouldering the responsibilities of ‘absent parents’. “This is the stage at which the learner leaders are said to be consolidating their social roles and trying to decide where they are and where they are going” (Yelon & Weinstein, 1977, p. 89). I have alluded to the fact that these learner leaders are attempting to work out how they appear in the eyes of their peers, compared to how they feel about themselves. The development of their social identity is said to be produced through internal conversations that the learner leaders have with their circumstances. Their personal identities emerge from their emotional commentaries that take place about their concerns, originating from the neutral, practical and social orders of their reality, through personal reflection.

However, these adolescents have been constrained due to little or no support and guidance at home because of ‘absent parents’ which has been accentuated by the poor role models that they have had to model their lives on (Yelon & Weinstein, 1977; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Bloch,

2009). According to van Linden and Fertman (1998, p. 15), “They look for role models and heroes and try to integrate aspects of those ideals into their own value system”. Due to lack of structure in the home the learners are often drawn to the structure of the gangs in their neighbourhoods because it is from these structures that they receive acceptance, identity, protection and a feeling of belongingness. The principal alluded to the challenge of these learners who feel that they are living in two worlds... school and community (Extract 8).

Nevertheless, according to the principal, these learners have demonstrated that they are willing to take responsibility for themselves (Extract 18). In their collages the learners illustrated who they thought they were and who they were hoping to become (Appendix K) which has been part and parcel of the development of a sense of self during this study. Their intentions have been undoubtedly distinct as to who they would like to be – “an engineer; a researcher; lawyer; a pilot”.

In Chapter Seven, the interrogation of self-worth and personal-identity begin to unfold as tensions are surfaced in the learner leader activity system.

B. Factors shaping learner leadership

A number of significant tensions that were surfaced in Chapter Seven, revealed the stumbling blocks that the learner leaders had to navigate when having to work with other learners in the group. Van Linden and Fertman (1998, p. 21) do caution that there are certain characteristics that learner leaders tend to associate leadership with (Table 18). In this particular research group, socialised patriarchy was a significant stimulus (see Section 7.2.1.3).

Nonetheless, they demonstrated resilience in that they were prepared to become more equipped to take greater control over their own lives. The tasks that the learner leaders participated in provided them with opportunities to make decisions for themselves and for their group. Once they had taken collective ownership to clarify and establish group norms and values, they were able to collaboratively work together in solving set problems.

Table 18: Characteristics adolescents associate with being a leader

Tall	Extroverted	Willful (having willpower)
Physically fit	Older	Having sense of duty
Self-confident	Honest	Healthy
Reliable	Not overweight	Male
Attractive	Popular	Physically energetic
Possessing initiative	Intelligent	Desiring to excel
Wealthy	Well-behaved in school	Maintaining good attendance
Persistent	Hard-working	Having good school habits

(Adapted from van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 21)

One would think that these learner leaders would demonstrate negative leadership due to the restrictive and repressing environment that they lived in. Although, the learner leaders were able to motivate each other during the set tasks through encouragement, they were also able to voice their sentiments and thoughts during discussion phases of the study. However, initially, the learner leaders' negative behaviour displayed towards one another matched their words (aggressive behaviour), often resulting in much resentment and failure (see Extract 32, Section 7.2.2.3). It is argued that this negative leadership is deeply rooted in repression, poverty of the soul, and violence which is cultivated in the environment in which the leader grows up in (van Linden & Fertman (1998, p. 23). In the beginning of the research study there were situations where the group participated in pre-set tasks, where this kind of behaviour was evident (see Section 7.2.1.2) which resulted in heated exchanges. These behavioural exchanges could be said to be “born out of instinct to survive” (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 24). Learners were initially hurtful, unkind, aggressive, domineering and inconsiderate. The feelings of many were affected (see Extract 24). *“The people saw me as a disadvantaged person...I don't feel good about myself...they say bad*

things about me...they don't take me seriously...I'm just a laughing stock to them. I want to be part of the group and it's functioning" (words of a disabled boy).

However, I believed that by using the CHAT method for data collecting, I was able to develop an understanding of the framework in which I was researching and also get the learner leaders to redirect this negative energy into positive leadership.

It was pointedly evident in this study that the learner leaders needed to belong and be included in the group which was motivated to act in order to fulfil this need (see Section 7.2.1.2). Maslow (1954) suggests that once this need is met the learner leader's motivation would not be terminated but rather be stimulated in such a way to seek further fulfilment (Yelon & Weinstein, 1977; van Linden & Fertman, 1998). As soon as the learner leaders succeeded in their tasks, developing knowledge and understanding, the more they began to strive to work collaboratively which resulted in a greater sense of being valued within the group. The learner leaders' "deficiency needs" and "being needs" were being satisfied (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 27) (see Section 4.5.4). Being accepted into this learner leadership group was important to these learners which enabled them to develop and maintain a sense of self-esteem and respect.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Being able to develop an awareness of the learner leaders' struggles to meet their needs during this research study, provided me with a frame of reference within which to work. These learner leaders actively demonstrated their leadership abilities in their desire to become effective leaders. In many instances, leadership development is so subtle to the learner leaders that they are oblivious to the leadership skills that they actually possess and inadvertently practice. Learner leaders need to accept and recognise that they are developing their leadership skills continuously each day as they are exposed to different life situations and the way that they influence others.

In the following chapter I focus on another layer of data that surfaced a number of significant tensions, which was used as a springboard for expansive learning.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SURFACING CONTRADICTIONS IN LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE LEARNER ACTIVITY SYSTEM



(A group of participants engage in some healthy dialogue and debate.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

(Nelson Mandela)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the focus of the study was on developing an understanding of the social structure that influenced the agency of the learners and how the learners were impacted in developing their skills as learner leaders. In Chapter Seven, I use Engeström's (1987) model of activity systems as an analytical tool for identifying and negotiating contradictions and tensions that occurred within these learners' leadership activity system. According to Engeström (2001), contradictions act as a guiding principle for empirical research. He points out that these contradictions act as a source for change and development – which is its fundamental role – establishing the basis for expansive learning for learner leadership development as discussed in Chapter Eight.

In this study, contradictions were surfaced largely from the rich body of collected data that was generated during the exploratory phase of the study and then grouped together according to the types of contradictions as described by Engeström (*ibid.*) (see Section 4.4). Extracts were taken from the participants' responses from the conversations that arose in the various interviews and workshops to illustrate the tensions that existed. For the research study, I considered deep, insightful and detailed responses for analytical development as this assisted in tracing some of the roots of the contradictions (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 108).

It is argued that these surfaced contradictions are not to be seen or described as problems of conflict (Engeström, 2001), but rather that contradictions be defined as tensions, choices, contrasts or opposition between two elements within the activity system (Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanera, 2008). According to Engeström (2001, p. 137) the origin of the surfaced contradictions is “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems”. This was then followed by an explanation highlighting the points of tension that had the potential to create transformative changes in the learner activity system.

In surfacing these contradictions, Chikunda (2013, p. 279) suggests that one keep in mind and remember that these “contradictions do not manifest themselves directly, but through disturbances, ruptures, problems, breakdowns, clashes and small unremarkable innovations in practitioners' everyday work actions” (Engeström, 1999, 2001). Any appearance of such attributes could then indicate the presence of an underlying contradiction. Although Engeström (1999) makes reference

to four contradictions that could be surfaced in activity systems, namely: primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary, I was only able to surface and classify three types of contradictions in operation in the learner activity system.

7.2 CONTRADICTIONS IN THE LEARNER LEADERSHIP CASE STUDY

Contradictions were surfaced in this single-case study's activity system (see Section 6.2) by volunteer subjects who were a group of learners (see Section 5.4.3), made up of boys and girls who were eager to change their approach to leadership by learning new ways to collaborate with each other and develop their leadership skills. They were willing to engage on all levels and share their ideas and experiences in order to become efficient and effective leaders. However, it became a lot more difficult than they thought it would be as they engaged with the study.

In this learner leadership activity system, I had to consider how the subjects were mediated by the use of leadership training tools – in the form of leadership language and tasks that they undertook to do – that could have enabled them to work towards achieving the object – the development and practice of leadership. However, I also had to consider that the learners were governed and influenced by the existing rules, norms and beliefs of the school and families, which influenced them greatly, creating a framework within which the learners worked (see Section 6.2). The learners were also influenced by their communities and the division of labour as they almost certainly required assistance to realise their goal – the object.

Russell (2002) does warn that there is “a complex and messy network of tool mediated human relationships that must be explored” (as cited in Silo, 2011, p. 230). It is also suggested that the particular personal objects that each component of the activity might have been working on, be scrutinised against the “social and cultural practices which people bring to their uses of the tools they seem to share” (*ibid.*). The importance of contradictions is that they are seen as being the driving forces of change within an activity system, which could lead to development and transformation (Engeström, 2001).

It must be remembered that all these participants engaged in using English which was possibly their second or even third language, but I still made use of the direct translations from the transcripts. It must be understood that this was a difficult task in the sense that there are at times

no suitable English words that are able to explain the meaning of a Xhosa word. This in itself created a tension in the study. Nonetheless, from their activities and in their discussions, a number of contradictions were surfaced that they as a group had to engage with.

7.2.1 Primary contradictions

Primary contradictions are described as tensions that have occurred within an element of the activity system. According to Engeström (1987, 2001), these contradictions emerge when the participants of an activity experience more than one value system which is attached to an element within the activity system, where the interpretations of the goals by individual subjects are competing with each other, bringing about conflict, e.g., within the ‘subjects’ element of the activity system (Silo, 2011).

7.2.1.1 A contradiction between the RCL guides and the school’s implementation (RCL guides vs “participatory democracy”)

As was discussed in Section 3.6.1, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996; article 11(1)) states that every public school enrolling learners in the eighth grade and higher must establish a RCL (RSA, 1996, p. 10). As was explained, the purpose of the Schools’ Act was to defend the rights of learners, which would give them opportunities of participation and responsibility in the governance of their schools as they served as representatives on the SGB.

However, research data revealed that – although there is some evidence to suggest that leadership development is taking place – the contradiction between the RCL guides and the lack of implementation has impacted on the learner leaders’ notion of ‘participatory democracy’ in the leadership activities within the school. It appears that not all the learners are afforded an equal opportunity to be engaged with the process within the activity system. The document analysis points to the fact that the community and the school – that the learners are exposed to – continue to socialise the youth into an existing status quo of inequalities through conformity to authoritarian structures, influenced by embedded historical and cultural influences. The primary contradiction (Figure 33) appears to arise between the directives to have learners participate in leadership within the school and the lack of clarity of the RCL guides which paralyses the learners’ ability to participate.

There is a strong occurrence of socialised patriarchy in the learner activity system which influences and restricts the way in which the learners collaborate and lead (see Section 6.3). The following extract demonstrates the hesitancy that learners have towards engaging with the adults.

Extract 19:

Participant #6: *I am in the RCL but the communication is poor. When we have a meeting nobody is willing to talk...everybody just looks down when the principal or teacher is asking a question.*

Participant #7: *The RCL does run but can be improved through support from the students. Only a fraction of the learners participate and others I think are scared to participate. I think that it is because they are not used to having meetings with the teachers and what should be done. They feel uncomfortable in front of the adults. Don't have much confidence in themselves.*

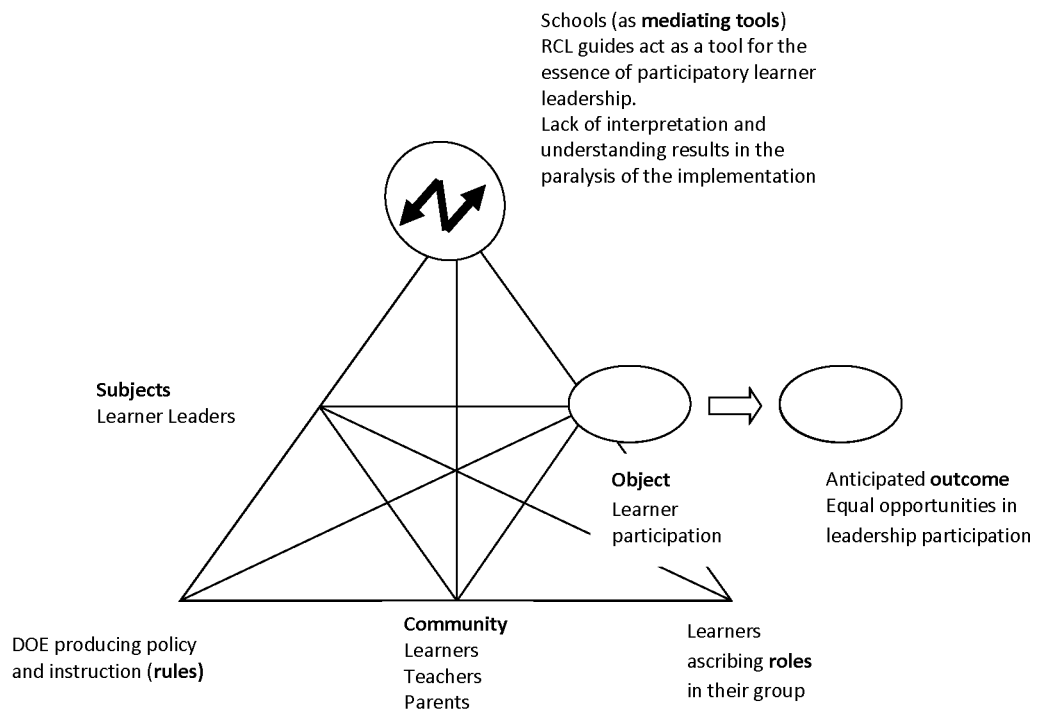


Figure 33: RCL guides vs “participatory democracy”

Such statements made by the participants revealed that although the RCL guides have been issued to promote its policy of encouraging democratic governance, there have been problems as regards to the implementation of the RCLs in schools (Mathebula, 2001; Nongubo, 2002; Knott-Craig, 2008). It appears that many learners are reluctant to engage with the process as those responsible

(adult authority figures) for the implementation of the guides are still seen to be reluctant to enter into discussions with minors and are conventional in their approach when working with the learners. Learners demonstrated a reluctance to engage with the adults due to cultural norms of respect.

Although the DoE issued RCL guides aimed at promoting democratic governance, it appears that the guides lack clarity as to the roles, functions and responsibilities of the RCLs, and the amount of authority or responsibility of the RCL is not clearly defined – hence not used much in schools.

Extract 20:

Participant #7: I am not aware of a RCL guide. We have never used one in our committee. What is it used for?

It appears that the guides also have a “narrow conception of participatory democracy” (Mathebula, 2001, p. 1; Knott-Craig, 2008), which contradicts the Act, and that the authors of the guides assumed a level of stability and normality in South African schools instead of focusing on the educative potential of participation. The whole aim of the RCL guides was to promote orderliness, a sense of community and to establish conditions that are conducive to improved education. Yet, the research study finds that learners still find themselves on the receiving end of poor education opportunities (see Section 2.). The guides that are provided are generally shallow in their recognition of learner rights and are not a true reflection of what it means to educate through participation.

7.2.1.2 Contradiction between a personal desire to be included in the group and being excluded by the group

In the study the learner leaders were keen to change their approach to developing their leadership skills. As a group it was assumed that they would work collaboratively, supporting each other in the various tasks given. However, it became apparent some learners were being left out from the group tasks, although they were equal participants when they were presented with the tasks to complete. Within the subject element of the activity system a contradiction was surfaced, the personal desire to be included in the group and the feeling of being left out in the group (Figure 35). The following extract alludes to this:

Extract 21:

Researcher: *I'm going to show you a picture from the video clip you watched and then tell me what you think.*

Participants: Great laughter when viewing the video clip.

Researcher: *Well, what do you see?*

Participant #2: *Participant is giving all the instructions and we are listening to him.*

Researcher: *Anything else that stands out?*

Participant #5: *Yes, Participant 2 is standing around doing nothing!*

Researcher: *Is he? What do you think is happening here?*

Participant #7: *He is not included in the activity that is why he is not doing anything.*



Figure 34: Initiative test (L12; L2 and girls)

These statements demonstrate that the participants noticed that Participant #2 was not doing anything, yet as a group they were unable to recognise this and articulate that someone had been excluded in the group task. They appeared to not possess the required tools to be able to see the distinction between not doing anything versus being excluded.

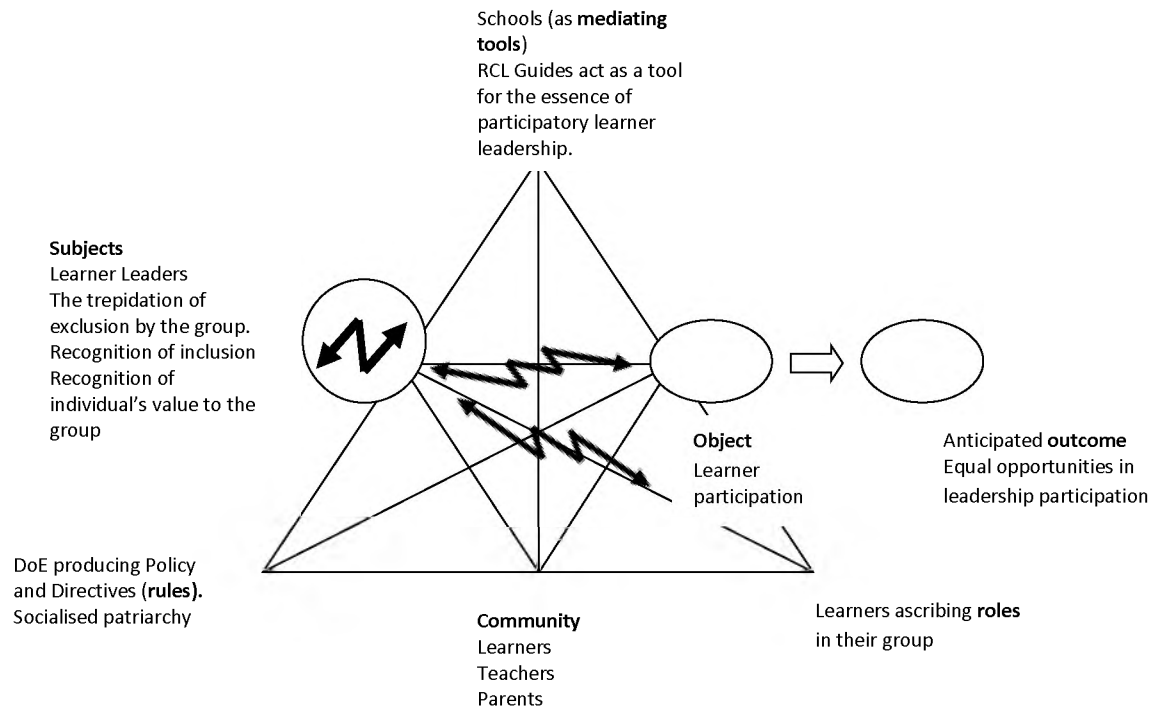


Figure 35: Recognition of individual value

A tension between a personal desire to be included by the group and the feeling of being excluded existed. What was interesting from viewing the data video (Figure 34) was that Participant #12 had taken over the decision-making for the group. Participant #12 did most of the talking and only occasionally allowed the older peers (boys) to put forward their suggestions.

What is not evident in this diagram is that many of the girls were left out in the decision-making as well. However, a significant observation was that Participant #12 was holding three control ropes used in the activity and giving out instructions whilst Participant #2 had nothing to do. Participant #2 appeared desperately to want to get involved but his voice was overlooked and he was not included. The following extract revealed this action:

Extract 22:

Researcher: [Asking the actual participant] *How did you feel?*

Participant #2: *Yes, left out. I had ideas but no-one was listening.*

During the early phases of coding I noticed that there was possibly a complex tension in existence in this group of learners with regards to learners trying to be part of the group dynamic and being willing to make contributions but realising that their contributions would not be accepted, resulting in a feeling of exclusion. Participant #2's sense making was influenced by the dominance of the old learners in the group. A double bind existed when there were two messages that Participant #2 – and probably the girls too – had to deal with. Firstly, he understood that he had ideas that could help solve the problem and by being heard he would feel included in the group, but he also knew that this might not happen either and he would be excluded.

There appeared to be influencing factors that were embedded in this group activity that allowed one person to ascribe his role as the leader, whilst the others automatically accepted the position of followers. It was not evident who empowered Participant #12 to take the role as leader but Participant #2 did quietly indicate possible reasons in an answer to a question posed to him by the researcher. According to Participant #2 he felt that he was excluded from the activity because he was probably younger and smaller compared to the other participants:

Extract 23:

Participant #2: *Yes, left out. I had ideas but no-one was listening...Maybe because I'm young and smaller than them.*

However, the girls in the group (Participant #7 & Participant #9) were all involved but very seldom made a contribution. When they did it was often overlooked and the older boys carried on giving orders.

It was noted that a much older learner (Participant #1 - 20 years) (Figure 34) had also been excluded from much of the action due to his physical disabilities. The disabilities that he has are a lack of hearing in both ears for which he uses hearing aids. He also wears a prosthesis on a stump that never grew and his other leg is deformed. Nonetheless, he appeared to be more empowered to offer and make suggestions which were accepted occasionally. He does explain in an interview that he is not much respected by his peers. The following extract reveals his feelings:

Extract 23:

Participant #1: *I'm disabled you know...I never know if I am able to [do] anything because of my disability. The people see me as a very disadvantaged person...I don't feel good about myself...there are people that say bad things sometimes they don't take me seriously...instead I am a laughing stock to them. I want to be part of the group and its functionings (sic).*

The participants had great difficulty in identifying the value of each other in the group which resulted in a number of learners being excluded from participating in the tasks, although they were members of the research group. This led to imprecise solutions being proposed with the expectation that they would be adequate in order to succeed.

7.2.1.3 Tension in the rules (between patriarchal run family (traditional) and matriarchal run family (current))

Within the rules element of the learner leaders' activity system, more than one value system appeared to be in conflict resulting in a primary contradiction arising (Figure 36). The learner leaders' interpretation of the leadership goals of the traditional, patriarchal custom of leading in a home were in direct competition with the matriarchal means of leading, resulting in conflict between the leadership philosophies of the learners (Engeström, 1987, 2001; Silo, 2011). This was aggravated with the introduction of the philosophy of servant leadership to the group. The research study had clearly illuminated the reasons for this conflict due to broken homes, single parent homes (run by mothers) and children run homes (see Section 2.1.4; Section 6.3.1.2). The discourse of the learner leaders was clearly articulated in Section 7.2.2.2, that it was not the place for females to lead the males, as this primary contradiction developed into a secondary contradiction.

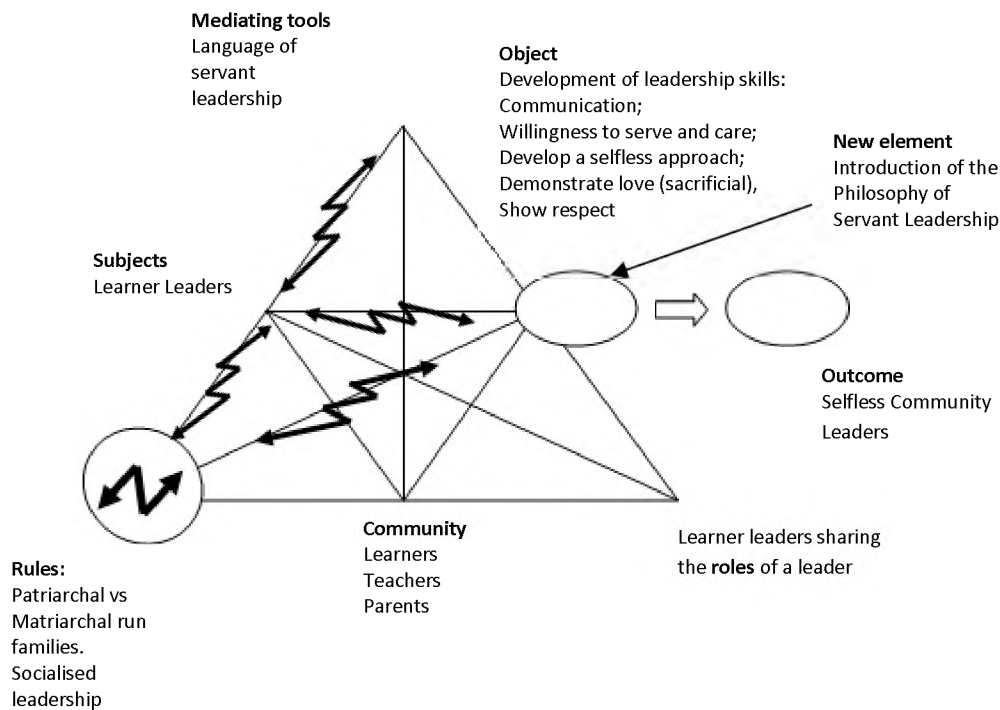


Figure 36: Patriarchal vs matriarchic run households

7.2.2 Secondary contradictions

These secondary contradictions originated between two elements in the activity system as described by Engeström (1999b), who explains that primary contradictions change and develop into a type of specific secondary contradiction. He makes it clear that conflict is brought about when the activity participants have encountered a new element (philosophy of servant leadership) of an activity, resulting in a process of assimilating the new element into the activity, giving rise to a secondary contradiction (Engeström, 1987). In this case, the learners' low level of group/team awareness led to them failing to notice that participants had been excluded from the group task, failing therefore to practice basic group leadership principles.

Engeström (2001) does warn that, "contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems". What he means here is that participants could be deeply

subjective by embedded influences of their own patriarchal norms that have been established in their culture/family. This is alluded to in the following descriptions of surfaced contradictions in the elements of this activity system.

7.2.2.1 Between the material tools and object (language of leadership, developing and practice of leadership)

A tension existed between the material tools (language of leadership) that pointed to the need of incorporating group work awareness (inclusion) into the discussion, and the lack of the subject’s conceptual tools to translate this into their leadership practice (object), which eventually resulted in the group failing to practice inclusion in the group (Figure 37). Chikunda (2013, p. 285) points out that a tacit contradiction could be surfaced which is a tension that could arise due to – in this activity – the subjects’ inability to recognise inclusion in the practice of leadership due to their own patriarchal socialisation.

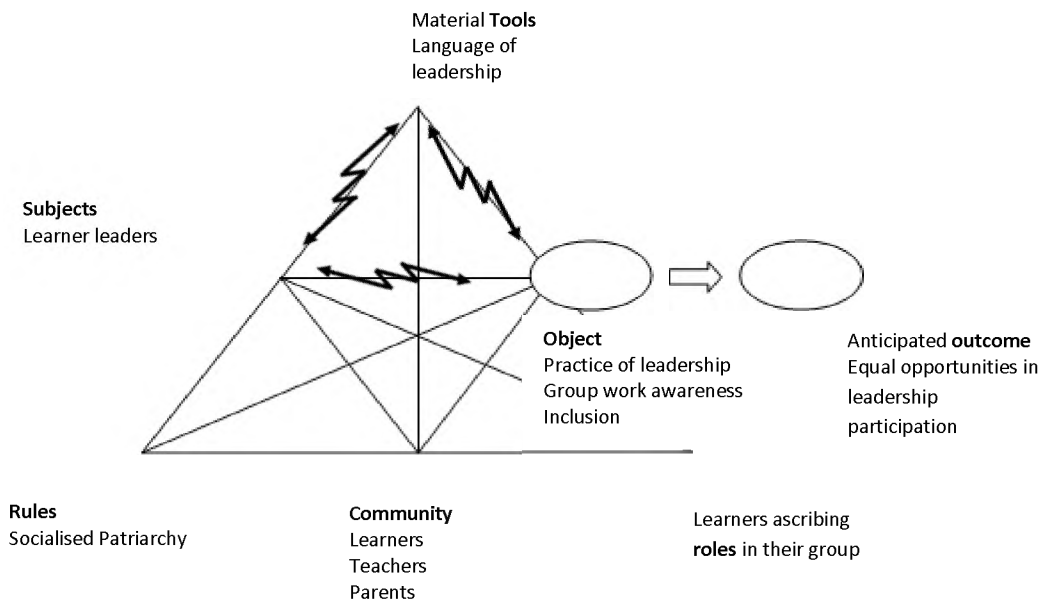


Figure 37: Language of leadership, developing and practice of leadership

The research study demonstrated (see Section 7.2.2.2; 7.2.2.4) that there was an indication of a lack of understanding of these tools which affected the learner leaders’ capacity to practise their leadership skills successfully in a group context. Their inability to recognise inclusion in the

practice of leadership was due to the fact that they had not yet fully established the necessary conceptual tools to recognise the discrepancy between being part of the group and being excluded. This unfortunately resulted in poor communication.

7.2.2.2 Between the subject and rules (inclusion and patriarchal norms)

A further tension was surfaced between other elements of the activity system that manifested as a contradiction between subject and rules (Figure 38). Here tensions within the rules (patriarchal norms in the family/community) led to a similar effect, with the subject failing to include the girls as well. This tension arose in many of the focus group discussions and group tasks undertaken. Chikunda (2013, p. 285) refers to this as “patriarchal socialisation” of the participants. This appears to be a major contributing factor to the groups’ ineffectiveness in the tasks undertaken.

According to Anderson et al. (2013, p. 1438), the male is more likely to self-select into environments that involve competition than females. It is also pointed out that gender differences have evolutionary or “natural” basis and the sociocultural construct of gender and gender roles as a potential factor behind gender differences (*ibid.*). It is pointed out by Kalu (2015) that learners are socialised into basic patriarchal structures that foster gender inequality. In most African cultures, the women are seen as inferior to men and are expected to be subservient to their male counterparts, leaving the decision-making to them. They are taught not to speak out in public, not to be outspoken particularly in front of the men and encouraged to accept the injustices meted out to them by the system without a fight (Kalu, 2015; Chikunda, 2013).

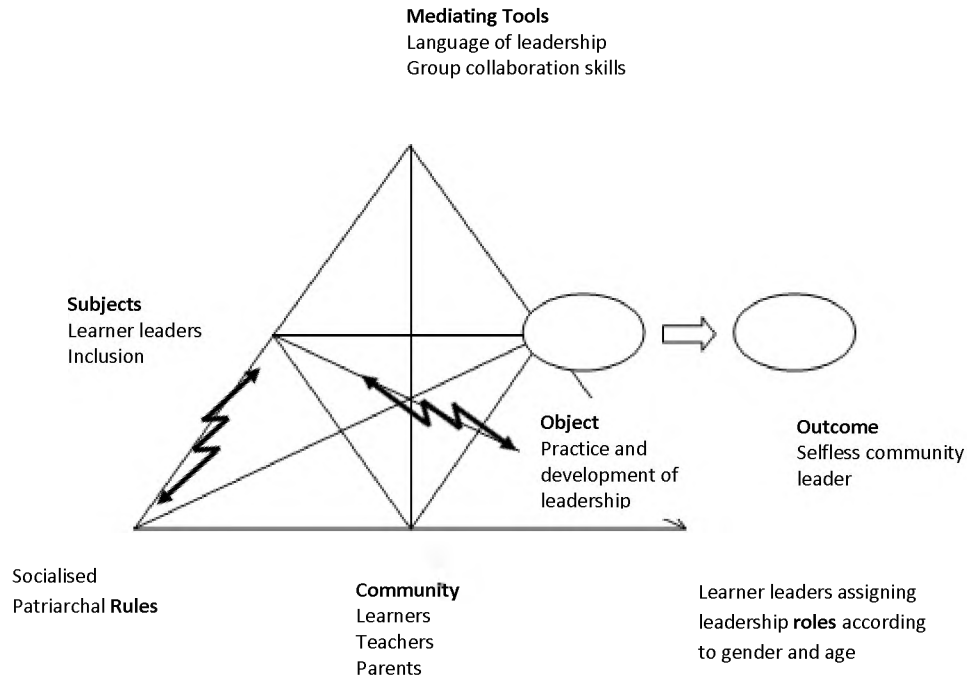


Figure 38: Inclusion and patriarchal norms

The following extract highlights the ingrained patriarchal socialisation that exists within the learner leadership group.

Extract 24:

Researcher: *Did you not think about listening to others' ideas?*

Participant #4: *No. We all had different ideas. It would have taken more time.*

Researcher: *What about the girls' ideas?*

Participant #6: [A girl points to the boys] *They don't listen to us...they don't respect us* [pointing to the girls in the group].

Participants: [Stifled laugh and then almost one response]. *We do!*

Researcher: *Do you think that they* [referring to the girls] *have good ideas?*

Participant #4: *Yes...but we listen to the older guys...they have more knowledge.*

Researcher: *Would you follow a girl if she shared her idea and it was a good one?*

Participant #5: *Not really [other boys laugh]. No, because in my home the father is the leader and the mother listens to him. We all listen to him. He is the head of the house.*

Participant #4: *In our culture the woman always obeys the man.*

Researcher: *But you are all children. Surely you should also take direction from your mother.*

Participant #4: *Yes... but we take the example from our father. The man is the head and the woman must obey. The woman's role is to care for the family not to lead.*

Participant #5: *A mother's role is to do the house chores.*

Participant #4: *In our culture we believe that you cannot be led by a woman because women are very emotional...they use their hearts for thinking instead of their brains.*

Participant #6: *Of course women can lead in the house...my father is no longer with us so she leads us now. What's wrong with that?*

Participant #7: *Yes, yes...The mother is the head of the house when the father is dead.*

Researcher: *From a previous discussion on the structure of many of your families it was revealed that many of you either stay with one parent, mostly with your mothers, or with female relatives.*

Participants: [All in agreement] *Yes.*

Researcher: *So you do obey the female in the house as well and take advice from her?*

Participants: [All in agreement that they do] *So my next question is, do you think that these girls can become leaders? Would you be able to listen to them?*

Participants: [General agreement] *Yes.*

What was noticeable here was that gender and age differences played a significant role in determining who would lead in the group based on norms. It became apparent that the practice of traditions and norms in the families and by the community is deeply embedded and were being strongly adhered to in the home environment which then carried over to the way in which the group functioned.

7.2.2.3 Rules, community norms (support/structure of families) and subjects (expectations of the learners)

As an educational facility, it would be probable to assume that the school is the space where the learners come to be educated and prepared to face the world's future expectations. It would also

be true to suppose that the teachers would set the tone for leadership development by being good role models themselves, ones to look up to.

Extracts from the interviews and focus groups suggested that tensions existed in the expectations that the learners had of the role that the family and school (parents and teachers) should play in their development and would imply that the effects were negative for the learner (Figure 39). However, there were some comments that also suggested that some of the learners felt that their needs were reasonably met. Nonetheless, the following extracts (see Section 6.3.1.2. A; B; C) have been used to illustrate this.

The feelings of the interviewee cited below brings in the object nature of him living apart from his mother, yet referring to the need to live with his mother. He suggested that without her presence it became difficult to receive the support that he required in Grade 12 and he misses not having her there with him.

Extract 25:

Participant #7: *My mother has gone back to her village as she doesn't like living in Grahamstown. I miss not having her with me...her support.*

A similar issue is raised by the principal. Although the family unit is seen to provide structure for many of the learners in the school, the principal points out that some of these learners have very little structure due to them coming from broken homes or living in homes without either parent present.

Extract 26

Principal: *Many of the learners come from broken homes where parents have died or live with either the mother or father...Very little structure in their lives.*

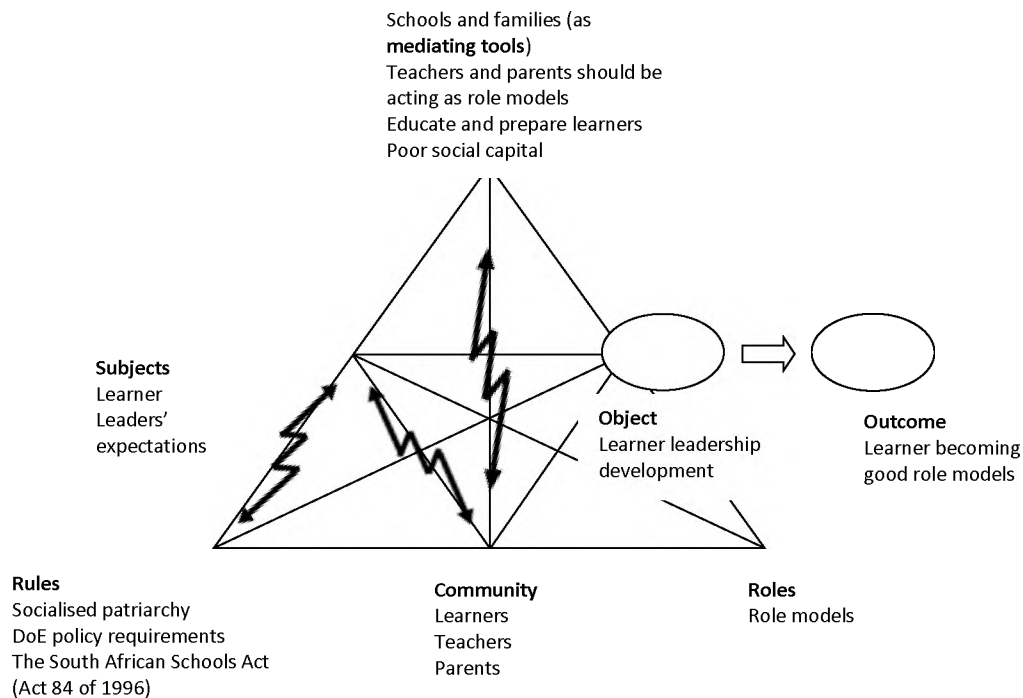


Figure 39: Rules, community norms (support/structure of families) and subjects (expectations of the learners)

In Section 6.3.1.2 it was pointed out that this lack of structure and support appeared to have permeated through the learners resulting in a sense of hopelessness in many of them, which could ultimately affect how they responded to learning in the school. This was further exacerbated by the frequent absence of teachers from the classroom due to forced strikes, as explained by the interviewees below. The adults (seen as role models) are responsible for the education of the learners but are removed from the classroom (by choice/forced) to focus on their own personal agendas.

Extract 27:

Principal: *You just can't rely on many of the teachers... they are called away for a 7-day strike.*

Extract 28:

Participant #3: *Although I have teachers, sometimes they are just not there. Not helpful... not an example to us.*

Extract 29:

Participant #2: *I like my teachers but I don't like it when they go away for long times from school.*

Participant #3: *I'm not able to learn...it makes me sad.*

The tension that exists between the tool, subject and object became the focus during an earlier CL workshop and would suggest that people who were expected to provide the structure and support necessary for the development of learners were not able to do so due to their absence from the classroom. This had a bearing on how learners saw the adults setting an example as leaders. However, having made this statement it is important to understand that the 'disintegrating family' has had a similar effect on the learner (see Section 2.1.4; 6.3.2.1). Bloch (2009, p. 124) also contends that, "families' social capital is one of the strongest reasons for these inequalities and relatively weak outcomes in poor communities and schools". The absence of role models in their homes – particularly the father figurehead – has resulted in a break down in structure and discipline, often leading to anti-social behaviour being displayed. Learners require a framework from which they can work and develop. The influence of the family unit plays a crucial role in the development of the adolescent and it is here that they start to develop their leadership skills due to the role modelling of the family.

However, data revealed that the learners had taken the initiative to do something about their lot in life. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 982) point out that actors develop relatively stable patterns of interactions in active response to their histories. Research (*ibid.*) demonstrates that during the Great Depression – where people were exposed to the economic hardship of that time – families were able to shape their emotional and cultural resources due to interactions within the family. However, in this case study the structure of Apartheid (see Section 2.1) has had a similar effect on family members in this context and the learners – through the data – demonstrated that they have utilised their agency to construct direction in their lives even without role models (adults). In a discussion with a 'critical friend', in attempting to make sense of how some of these learners are able to rise above their situation, the following statement was made:

Extract 30:

Critical Friend: *One needs to understand that many of the learners, which you are working with, live in environments that are dire. They live on the cusp of survival, if not in survival mode and due to this these learners have to take ownership of their situations otherwise they will not survive in the community and what they are currently experiencing will be perpetuated into the next generation. It is a case of if they did not have water in their homes they would have to pick up the bucket and walk to the nearest tap down the road to collect water for family usage.*

According to Mead (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 975) the effects of Apartheid in the past have shaped (permeated) the learners' current experiences resulting in these families taking on "the organised structure of tendencies". However, some of these learners chose to take on the inertia that exists within their environment and do something about their lot, even though it may be something small. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 983) refer to this action as the subject's "constructive activity". Research data revealed this intent.

Extract 31:

Principal: *The learners take responsibility for their learning for themselves. It happens a lot. There are kids [learners] that stand out...those that study on their own. There is almost a sense that they have to do something about it themselves...they have also taken on setting up study groups in the afternoons and help the younger ones with their homework.*

The conceptualisation of the contradiction of structure/support of the family and school and expectations of the learners of the role model is summarised in Table 19.

Several contradictions were surfaced and appeared to be having an effect on each other. For example, the tension between the desire of parents/teachers to provide parenting/education as a tool and the need of the learners for direction and role modelling in their lives in order to develop their leadership skills and become educated. Another example is the effect that the contradiction between the historical origin of rules of parenting and education versus modern day parenting and education in providing structure and support for the learner. The absence of role models makes this difficult.

Table 19: Contradiction analysis of rules/norms (structure/support) and subjects (expectations of learners)

TENSION	CAUSE	EFFECT	EXPECTATIONS	OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structure/support vs expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broken homes ▪ Single parent homes ▪ Absent parents ▪ Abdication of responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of direction ▪ Poor development of learning skills ▪ Poor education ▪ Lack of leadership ▪ Lack of Role Modelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Being there for me” ▪ Role model ▪ Caring ▪ Love ▪ Respect ▪ Provision of basic needs (food, finances) ▪ Trust ▪ Motivation/encouragement ▪ Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners turn to anti-social behaviour ▪ Perpetuation of poverty cycle ▪ State of hopelessness ▪ Poor academic achievement ▪ Unemployment



Figure 40: A senior boy giving instructions during an initiative test activity

7.2.2.4 Exclusion (contradiction between subject, rules and division of labour)

In exposing the learners to leadership development activities, the learners participated in a group initiative task (Figure 34) which required them to work together without any form of prompting at the beginning. The task was presented to them with a time stipulation. The aim behind this method was to explore how they as a group collaborated to solve the problem.

On the completion of the activity, a CL session was run where the participants were able to view a video of the activity that they had completed that then developed further data through the conversation that took place. This acted as mirror data. A discussion ensued which revealed the feelings of the participants. The extract below revealed the contradiction that existed in leadership between the participants during this activity.

Extract 32:

Researcher: *Having watched the video clip, what do you observe in the activity?*

Participant #3: *It was a mess.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by “a mess”?*

Participant #3: *We did not work together on the task. You can see we were all shouting out our own ideas. We did not agree with each other.*

Participant #5: *We were fighting a lot. Sometimes we were nasty.*

Participant #1: *Yes, little working together.*

Researcher: *Why do you think that this was happening?*

Participant #1: *We all tried to take the lead and never worked as a team.*

Researcher: *Who had good ideas about solving the problem?*

Participant #4: *We did! Some had better ideas than others but we didn't take time to listen.*

Researcher: *Whose ideas did you follow?*

Participant #4: *We used participant #12's idea. It's the one that worked. [Older boy]*

An observation made at this point was that the tool of communication – which is essential for any good leadership – was an issue for these participants in that very few of them actually listened to

each other. It was evident that communication was not always easy between the participants in the group. They all appeared to be caught up in themselves, following a process where they all shouted out their ideas, to which no-one listened. This resulted in much confusion and – for some participants – a sense of feeling left out, as their ideas were not being heard and their help not required.

This was so notable in Figure 34 where a junior boy can be seen standing idle just wanting to get involved and is on the fringe of activity even though the senior – who is giving instructions – has his hands full. This is firmly demonstrated in the extract below.

Extract 33:

Researcher: *Did you notice anything else when watching the video today?*

Participants: [Collectively] *No.*

Researcher: *I'm going to show you a picture from the video clip you watched and then tell me what you think.*

Participants: *Great laughter*

Researcher: *Well, what do you see?*

Participant #4: *Participant #12 is giving all the instructions and we are listening to him.*

Researcher: *Anything else that stands out?*

Participant #5: *Yes, Participant #2 is standing around doing nothing!*

Researcher: *Is he? What do you think is happening here?*

Participant #3: *He is not included in the activity that is why he is not doing anything.*

Researcher: [Asking the actual participant] *How did you feel?*

Participant #2: *Yes, left out. I had ideas but no-one was listening.*

Researcher: *Why do you think this?*

Participant #2: *Maybe cause I'm young and smaller than them.*

Participants: [A roar from the group possibly acknowledging his sentiments]

Conflict and disagreement was noticeable. The success of the solution of the activity was dependent on trial and error. The instruction from one of the older boys for solving the problem

was followed. Although a few participants tried desperately to volunteer their suggestions – the younger boys and three girls in the group – they were shouted down by the older participants. Eventually most of the group capitulated and began to listen to the one member of the group.

However, the following extract revealed the willingness of the learners to develop their communication skills so that they could operate more effectively as a group.

Extract 34:

Researcher: *How do you think that you as a group could work more effectively together?*

Participant #7: *We need to listen to each other's ideas.*

Participant #6: *I think that it is a case of giving each person a chance to talk. Let others help.*

Participants: [Most nod in agreement to the two suggestions]

Researcher: *How are you going to do this?*

As the discussion continued, the participants surfaced further tensions, resulting in a lively dialogue when mirror data (video clip and statements) was presented to them. The extract below revealed that these tensions were within the division of labour (roles) and the community elements of the activity system with the students. What was noticeable was that gender and age differences played a significant role in determining who would lead in the group. It became apparent that the practice of traditions and beliefs by the community – deeply embedded – were being strongly adhered to in the home environment which then carried over to the way in which the group functioned (see Extract 24, Section 2.2.2).

The conceptualisation of the contradictions experienced by the learners between division of labour/roles of the learner, the community's cultural traditions and the rules of the activity system hampered the learners' ability to work collaboratively towards a solution. This is illustrated in Table 20.

Table 20: Contradiction analysis of division of labour, rules and community

TENSION	CAUSE	EFFECT	EXPECTATIONS	OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Division of labour/roles vs ▪ Rules vs community (traditions/beliefs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural traditions and beliefs ▪ Gender ▪ Age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor communication ▪ Lack of cohesion ▪ ‘Messy’ ▪ Disorganized ▪ Lack of agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belong to group ▪ Valued ▪ Respected ▪ Included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feeling left out ▪ Failure ▪ Feeling bullied ▪ Withdrawal

A number of tensions emerged from these discussions. Firstly, a tension arose in that the boys – in particular – felt very strongly about who should take the lead in the group which was based purely on their experiences at home. To the male participants, the practice of leadership was determined by their culture, dictating the practice of patriarchal leadership (see Section 7.2.1.3). Secondly, within the group, gender played a significant role in deciding who led or did not lead. The participants demonstrated that they – more often than not – would follow the advice of a male in the group, ignoring the others. Thirdly, the age of the participants appeared to have had a determining effect on who they chose to listen to and follow – even at the expense of failure – due to the practices of their culture’s tradition and belief systems.

7.2.2.5 Change and the fear of change (contradiction between subject, object and rules)

In the research study, the learners had intimated that they all had varied roles to play in the home, from collecting water at the tap down the road, helping in the home with various chores such as keeping the house clean, cooking food and washing up, to looking after the younger children in the home. The list of responsibilities grew with each conversation that took place as they became more open in the group to sharing their stories honestly.

In the extract below it was pointed out to the learners that in previous conversations in the CL workshop there was a certain amount of tension that existed between the roles that learners played in the home and the concept of ‘respect’ which had surfaced, which appeared to be quite contentious.

Extract 35:

Researcher: *Good afternoon guys. Glad to see so many of here. Today I would like the group to talk about different roles that one can play as a teenager. I mean the responsibilities that you could have in the home. Remember that in previous discussions we have surfaced the whole idea of respect so we could focus on this and how it affects our position in the house.*

Participant #6: *First of all boys must obey the rules of the house.*

Participants: (Males in unison) *Why?*

Participant #6: *Because you don't own your own houses, you're still under your mother's/parent's care.*

Participant #8: *The mother is the head of the house when the father is dead or away.*

Participants: (Males in unison) *Why?*

Participant #6: *The mother is older and makes all final decisions.*

Participant #8: *Yes, we as women have the role to love and care and feed the children.*

Participant #6: *My second point is the best one, in my opinion.*

Participants: [Males show that they are not happy with the reasoning] *No! No! No!*

A tension emerged here in that the rules of the home – that provide structure for the family members – appeared to not be adhered to by the younger males (Figure 41). It was the general feeling of the female participants that the males in the home needed to become more obedient to the rules of the home. It became apparent that the breakdown in structure was due to the absence of the father in the home that has resulted in a certain amount of disobedience from the younger males. The structure that was the stable backbone of the family's discipline has all but disintegrated, leaving a void of a role model (see Section 6.3). The female members of the home now had to step into this void with difficulty.

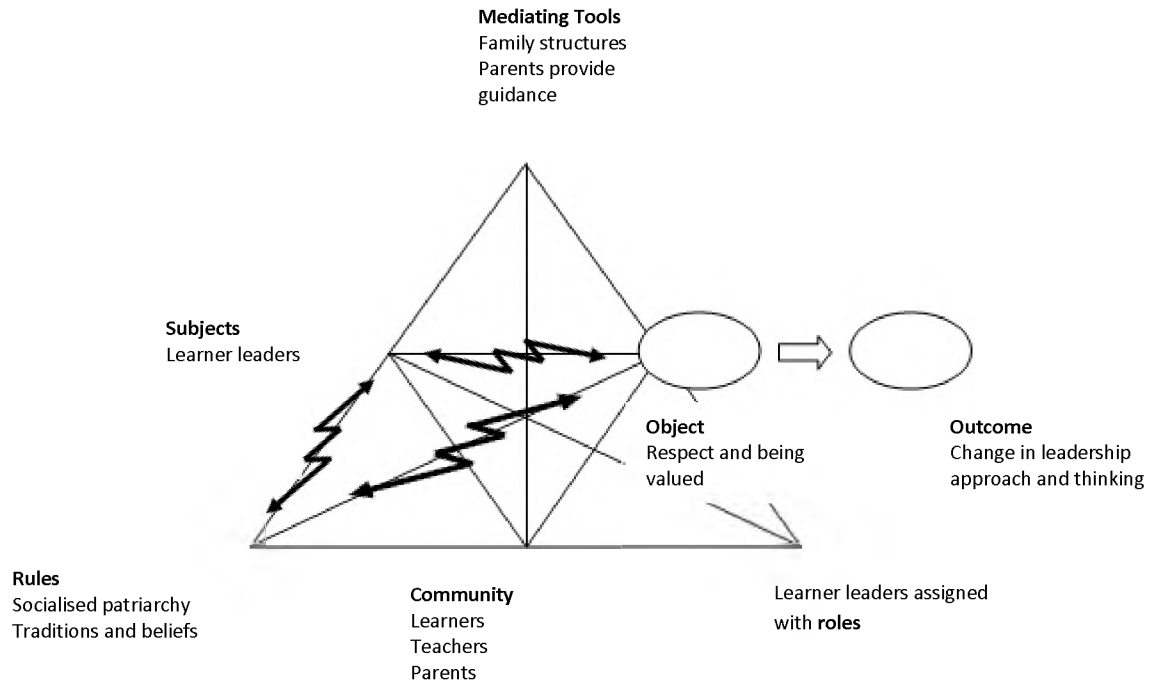


Figure 41: Change and the fear of change

Nonetheless, they are still able to provide what the family members require in order to survive. The following extract makes a poignant point.

Extract 36:

Participant #6: *The mother is older and makes all the decisions...Yes, we as women have the role to love and care and feed the children [of the family] ...My point...second point is the best one, in my opinion.*

This female participant is adamant that the role of the woman in the family has substance and should not be disregarded in any way. Although the male participants showed their disagreement with the feelings of the female participants, an older male participant shared his views in the following extract:

Extract 37:

Participant #10: *Hey guys, you aren't hearing what she's saying to you guys. All she's saying is that your mother works and you don't which means you have no money to your name. For example, if a tap at home breaks, are you going to be the one to pay for it and for the plumber? No, your mother will.*

- Participant #5: (Laughter from males) *I fix it myself.*
- Participant #10: *Listen. Okay what if there's no bread at home for school, are you going to go work for the R10 for the loaf of bread? No, your mom will pay for it.*
- Participant #5: *Okay, I hear you.*
- Participant #10: *Your mom is next in charge for providing for the house. But you as the man may be the head of the house in terms of things that a man can pertain to, such as when the cows should come home, when you father isn't there.*
- Participant #4: *But when you go back, our culture doesn't permit or allow that.*

Concern was voiced by the male participants that their culture does not permit the woman in the household to do the things that are traditionally allocated to the male member of the family – that of the head of the home. The tension surfaced between the role played by the female in the house – as the head in the absence of the father – and the rules that exist traditionally in their culture. Respect for the position of the female as the head of the house comes into question which ultimately affects the leadership in the house resulting in disrespect being shown towards the mother. Kalu (2005) submits that in most African cultures the female is taught to be subservient to their male counterparts and that the female is trained not to speak out in public and not to be outspoken particularly in front of men. The female is encouraged to accept the injustices meted out to them by the system without resistance.

Nonetheless, the older male participant (Participant #10) tried to relay the concerns of the younger male participants by trying to explain to the research group that one needed to adapt to change as change is taking place all the time. The following extract demonstrated the maturity of this participant who appeared to convince the other participants that there was nothing to fear from change.

Extract 38:

- Participant #10: *What year are you living in?*
- Participant #4: *[Sarcastically] 2014!*

Participant #10: *That's the thing, we live in the 21st century. You can't rely on things that my great-great-great grandfather was doing. They were using donkeys but I use a car. We live in two different times. Adding now that you've become a man in our culture it doesn't mean you mustn't listen to your mother.*

Stilted pause

Participant #10: *Because had she not given birth to you, you wouldn't be here. As a person you can't/mustn't just think that my culture says this and that, but then culture itself was based on the times where they didn't live like this. They didn't have schools like we do.*

Participant #4: *So you saying or trying to say we should abandon our culture!*

Participant #10: *I'm not saying that at all. I'm just saying that as time goes forward you can't just rely on what your forefathers said. You have to think that times have changed. We live in new times. Let me use Mandela's quote: "The greatest weapon anyone can have is an education", by you forsaking your education, you aren't becoming a better person and you aren't using it to your advantage. The education is that we are all equal. I'm not saying forsake your culture as I'm cultural too, but I'm not going to think like I'm back then. You have to adapt to times.*

Participant #4: *So you are saying that we should look at the bigger picture and our culture isn't part of that picture or our culture is holding us back.*

Participant #10: *No, what I'm trying to say is that you shouldn't use your culture to your advantage in conjunction. I'm a proud Xhosa man and keep it alive but I also move with the times even though it is strict.*

Lots of nods from the group in approval.

Using a metaphor of the donkey cart, the older male participant urged his peers to understand that they were all caught up in the process of change and nothing was going to stop its movement forward. He encouraged them to be prepared to adapt to change in their environment but to remain proud Xhosa people.

Participant #10: *I just want to say one more thing, if I may. It's like a donkey cart. We all use them. Our culture is like that donkey cart. When we climb onto it, it is in one position. Yes? It could have been there for quite a while but now it starts to move. Does the donkey cart change?*

Participants: *No!*

Participant #10: *Yes, it doesn't change but as it moves forward so the environment changes. Our culture does not have to change but we need to adapt to the changes in the environment because that is changing all the time. Do you always want to stay here in Joza¹⁵, in the same house?*

Participants: *No!*

Participant #10: *So we need to change in the way in which we do things as well.*

Table 21: Contradiction analysis of subject and division of labour

TENSION	CAUSE	EFFECT	EXPECTATIONS	OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Division of labour/roles vs object (Respect) ▪ Rules vs community ▪ Traditional vs modern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural traditions and beliefs ▪ Position in family ▪ Gender ▪ Age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fear of change ▪ Not wanting to change culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respected ▪ Valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change ▪ Become a leader ▪ Responsible person

7.3 CONCLUSION

Whilst leadership roles are offered to learners to facilitate order in the school, many of the participants found that they lacked the necessary conceptual tools to be able to lead effectively. Their histories and culture played a significant role in shaping their approach to the practice of traditional leadership. However, when given the opportunity, the learners began to question the way in which they led and were willing to consider how to make changes. Through their conversations, the learners developed new tools that mediated and informed their practice of leadership. The learners recognised that in order to lead, change had to take place from within. This would mean that norms of traditional leadership – entrenched by socialised patriarchy – would be challenged and the practice of leadership would need to change. The learners

¹⁵ Joza is the name of a residential zone in the township of Grahamstown.

demonstrated an enthusiasm to engage in the leadership development process even though they were brutally challenged by the fear of change.

In the final chapter I conclude my research journey by presenting my findings in a way that centres around a retroductive reflection. In the development of the chapter, I summarise the situation in which the study was undertaken, the meaning that was derived from the interaction within the learner leaders' activity system, the discoveries that were made and the causes of the challenges that the research site faces. I then propose ways of making learner leadership possible, in a sustainable manner, in the sense of developing learner leadership further in the school and the community, given the overwhelming challenges that the learner leaders are faced with in their community.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPANSIVE LEARNING PROCESS – DEVELOPING THE LEARNERS’ SERVANT LEADERSHIP CAPACITY THROUGH THE ACTIVITY SYSTEM



(Participants accomplishing things that they never thought were possible.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

“Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that generation. Let your greatness blossom”.

(Nelson Mandela)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Seven I was able to disturb the leadership landscape of the learner leaders which surfaced a number of contradictions. In this chapter I make use of these agitated contradictions to develop the learner leaders' leadership capacity through small expansive learning cycles.

This research study was inspired by my curiosity about the experience and development of leadership skills of the learner leaders in black township schools. In the study, I tried to encapsulate the struggles that the learner leaders had wrestled with during the data collecting process, bearing the scars of the legacy of the past (see Section 2), in his/her development. Using the research data, I demonstrated that a lack of self-belief, involuntarily enforced on the learner leaders through living in an environment of deficiency, was a major barrier that these research participants had to wrestle with on a daily basis in search of a glimpse of any hope for their future (see Section 6.3.1).

The socio-economic status that many adolescents are exposed to, still remains a powerful force in their lives (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 35). I have argued that poverty, health problems and school failure have an effect on the expectations of attitudes of these adolescents towards leadership development, to the point that many of them feel that they cannot be leaders (see Section 2).

However, I have to contend that whilst these learner leaders wrestled with the inadequacies of their environments due to poverty – providing little hope for the future, and often undermining their dignity – they were still able to demonstrate a resilience, one of hoping for a better future. This is best demonstrated by the smiles they wore on their faces at the beginning of each contact session undertaken with them.

Nonetheless, the stage of adolescence development is described as being a formative time during which adolescents develop their individuality, are interested in trying new things and willing to learn new skills. (*ibid.*, p. 36). Leadership development would encourage the learner leaders to learn from their experiences and training and the choices that they make. The paths they take as adolescents have the potential to be pivotal, setting the course of educational and vocational direction (Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995, p. 69).

It became apparent to me in this study that there was a need for an intervention that departed from the assumptions that were underpinning the rhetoric of raising hopes, so I sought instead to actively include young people (in the development of their leadership skills), by supporting their agency to exercise more control over their development and by valuing their lived experiences and identities (Rogoff, 1990).

As the learner leaders were engaged – through the research study – I attempted to encourage them to exercise their leadership capacity and agency. Using their lived experiences (culture and histories), the learner leaders began to question the accepted practice of leadership, overcoming existing contradictions and demonstrating a transformation in the manner in which they worked collaboratively, expanding collectively by beginning to include their peers in the decision-making process in tasks undertaken. The learner leaders were engaged, reflecting and making progress in improving the practice of leadership.

It could be argued that the socio-cultural basis of human skills and activities is inseparable from the biological and historical basis of humans (Rogoff, 1990). These skills and orientation that the learner leaders had developed since birth were deeply rooted in their culture and histories, through interaction with each other, in their communities.

8.2 EXPANDING LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPEMENT

In this chapter I explore the use of small expansive learning cycles in order to create new knowledge about learner leadership and to encourage the development of new leadership practices – such as servant leadership – individually and within the school. I drew on Engeström's Developmental Work Research (DWR) cycle which is organised around the Change Laboratory (CL) workshops (see Section 5.6.6) to act as a change mechanism for learner leadership development. Using the surfaced contradictions (see Section 7.2), I focused on scrutinising the concepts and practices of learner leadership, encouraging the learner leaders to work towards developing new ways (models) of leading individually and leading others.

In Section 5.6.6.1, I elaborated on how I used the workshop as an intervention tool, how discussion and dialogue were stimulated, how the thinking and practice of the leadership of the learners was expanded, confronting them with new practices of leadership (see Section 5.6.6.1). I used the surfaced contradictions (see Section 7.2) as the key mechanism for stimulating transformation and

development. Engeström (1999, p. 4) argues that development should not just be seen as a non-threatening achievement of mastery but rather be regarded as the partial, critical refutation of the old. Development should not be viewed as just an individual transformation but also viewed as a collective transformation. Engeström (*ibid.*) strongly suggests that the movement that occurs across levels – for example in this study, gender, age – is not necessarily just a vertical movement but that horizontal movement also occurs across these border levels.

8.2.1 Expanding the learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) in the activity system – directing learner leadership development

According to Rogoff (1990, p. vii) a learner's cognitive development is a life preparation which occurs through guided participation in a social activity with fellow learners who support and expand the learner's understanding of and skill in using the tools of culture. These young learner leaders have to be provided with a platform (space) and the support from which a holistic and collaborative model of leadership can be developed.

As the contradictions of the activity system were aggravated, the learner leaders began to question and deviate from some of their established norms on leadership. These inner contradictions became the chief sources of movement and change in the learner leader activity system (Engeström, 1999d). As the participants wrestled through the developmental transformations, moving across collective ZPDs, the object and motive of the activity were slowly being reconceptualised embracing a radically wider horizon of leadership possibilities – from an abstract understanding of what leadership is, to a more concrete one – than what the learner leaders were accustomed to (Engeström, 1999d).

The cycles of change (transformation) (Figure 35) that were being experienced in the activity system – by the learner leaders – could be understood as “a collective journey through what Vygotsky suggested was the zone of proximal development” (Warmington et al., 2005, p. 7; Engeström, 1999a, p. 4). Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) explains that the ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers".

The research study attempted to push forward, mediating, recording and analysing cycles of expansive learning. Due to time-frame constraints in my research study I had used small, intermediate phases and cycles of expanded learning which had been successfully used in recent research studies (Engeström, 1995; Engeström, Engeström & Kärkkäinen, 1995; Engeström, Virkkunen, Helle, Pihlaja & Poikela, 1996; Buchwald, 1995; Kärkkäinen, 1996) (as cited in Engeström, 1999a, p. 4).



Figure 42: Scaffolding learner leadership development - small cycles of learning

The new ideas/concepts of leadership that emerged from the learner leaders could be described as a ‘germ cell’, a simple descriptive relationship of how learner leaders would work with their followers. It is argued (Engeström, Nummijoki & Sannino, 2012) that, “The germ cell is expansive in that it opens up rich and diverse possibilities of explanation, practice; application and creative solutions” (as cited in Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 9). The initial abstraction of the concept of leadership – in abstract form - was supplemented by a step-by-step approach, with a challenging situation – a lack of respect for others - which slowly changed into a real concrete system of multiple, frequently emerging indicators of leadership. According to Sannino et al (*ibid.*,

p. 9), “The key to understanding the principle of ascending to the concrete is the concept of a germ cell”. By using the expansive learning approach, “a rich reconceptualization of the object of activity [leadership] can be attained” (Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 9). Researchers Engeström & Sannino (2010) argue that, “The germ cell has to be discovered and modelled by the participants investigating and transforming their activity (as cited in *ibid.*, p. 10). The learner leaders were able to transform their simple idea of leadership into a more complex object, forming a new concept of leadership practice and beginning to work with servant leadership as an emerging style of leadership – “generating a novel implementation” and “constructing a foundational relationship” (*ibid.*).

8.2.2 Scaffolding Learner Leadership development

It became clear to me that these learners needed to engage and interact more with each other at this level in order to be able to develop a better understanding of each other in order to work cooperatively. Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) points out that these interactions of the learners would act as an effective way of developing skills and strategies that would help them develop their leadership capacity. My notion was to make use of a number of cooperative learning exercises where the learners could help each other develop their leadership skills – developing within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). I had anticipated that the learner leaders who possessed the necessary skills – would collaborate with those learner leaders whose skills had not been fully realised. Vygotsky (*ibid.*) believes that when a learner leader is in the ZPD for a particular task, providing the necessary scaffolding (appropriate assistance) would give the learner leader enough of a "boost" to successfully complete the task.

With the provision of scaffolding that I provided (Figure 35) the learners soon realised and began to learn that they were dependent on each other in collectively resolving the problems that had arisen from the various tasks undertaken. That meant that they needed to be more aware of each other’s needs, goals, strengths, anxieties and possible lack of confidence. The interactions that took place between the participants started to create a bond which could be described as making a connection – a more respectful form of communication. Collectively, the learners were beginning to seek “generative solutions” to their situation, which Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, (2016, p. 10) describes as, “Locally initiated appropriate solutions, which can lead to practical systematic transformation, as well as to the development of novel theoretical tools”. The learner leaders

appeared to develop a respect for each other; because they wanted to avoid any possibility of ugly confrontations, they started communicating politely with each other but not empathically. This group of participants slowly started to display signs of ‘knitting together’, becoming more vulnerable to each other and exhibiting a fair amount of synergistic interaction.

However, I would like to point out that although there was this intriguing and riveting interaction taking place, once these individuals became engaged in the tasks and discussions there were moments where they demonstrated signs of being either constrained or disabled. Learner leaders wrestled with the introduction of the new idea of servant leadership as being an alternative style of leadership because it conflicted with the embedded practices of leadership in their homes and school, which became clearer as the research study unfolded. Meaningful relations among the concepts and between knowledge and experience were being generated, in what Greeno (1989) refers to as “generative reasoning” (as cited in Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 10). Their social structure ultimately shaped them as learner leaders and influenced their interaction with their environment. A personal struggle ensued within their own lives (see Section 6.3.1; 6.3.2). For instance, learner leaders initially found great difficulty in making sense of the need to put others first – to serve. This is understandable, for there are historical connotations that surround the term ‘servant’ in itself. As was noted in a general discussion with regards servant leadership, a learner leader stated that, “*I don’t want to become a slave to other people*”. As adolescents, the learner leaders were so focused on themselves that they were unable to be aware of the needs of others. This in itself is a contradiction as many of them would go home after the school day to take on the responsibility of the home (see Extract 12, Section 6.3.1.2).

8.2.3 Explicating and signifying the learner leaders’ object – the purpose of leading

The learner leaders’ reality of leadership is composed of natural laws that govern how they as human beings live and lead on earth. They are described as being “the roots of every family and institution that has endured and prospered” (Covey, 2004, p. 35) and are filtered by the socio-biographical characteristics and beliefs that they are exposed to in their cultural environment (Kadyakapita, 2013).

The sense making of these social practices and objects by the learner leaders was achieved through embracing of philosophies, which have certain structures and rules, found in their cultural and historical norms. These are deep-lying invisible causal mechanisms that have caused the anchoring of the fundamental upbringing of the human race and establishes the foundation onto which the learner leaders could build their understanding of what leadership is (Danermark et al., 2002). Using the research data (see Sections 2, 6 & 7), I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the learner leaders' leadership paradigms were however, significantly influenced and shaped by and through their cultures and histories, conditioning the learner leaders. The home, the family, the school, the church, the community and their friends have made their silent, unconscious, indelible impact on these learner leaders. The following extracts highlight this influence and impact.

The paradigms that learner leaders have developed over time about leadership are inseparable from their character because “*being is seeing* in the human dimension” (Covey, 2004, p. 32). For example, the following extract bears witness to this thinking:

Extract 39:

Participant #4: *In our culture the woman always obeys the man.*

Here the learners have always been exposed to the fact that in their culture the woman is always submissive to the male member in the home. The socialised practice of patriarchal leadership is ingrained into their culture and their way of thinking, as it plays out in front of their eyes each day. What the learner leaders saw was highly interrelated to what they are, suggesting that the learner leaders would not have to go too far to alter their *seeing* without simultaneously changing their *being*, and vice versa (Covey, 2004, p. 32).

A significant tension was surfaced between the personal desire to be included in the group and the feeling of being excluded from the group (see Section 7.2.1.2). The learner leaders noticed that one learner was giving the instructions whilst the rest were listening. The learners pointed out that there was one learner who was doing nothing. In questioning the action, they realised that a number of the learners (girls and younger boys) had been excluded from the task which resulted in the excluded learners not feeling part of the group – they felt left out.

Extract 40:

Researcher: [Asking the actual participant] *How did you feel?*

Participant #2: *Yes, left out. I had ideas but no-one was listening.*

The older learner automatically took the leadership reins with everyone else taking a step back to follow instructions given. To many of the learners, this was the accepted norm in leadership. Even the girls, of a similar age to the older boy, took a step back and followed. I believe that a complex chain of actions was being applied in this task (giving instructions, listening, participating, inclusion, exclusion, to mention a few), probably positioned by the purposes that were founded in the chemistry of the hierarchical and distributed element of agency (Vennebo & Ottesen, 2012) (see Section 4.4.3). This was underpinned by the deeper mechanisms of socialised patriarchy, for example, gender differences, that have been constructed socio-culturally, with the evidence of who took the lead, who followed and who did nothing. In this environment, the male will be more likely to self-select into an environment where competition is possible than the female (Anderson et al., 2013) (see section 7.2.2.2).

These forged paradigms were probably never questioned on their accuracy as the learner leaders had become accustomed to this way of life (structure). The learner leaders probably assumed it to be the norm (rule). The behaviour and attitude of the learner leaders towards the practice of leadership was congruent with the way in which they saw leadership being practised around them in their homes and their community. This was evident in many of the tasks that the learner leaders participated in, to the point that the female learner leaders were often excluded in the decision-making process, yet still had good ideas to solve the tasks. Further data revealed that this mindset was being underpinned by socio-economic conditions (see Section 2.5) and socialised patriarchy (see Section 7.2.2.2) that they were continuously exposed to. The following extract bears further witness to this claim:

Extract 41:

Participant #5: *In my home the father is the leader and the mother listens to him. We all listen to him. He is the head of the house.*

Participant #1: *It's not the place for the female to lead in the house, that is the job of the father, the male.*

Participant #4: *Yes...but we take the example from our father. The man is the head and the woman must obey. The woman's role is to care for the family not to lead.*

Participant #5: *A mother's role is to do the house chores.*

Participant #1: *Yes, in my house my father runs the house and everyone respects and listens to him. My mother is obedient to him. Us children also listen and carry out our tasks.*

However, through active and effective communication they demonstrated that they were able to dissect the barriers and begin to develop a new understanding of leadership and a remarkable social dynamism and resourcefulness began to be set free. The learner leaders created a collaborative standard for leadership amongst themselves, based on respect and trust. They were beginning to influence each other in a positive manner, ensuring a sense of hope in each other and fortifying self-belief. The following extract builds on this suggestion:

Extract 42:

Researcher: *From a previous discussion on the structure of many of your families it was revealed that many of you either stay with one parent, mostly with your mothers, or with female relatives.*

Participants: [All in agreement] *Yes.*

Researcher: *So you do obey the female in the house as well and take advice from her?*

Participant #6: *Of course women can lead in the house...my father is no longer with us so she leads us now. What's wrong with that?*

Participant #8: *Yes, yes...The mother is the head of the house when the father is dead.*

Participants: [All in agreement that they do]

Researcher: *So my next question is, do you think that these girls can become leaders? Would you be able to listen to them?*

Participants: [General agreement] *Yes.*

However, in order for this group of learner leaders to work collaboratively, a high level of trust needed to be developed which is described as, ‘the highest form of human motivation’ (Covey, 2004, p. 178). The challenge was undoubtedly time and patience but it is argued that it would be necessary to train and cultivate these learner leaders so that their capability could rise to the level of trust (*ibid.*). In order for this to happen, the learner leaders had to be provided with the necessary assistance to guide them through to their potential capacity of serving others as leaders through scaffolding, so a series of small expansive cycles of learning were used.

8.2.4 Stimulating and developing trust within the activity system

This research journey I have described as a ‘collective journey’ because it has been dependent on the collaboration of the researcher, staff and learners from the outset. One of the earliest challenges that I was faced with was that of trust, both between me – the researcher – and the participants. I soon realised that for trust to replace the cynicism that existed in the earlier contact sessions, an understanding of the motive of the research study and how it could impact on the capacity of the learners involved, needed to be developed. What became a challenge was to develop a connection with the research group as soon as possible in order to pave the way forward with the research study.

To underline the serious challenge, I now faced, in the second contact session that I conducted with the group, one of the members made the following comment:

Extract 43:

Participant #16: *Ndiyanithembsa nonke loMlungu akasoze ahlale ixesha elide apha nditho kwa iVeki ezimbini kunye ngathi. Ayondawu yakhe le. Umntu omnyama uqiniile way eke kunzima ukusebenza nomntu omnyama.*

This comment seemed to spark much laughter to the delight of the learners in the group. I remained unfazed by the comment and the reaction and ignored it. However, once the session had been concluded I offered to give participant #1 a lift home – who had a disability – as it was rather late. In making polite conversation I asked him what was the meaning of the comment that had caused so much laughter in the session to which he replied (with great delight):

Extract 44:

Participant #16: *I promise you all that this white man (mlungu¹⁶) is not going to stay here for long not even two weeks. This is not his place. A black person is strong even though working with a white person.*

Participant #1 [quickly tried to allay my fears of venturing into the school by adding]:

Sir, you must not worry about what they said. It is just a reaction to you, a white man, wanting to work with us in the school. They are not used to it.

From this discussion, it became clear that in order for this research study to achieve its expectations and goals, trust needed to be developed and quickly. If trust was to replace this pervasive cynicism, the participants and I would need to develop a clear understanding of the research process and the caring for all participants in proportion to their involvement and dependence. The development of trust was a priority and I knew that nothing would move until this trust was firmly established and settled.

In this contact session, it became evident to me that certain generative mechanisms (also called causal powers) were activated which gave rise to the reaction of the learners towards my presence in their school. These causal mechanisms are multifaceted but were difficult to detect as they subsist deep within the social structure which originate in the domain of the 'real' (Kurki, 2007) (see Section 4.2.3). These effects (events) revealed the presence of these mechanisms, whether experienced or not. In this case, the reaction of disbelief and cynicism of the learners to having a white male enter into their classroom caused quite a stir, resulting in a lack of trust. The underlying social factors or phenomena that existed in the learners' environment had certain structures (rules)

¹⁶ Mlungu: (Origin) The use of the word was used in the early 19th century. It is derived from the Xhosa *mlungu* and its cognate Zulu *mlungu*, vocative of *umlungu* (plural *abelungu*), perhaps from *lunga* to get or be in order, to become or be correct or good, or perhaps related to the noun *-lungu* canoe, ship, found in some other Bantu languages. However, as a noun, especially in the context of interactions between black and white South Africans, it means a white person. Also in *plural* the word refers to white people collectively. Also as a form of address (now somewhat *offensive*). As an adjective, it is used in designating a white person or white people; (of a person) white. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mlungu>)

that guided their behaviour to react the way they did, hence their reaction towards me (see Section 2.5). These causal powers had the potential to either inhibit or transform their behaviour, and possibly effect change within the activity system (Mingers, 2004). In the beginning, many of the learner leaders' behaviour towards me was strongly inhibited by the effect that these mechanisms had on them, which were underpinned by the cultural structure within their community. As I suggested in Chapter Two, many of these behaviours (events) are driven by the problems (causal powers) that are brought into the school from home (social structures).

However, one learner leader exhibited a completely different behavioural approach to me in that he appeared to have changed his attitude to my presence. What was interesting to me was the way in which participant #1 reacted to my observation from the classroom experience of, "I promise you all that this white man is not going to stay here for long not even two weeks", when he quickly tried to allay my fears of venturing into the school by adding, "*Sir, you must not worry about what they said. It is just a reaction to you, a white man, wanting to work with us in the school. They are not used to it*".

The mere fact that, "*They were not used to it* [a white man in their classroom]" pointed to "deep-lying mechanisms" that caused the learner leaders' to react to my presence in their classroom, and were possibly shaped by the principles (rules) that they had embraced due to their culture and histories, filtered by their socio-biographical characteristics and beliefs (Bergin, Wells & Owen, 2008; Kadyakapita, 2013). This structure with its set of simultaneously constraining and enabling rules and resources, were implemented within the learner leaders' interactions with me, having the power to shape the interaction (Sayer, 2000). The power of the structure was inactive until they were triggered by my presence in the classroom resulting in a cynical reaction.

These learner leaders may have been affected, on the one hand, by a historical period of conflict and were possibly being exposed to crises leading to a state of despair where they considered themselves condemned to mediocrity or inadequacy leading to cynicism, irritation and resentment. However, on the other hand, as they are given a space to "consolidate their social roles, deciding where they are and where they are going", ego qualities such as trust, initiative, or identity may begin to emerge (Erikson, 1959, 1963, 1968, as cited in Rosenthal, Gurney & Moore, 1981, p.

526; Erikson, 1963, as cited in Yelon, Weinstein, & Weener, 1977, p. 89). Nonetheless, in order to stimulate trust, the learner leaders needed to have confidence in both their values and their capability.

Greenleaf (2002) suggests that one does not neglect the voices of the past. The learner leaders demonstrated that they were not scared to challenge the pervasive injustices that existed – due to the wide inequalities and disparities in society – in their communities but still respected the traditions of their culture. Nonetheless, they were still keen to listen, to search and to question, always expecting the wheels of change to provide them with a better lot in life. Nothing much happens if there is no hope and one cannot have hope if there is no dream. “For something great to happen, there must be a great dream...and more than a dreamer to bring it into reality” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 30).

I believed that it would just take one of the learner leaders to grasp an understanding of the object of the study, which could result in a movement being started that could serve the community.

8.2.5 Communication in a traditional socialised patriarchal environment (an inhibited ZPD)

The traditional authoritarian leadership model used in the home and the school operated in a win/lose paradigm. As I have explained in Chapter Two and Seven, many of the learner leaders had grown up and been exposed to traditional, socialised patriarchal leadership all their lives. It was evident in the research study that the learners’ sense of leadership agency was seldom perceived as being important within their homes and the school and not pursued in a manner that contributed to the development of leadership skills in the learners directly. Parents and teachers should have focused on supporting learner leaders’ potential from the point of their development by recognising and locating the learners’ ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff & Wertsch, 1984) in order to assist learners in expanding this zone by opening up available opportunities.

However, as was highlighted in Chapter Two (see Section 2.5), many of these learners lived in broken family environments where either both parents were deceased or they lived with one of their parents or relatives. Teachers were found to be uncommitted to this development as it was beyond their teaching commitment as laid out by the teachers’ union, SADTU. Without the required support and assistance from the parents and teachers, learners had failed to develop their

leadership competencies, capacities and capabilities further, depriving them of cognitively developing and participating beyond the level of what they were doing on their own, at their existing levels of development.

8.2.6 Discovering the missing tool of communication

It was revealed in Chapter Seven that communication was a tool that had not been developed successfully in the lives of these learner leaders. The key to leadership is the ability to communicate effectively with those people that leaders work with.

Nonetheless, when the learner leaders were first exposed to various cooperative learning tasks during the contact sessions it became evident that there was a lack of these skills and strategies in attempting to solve the problems that had been set for the learners, either in pairs or groups. This group was a diverse group of individuals who all came with extremely weighty agendas and showed signs of intolerance and impatience, all wanting to get on with the tasks in an enthusiastic manner.

The tasks soon had the learner leaders struggling to work collaboratively due to a lack of, or low levels of cooperation and low levels of trust being displayed, resulting in a defensive (win/lose or lose/win) level of communication arising (Figure 36) (Covey, 2004, p. 270). Participants were often so defensive and protective of their ideas that they were in no position to hear what others had to say. Some of the interactions were quite aggressive and belligerent. These behaviours were the effects of their traditions and histories, and causal mechanisms that operated within the structure that existed within the culture. Often the cultural traditions dictated who would take the lead in this group which manifested the prejudice or tradition that existed.

As was often heard in the feedback sessions, the participants did not show respect for each other. It did not matter to them whose idea had not been accepted but rather whether their idea had been accepted or not – a win/lose situation – which is indicative of low-trust situations (Covey, 2004). It proved to be an ineffective way of communicating with others as it resulted in tasks going sour.

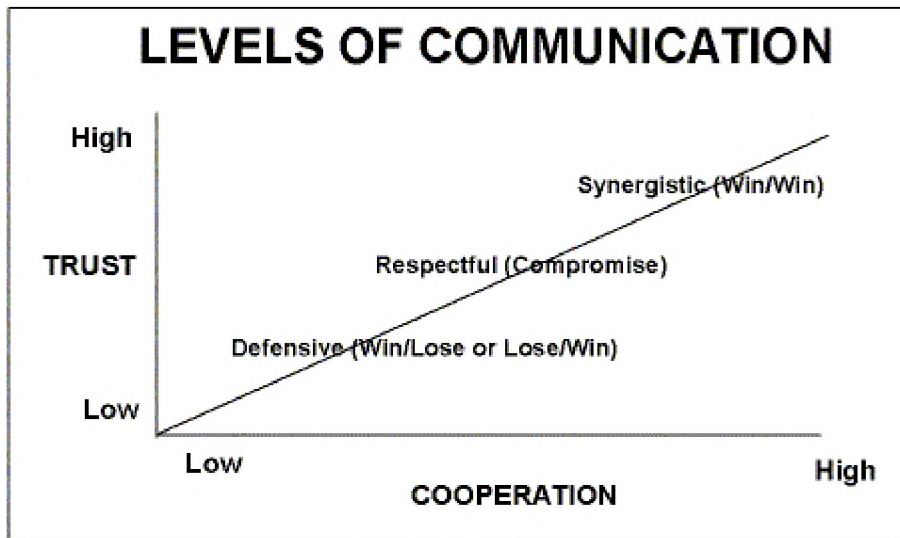


Figure 43: Levels of communication
 (Adapted from Covey, 2004, p. 270)

One of the very first tasks (Figure 37) organised, was to test the learners’ ability to be able to work collaboratively. However, the learners soon discovered that they were unable to complete the task successfully. This was solely due to the fact that the learners were unable to communicate effectively with each other and everyone wanted to work at their own idea which resulted in failure (An interesting observation here were the number of hands, each hand trying to do its own thing - Figure 38). The session ended up in a shouting match as each learner attempted to voice their suggestions as they all rushed in to solve the problem, giving good advice at times.



Figure 44: Many ideas but only one solution



Figure 45: Too many hands spoil the broth

The following extract revealed the lack of communication skills within the group:

Extract 45:

Researcher: *Could I ask that you all to stop what you are doing and take your seats.*

After a while, once the learners had settled down in their seats the researcher continued.

Researcher: *How do you think the activity went? Did you succeed?*

Participants: [All shouting out in unison] *No. It did not go well. We were too noisy.* [To the delight of many of the participants]

Researcher: *Why do you think so?*

Participant #8: *We were all shouting at each other.*

Participant #6: *Some were not listening to the others who had ideas.*

Researcher: *Why do you think so?*

Participant #8: *Yes, we don't talk to each other with respect and respect each other's ideas.*

Participant #12: *I don't think that we trust each other. We don't even respect each other.*

Researcher: *How do you think that you could do it differently?*

Participant #6: *We need to learn to talk to each other and listen to each other as well.*

Researcher: *What do you mean by not listening?*

Participant #6: *We don't listen to what is being said. I often think of how I want to argue my point that I forget what is being said.*

In the above extract participant's #6, #8 and #12 pointed out that the learners did not speak to each other with respect and did not listen to what was being said.

It was demonstrated in the second collaborative task (Figure 39) that once the learner leaders had mastered the task – with the benefit of scaffolding – that the appropriate assistance/support could then be removed and the learner leaders were able to complete the task on their own. Although the experience of continued failure in solving the task resulted in dejection (Figure 40), the learner leaders were still able to sit down and discuss the reasons for their failure. There seemed to be a better atmosphere when discussing the issues that arose, with each learner giving the other an opportunity to share their thoughts about the way forward.



Figure 46: Scaffolding being provided by instructors on skill of communication

What was noticeable was that participant #3 (disabled learner) was eventually given the opportunity to share his views as well. It was not too long before the group allowed him to direct the process as they strove to complete the task successfully and stick to the agreed plan (Figure 41). The learners were beginning to demonstrate the ability to listen carefully to the suggestions made by the other members of the group and began to include each other more in the discussion phases of the task (see Section 7.).



Figure 47: Although somewhat dejected the learner leaders begin to communicate in an orderly manner

The conversations that took place between the learner leaders were beginning to result in the construction of new meaning from their experiences. They were beginning to transform their collective experiences – from a personal and group level – to a point where they were able to collaborate more effectively. The participants were beginning to give each other the necessary space to voice their opinions and ideas whilst the remainder of the group showed signs of listening, with some intent. In the interaction within the learner leader activity system, the multi-voicedness of the group was the centre of numerous points of interpretation, behaviours and opinions with regards to the practice of leadership (see Section 4.4.1.3) (Engeström, 1999a; Daniels, 2008, p. 124). Much tension arose from these interactions resulting in eager discussions and negotiation in plotting the way forward for the practice of leadership. Nonetheless, there were signs of transformation taking place.

The following extracts were taken from reports that the learner leaders had compiled, reflecting on their experiences when participating in the various cooperative learning tasks. They demonstrated how the learners had responded and transformed their way of communicating with each other efficiently in these tasks that they had participated in.

Extract 46:

Participant #8: *We were working together as a group and we were starting to communicate very well with each other.*

Participant #3: *What I have learnt is that we have to work on our communication skills and we have to trust each other, support each other because we cannot achieve anything without talking to one another.*

Participant #6: *These tasks have helped me in many ways. It has helped me when it came to communication with other learners. We were sharing and listening to each other's ideas and encouraging each other.*

Participant #5: *I have also learned that sometimes in order to solve a problem you don't need to be strengthful (sic), you just need to use your mind. You don't have to solve a problem alone, there are other people around you and they can help. Encouragements and support are part and parcel of solving problems.*

Participant #4: *When I went out there and started doing what I had to do my team/group supported me in a way that made me to realise that more hands than one are powerful. They did not help me physically but their encouragement increased my faith, and my spirit and courage.*

Participant #2: *All these tasks gave us more confidence and we also learnt how to prove something when we helped each other because most of the tasks we needed to work as a team by giving someone instruction and direction so that we could finish the task.*

Participant #1: *Another thing that is important is to follow instructions because if you follow instructions it will be easy to do everything. I learned to listen to others opinions and ideas.*

The levels of trust between the learner leaders started to develop slowly. Some of the tasks that they had to complete required a large amount of trust, the participants had to learn how to place their safety into the hand of their peers (Figure 48).



Figure 48: Through better communication the plan starts coming together - better synergy

To be able to relate efficiently to anyone requires that the learner leaders learn to listen intently to those that they lead. This required on the part of these learner leaders to be patient, candid, and constantly aware of what was being said by others, as well as to have the aspiration to want to understand and recognise the needs of the followers. In an informal discussion with one of the participants, he mentioned that what they as learners look for is the “genuineness” and the “humility” that is reflected in the leader. He concluded with a poignant comment, “*The bad thing is that we don’t find many of these leaders here*” [referring to his community].

We live in an age when many of our leaders and holders of power are suspect and their actions that stem from authority are questionable. Nonetheless, “There are legions of persons of good will who could sharpen and clarify their view of the more serving society they would like to live in and help build – if in no other way than by holding a deepened interest and concern about it and speaking to the condition of others” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 19). “We are all born good!” (Tutu, 2010). There are those individuals (our youth) who have the ability to serve and lead, who are the prime movers and shakers but the latitude and space needs to be created to nurture the servant leader’s potential (Greenleaf, 1977).

8.2.7 Adapting to change in the leadership development environment

When Greenleaf (1977) first suggested that, “the servant-leader is servant first”, and that “it would begin with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first...the conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead”, he argued that there was a distinct difference between the person who chooses to serve first and the one who chooses to lead first. The distinction is that the person who chooses to serve first does so from within – a natural feeling (see Section 3.4.3.2). The process first starts with self, the inner most part of self. The person who chooses to lead first possibly has a “need to assuage an unusual power drive or to require material possessions” (Greenleaf, 1977).

In an additional small cycle of expansive learning I gave the learner leaders a task to complete. The task entailed that they make a decision that was based on a life or death situation. They had to imagine that they were travelling down a mountain pass in a taxi only to find that the vehicle’s brakes had failed. As occupants of the taxi they had to make a decision of whether to take a narrow access road that would result in them coming to a safe stand still or choose to take the mountain pass that would surely result in them losing their lives. The only problem that they faced was that there was a large group of young students having a picnic on the access road and the vehicle could not avoid colliding with them. Learners had to make a decision and then make a stand for why they made that choice in groups. Once everyone had an opportunity to make an argument they then had the opportunity to change their decisions.

Initially there was a 50/50 split in the decisions taken but once participants were able to justify their decisions there was a shift towards making an unselfish decision and saving the lives of the young group of learners. A marked change had occurred within the participants. When asked why they made their choices these were the responses:

Extract 47:

Decision to keep their lives

Participant #10: *I’m not ready to die. I’m the hope of my family.*

Participant #5: *I want to live out my life as I’m still young.*

Participant #10: *My family relies on me in so many ways.*

Decision to lose their lives

Participant #9: *I'm willing to make a sacrifice.*

Researcher: *Why are you willing to do this?*

Participant #7: *I'm older than those children playing on the off-ramp.*

Participant #9: *Because I can make a choice so that others may benefit. I don't want to be selfish. The members of the children's' families would be sad.*

Researcher: *But so would your family.*

Participant #9: *They will understand, [will] be sad but proud.*

The learner leaders were forced into making a decision but also to question why they made that decision. They also had the opportunity to change their decision based on how the other learner leaders had persuaded them through their reasoning. What was interesting was the shift across to the decision of losing their lives. When asked what they had learned from the exercise the following responses were made:

Extract 48:

Participant #9: *I have learned today that the decision /choice I make today will dictate my life in the future.*

Participant #3: *I must think of others.*

Participant #4: *I need to learn to become more selfless.*

Participant #11: *Yes...I need to know when to put self on hold so that others may benefit.*

These were profound statements made by the 15/16-year-old learners. They were beginning to scrutinise and interrogate their innermost part of their self by thinking differently and shifting their mind-set to one that was more magnanimous. These learner leaders were beginning to learn about considering other's needs first and positioning themselves accordingly, in an unselfish way.

In a further follow-up session, I asked the learners to reflect on how they could make a change to the way in which they were currently leading based on the past few cycles of learning that had taken place. With a reasonable but not an intrusive amount of scaffolding, the learners were asked to share with the group what they felt needed to happen. There were many suggestions made but there were two insightful suggestions that were articulated. The following extract reflects the in-depth reflection that had taken place:

Extract 49:

Participant #4: *For this change to take place we are going to have to start loving each other more.*

There was certainly an outburst of laughter that filled the meeting venue.

Researcher: *I know that it sounds amusing but could you please explain what you mean by that?*

Participant #4: *It's like this. This love is not like the love you are thinking about. It's deeper than that. I mean, this love is a love where you have to sacrifice. You have to sacrifice yourself. I mean that you need to put others first before yourself...be unselfish.*

The group of participants responded by clapping to show their acknowledgement of a great point. There was a quietness that descended on the group – one of deep thought – when a participant raised his hand to make a further point.

Participant #3: *I agree with what you say but I still feel that it won't work. Can't work if something doesn't happen inside of us. What I'm meaning is that we can't lead others if we have not changed within (Figure 49).*



Figure 49: "Change must take place from within!"

There is an ancient Buddhist adage that says, “There is nothing more difficult than changing oneself”. These learners were beginning to probe the nature of their commitment that was required in order to establish a new style of leadership, not only in their community, but more so in their own personal lives. Participant #3 recognised that change would not occur if they, as leaders, were not willing to make a commitment and be willing to change. They had begun to recognise that change had to be on a personal level as it needed to take place within. Participant #4 suggested that it started with *love* which he explained is the ability to be able to put others first – a sacrificial commitment to meeting others’ needs.

However, the learner leaders struggled with the idea of changing their approach to established leadership customs that had been developed, taught and handed down by their forefathers in their families and communities (see Section 7.2.2.4). The thought of change was difficult to comprehend as it appeared to them that it would impact on their culture.

Nevertheless, the following extract revealed how boundary-crossing was beginning to take shape in this learner leader activity. The ability of the learner leaders to engage with each other, through an improved level of communication and trust, generated new practices of leadership of inclusion and collaboration. The learner leaders were collaborating horizontally across divisions in their activity system, as they negotiated new practices of leadership. The learners were transferring and creating new understandings of the representation of the practice of leadership. Puonti (2004, as

cited in Warmington et al., 2005, p. 13) states that, “Knowledge is not about putting theory into practice but about the transmission and transformation of practices”.

Extract 50:

Participant #4: *So you saying or trying to say we should abandon our culture!*

Participant #14: *I'm not saying that at all. I'm just saying that as time goes forward you can't just rely on what your forefathers said. You have to think that times have changed. We live in new times. Let me use Mandela's quote: "The greatest weapon anyone can have is an education", by you forsaking your education, you aren't becoming a better person and you aren't using it to your advantage. The education is that we are all equal. I'm not saying forsake your culture as I'm cultural too, but I'm not going to think like I'm back then. You have to adapt to times.*

Participant #4: *So you are saying that we should look at the bigger picture and our culture isn't part of that picture or our culture is holding us back.*

Participant #14: *No, what I'm trying to say is that you shouldn't use your culture to your advantage in conjunction. I'm a proud Xhosa man and keep it alive but I also move with the times even though it is strict.*

Participant #14 eventually seemed to get buy-in from the group when he concluded the group dialogue by making the following declaration, clarifying that there was no need for them to disregard their culture but rather to adapt to the changes around them as the world will always be a place of change:

Participant #14: *Our culture does not have to change but we need to adapt to the changes in the environment because that is changing all the time.*

Leadership is not just about another skill for a learner leader to use to get a job done or about receiving a title, it is about changing and refining how adolescents make choices in their lives. For the learner leader, they must not be forced into doing it the adult/system's way but rather with an attitude of “together we can do it for ourselves” (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 158). Some of these internal changes that were being exposed, activated a disturbance of their core values, touching deep sensitive societal nerves of the learner leaders, which had been developed over time in their homes and communities. It became an important phase for the learners to experience as they started reflecting on whether their values in actual fact complemented their behaviour. It is

argued that this helps build awareness of themselves as leaders, playing an important role in their leadership development (van Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 79).

8.3 WORKING TOWARD MODELING A NEW PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP

Having drawn on mirror data to question the practices of leadership, individually and at school, the research study revealed the emerging contradictions that were aggravated in the learner leaders' activity system (see Section 7.2). Specific problem situations and disturbances were highlighted (see Section 8.3; 8.4; 8.6) and by implementing small cycles of expansive learning the study aimed to unpack the 'situated' nature of the concepts of leadership within the activity system through critical reflection to develop a new model of leadership.

8.3.1 Problem solving process – a recap

The learner leaders were visibly empowered as they worked towards developing a new model of leadership for themselves as an activity system. In conjunction, I used Seppänen's (2002) problem solving model (as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 364) to provide a framework for the learner leaders, which enabled the learner leaders to engage with each other on a collaborative level, with both visible and invisible magnitudes of the study (see Section 5.6.6.1; Table 22). Here I was able to utilise the suggested surfaces of representation for analysis and design, leading to a new learner leadership model.

At the outset of the study, it was revealed that there was a distinct concern about the lack of leadership and the style of learner leadership practised within the school and within the collective learner leaders' activity system. Once the research study began to engage with the learner leaders, a number of obvious (observable) problems were surfaced and 'mirrored':

- Poor understanding of the concept of leadership;
- Lack of collaboration;
- Lack of respect and trust; and
- Inability to communicate effectively.

By disturbing the contradictions within the learner leadership activity system, a number of contradictions/ruptures were surfaced that began to reveal some of the effects of the underlying

causes (see Section 8.3; 8.4; 8.6). In CR, causal mechanisms are said to be unobservable by researchers (Danermark et al., 2002; Bergins, Wells & Owen, 2008) (see Section 4.3.2) but they do agree that one can detect their effects. Seppänen (2002) refers to these effects as “invisible systemic structures of the collective activity” (as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 364).

In the study these were identified as possibly being the mechanisms that were creating cultural barriers, such as poor social capital, low aspirations, scepticism and a sense of hopelessness. The history and traditions of their culture emerged as influential mechanisms in the research study which was powerfully demonstrated in the debate about ‘losing one’s culture’. This was very revealing.

The effects were clearly displayed in the community through the disabling effect of being trapped in a cycle of poverty, broken homes due to HIV and AIDS, single parent homes, lack of sound education and lack of jobs (see Section 2.5). These effects tended to perpetuate the view that, “This is the lot in life!”, and was causing irreparable damage to the community, which meant that the mental outlook of each of these learner leaders living in this community was at stake. (Mandela, 1994) (see Section 2.4).

These learner leaders were seeing their environment and the practice of leadership as they were conditioned to see it, as strongly influenced by their culture and histories, such as socialised patriarchy (see Section 7). This surfaced a number of contradictions that disturbed the leadership landscape for the learner leaders (see Section 7.2). The learner leaders were prodded to use these contradictions to “appropriate and develop new conceptual leadership tools to analyse and redesign their practice of leadership” (Engeström, 1999a).

Data that was collected reflected the cultural and historical influences and changes were mirrored in the learner leaders’ activity system. During the research process, periods of transformation and turning points in thought processes were identified (see Sections 8.2.3; 8.2.6; 8.2.7). By analysing these transformations that had occurred within the activity, the intent of the study now focused on these important changes that had occurred.

In the next section, the study concentrated on the development of a new structure (individual/group) by modelling new ways (tools) which allowed the learner leaders to realise their potential as servant leaders.

8.3.2 Modelling of changes to the learner leader activity system

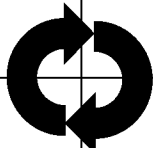
According to researchers (Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 9; Engeström, 1999), “This process goes beyond mere observation and categorization. It consists of practical experimentation with problematic situation, connecting it to its genetic-historical origins and abstracting from it an explanatory basic relation, called a germ cell”. The introduction of servant leadership as a new object/idea of leadership practice disturbed the learner leadership activity system. Surfaced contradictions highlighted the difficulty that the learner leaders had adjusting to the basic practice of leadership, let alone a new concept called servant-leadership. Learners found that they were struggling to work collaboratively – the new idea went contrary to the rules of leadership practiced within their cultures and histories – and it clashed with the division of labour (roles and responsibilities) that they were accustomed to.

Yet, as the learner leaders engaged with the research study and the cycles of expansive learning they began to partially reject the old practices of leadership through the questioning of the validity of them and began to establish new tools for the activity system (Engeström, 1999a). The decisions that the learner leader had made were internal within the activity system, under conditions that could be described as uncertain and intensive, facilitated against their historical and cultural backgrounds. The transformation that began to take place was not only centred on the individual but could be seen as a collective transformation (*ibid.*).

In the expansive learning cycles, the learners pointed out that changes needed to be made to the way in which they were working with their peers. It was felt that many of them showed no respect for each other, that there was little if any collaboration and that there were many tensions that existed due to their cultures. From the following extract the learner leaders partially highlighted some of the concerns that the learners had about the practice of leadership.

Table 22: Problem solving processes in learner leaders' activity system

LEVELS OF FOCUS	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
<p>INVISIBLE SYSTEMIC STRUCTURE OF THE COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY</p>	<p>2 Systematic causes of the visible problems in the activity: Culture/histories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded traditions and belief systems • Patriarchal leadership • Single/absent parents • Teenage households • Low aspirations • Poor social capital • Skepticism • Sense of hopelessness <p>Developmental process to identifying system contradictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team initiative tasks • Individual interviews • Conversations in focus groups • Change laboratory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw on mirrored data - Questioning existing practices - Surface contradictions - Development of tools - Reflection 	<p>3 Method(s) to overcome the problems (expansive reconceptualisation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection (inward/internal) • Develop new conceptual tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze and; - Redesign practice of leadership <p>Designing new forms of the activity (e.g. new rules, new tools):</p> <p>Introduction of new model (SALTED):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to each other respectfully • Be role-models to the other learners and serve • Be disciplined leaders • Display a positive attitude • Be who we really are
<p>IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE EVENTS AND PROBLEMS IN INDIVIDUALS' ACTIONS, WITHIN THE JOINT ACTIVITY</p>	<p>1 Identifying the obvious (visible) problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor understanding of concept of leadership • Lack of communication tools • Lack of collaboration • Lack of respect and trust • In ability to communicate • Self-absorbed/selfish 	<p>4 New kinds of actions; implementing new instruments, rules, ways of dividing labour and collaborating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S-Dialogue • A-Trustworthy • L-Attentive • T-Attitude and Feeling • E- Role Model • D-Self-controlled <p>Implementing the obvious or (new) solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement SALTED Model to the school



(Adapted from Seppänen, 2002, as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 364; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 10)

Extract 51:

Participant #4: *I think learners are scared to participate. They don't have much confidence in themselves.*

Participant #2: *Yes, left out. I had ideas but no-one was listening.*

Participant #1: *I'm disabled you know ...I never know that I am able to [do] anything because of my disability. The people saw me as a very disadvantaged person...I don't feel good about myself...there are people that say bad things sometimes they don't take me seriously...instead I am a laughing stock to them. I want to be part of the group and its functionings (sic).*

Participant #6: *They don't listen to us...they don't respect us.*

Participant #2: *We did not work together on the task. You can see we were all shouting out our own ideas. We did not agree with each other.*

Participant #3: *We were fighting a lot. Sometimes we were nasty.*

Participant #5: *Yes, little working together.*

Participant #9: *There is no respect. We can't treat each other good (sic).*

What was evident in the beginning of the research study was that many of the learners explained that they were not too keen to get involved in the leadership process. Feelings of being 'scared' and 'not feeling confident' made the poignant point that many of these learners had struggled with self-belief. As has been alluded to already in the research study, there was very little respect for others, a lack of collaboration, communication skills that were lacking and learners that were being excluded from participating in events.

However, the expansive learning cycles afforded the learner leaders the opportunity to begin to question their personal practice of leadership. Using the surfaced contradictions, they engaged (heatedly at times) with each other to a point that allowed each individual to begin to acquire some identifiable knowledge of leadership. It involved the doing, reflecting and improvement of the practice of their leadership. These stages led from one to the other until they were able to get to a place that they could inwardly reflect and begin to construct viable tools that would enhance their practice of leadership. The activity system is not a stable process (as there is continuous change) and as Engeström (2001, p. 137) argues, "the people...are learning all the time - not even defined or understood ahead of time".

As the learner leaders began learning, problems were being reformulated and the learner leaders started to develop new tools for engaging with these above-mentioned problems. According to Engeström (1987), “The continued production of new problem-solving tools enables subjects to transform the entire activity system, potentially creating and transforming (expanding) the object of the activity (as cited in Daniels, 2008, p. 126).

When the learner leaders first engaged with the research study it was expected that they would be functioning at least at the Level 1 stage of Bateson’s framework of levels of learning, by knowing what the appropriate behaviour of leadership should be (see Section 4.4.2). In these early stages it seemed that the actions of some, informed by prior environmental influences, could have been deemed as inappropriate as they excluded the weaker, both girls and other younger, less forceful members of the group and were scornful of their opinions. This could have been viewed as disrespectful and intimidating for the less dominant members of the group.

Through these early interactions, they were already beginning to formulate answers and behaviours that one would expect of leaders. As the learning process ensued, some learners began to assimilate what it was that was expected of a good leader. They were beginning to acquire a deeper understanding of the rules and patterns of behaviour required in leadership at Level 2. Bateson refers to it as “learning the ‘hidden’ curriculum of what it means to be a [leader]” (Daniels, 2008, p. 126).

In time, some of the learners began to show signs of learning to change their approach (thinking and behaviour) to leadership. With the surfacing of contradictions some of the learners began to question the sense and meaning of the context of leadership and the need for the introduction of an alternative construction of the wider context of servant-leadership. Bateson (Daniels, 2008, p. 126) describes this as Level 3 learning. Not all the learners reached all the stages of learning as depicted in Bateson’s framework. The activity system could have reached Level 3 and yet not all the learner leaders themselves had reached this stage.

The learning that was indicative of what had transpired over the expansive learning phase of the research study which also reflects Bateson’s Level 3 stage of learning, is depicted in Table 6. During the Change Laboratories learner leaders started to define which behavioural qualities would be necessary for effective servant-leadership. They had all agreed that for the initial stage

there had to be an inward reflection and a desire to want to change from within (see Section 8.2.7). In the subsequent discussion and dialogue, the learners created a set of required behaviours (Table 23).

Table 23: Learner leaders' suggested behaviours for leadership

BEHAVIOUR	REASONING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need talk to each other in a respectful manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to stop shouting at each other and speaking with disrespect. We need to devise better ways of communication and stop talking down to each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to be role-models to the other learners in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We don't have many good role-models around us. We have to be selfless and put others needs first. We need to set the example and show the other learners how to behave and lead.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to learn to listen to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to pay more attention to what each one is saying. We don't listen properly to what is being said. We need to be focused.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to be disciplined to carry out our roles as leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If we are going to lead, then we need to show how it should be done. We need to be neatly dressed, complete our homework and prepare for our tests. We need to show respect to everyone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to display a positive attitude towards those we lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We must stop being negative and try and be more positive in the way in which we do things. We need to think good thoughts of others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to learn to be who we really are – genuine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we lead if we say one thing to the learners and then do the exact opposite?

In their discussions, the learner leaders wanted to create a more informative framework that would act as a guide for them to transform themselves so they embarked on refining their work. In the discussion one learner leader (Participant #4 - committed Christian) felt that they as leaders needed to be what Jesus stated in the Sermon on the Mount, “Ye are the salt of the earth” (King James Version, Matthew 5:13). He explained that it depicted who leaders should be: “*good, caring people who were willing to put others first*”. In the discussion about the scripture verse, the learners pointed out that salt “*gave flavour*” and “*preserved food*” and felt that their lives as leaders needed to enhance and give meaning to their journey as leaders. One learner (Participant #4) warned that the Bible (NIV, 1978) also cautioned that, “If salt lost its flavour...it is good for nothing” (*ibid.*). In the ensuing discussion, they as a group decided which behaviours would be important to them

as leaders (Table 23) and decided to use the word ‘salted’ as an acronym to create a framework to lead (Table 24).

Table 24: Learner leaders' leadership framework

	BEHAVIOUR	DESCRIPTION
S	SPEECH (dialogue)	The need to talk to everyone with respect. Communication was important as a leader.
A	AUTHENTIC (show humility)	The need to be genuine, humble and reliable, to be transparent to followers. Don't pretend to be someone who you are not.
L	LISTENING (attentive)	The need to listen to what others are saying to you. One needs to listen with undivided attention.
T	THOUGHTS (attitude and feeling)	The need to generate positive thoughts. To make a decision to think positively all the time. It influences attitudes. Avoid being negative in thought, word and deed.
E	EXAMPLE (role model)	The need to be role-models to followers. Need to set the example in what we do as leaders: behaviour, punctual, neatly dressed, respect everyone and be selfless.
D	DISCIPLINED (self-controlled)	The need to be self-disciplined. Take pride in oneself. Be willing to do ‘all of the above’!

Although scaffolding took place to enhance and stimulate discussion, the learner leaders identified with the above-mentioned acronym and associated qualities for effective leadership as they developed this model as a unified activity system.

Through the number of small expansive learning cycles the learner leaders had reached the stage where they had realised that in order to lead effectively they would need to master themselves before they could lead others. As one of the learner leaders (Participant #2) stated, “*A leader must have this (sic) qualities to lead but more important about being a leader is putting the peoples’ needs before yours*”. These behavioural qualities were the ‘new rules’ that they had introduced

that would guide them to a place where they could be the role-models that they yearned to be. The SALTED acronym provided the necessary framework to empower them to be accountable for their own behaviour and actions as they were setting the example for others to follow.

8.4 CONCLUSION

A learner leader (Participant #4) had this to say towards the end of the contact sessions of the research journey: *“We as leaders need to become responsible for our environment because we have created it”*.

It is important to recognise the level of learning that had taken place in this young man. Here he recognised the need to take responsibility for an environment that he as an adolescent had not created. Nonetheless, he believed that the only way that they as learner leaders could make a difference in their environment, was to first become responsible for it. What was impressive was the fact that he recognised the importance of an inward decision to become responsible. The environment being spoken about here was specifically directed at the leadership environment. I believe here is a young leader who ventures to say, “I will go. Come with me!” These learner leaders had initiated, wrestled with and provided the many ideas and the structure to this activity system. To facilitate learning they knowingly took risks that could have led to failure but understood that they could succeed and succeed they did.

This is well demonstrated in the service activities that some of these learner leaders initiated. The principal pointed out to me that they had started Maths and Science tutor groups in the afternoons. When asked about their initiatives they explained that they had a responsibility to help their peers prepare for tests and exams. A number of the learner leaders were singled out for being *“Just so helpful in carrying books and bags for the teachers”*. When questioned about what they were doing the comment was, *“I just want to help and make life easier”*. One of these learner leaders (Participant #2) spent some time with me after school and went on to explain that he had this inner yearning to help others. When asked where he had learned this, he replied that it was from his aunt that he stayed with. He replied, *“She always gives of herself in such an unselfish way that I want to be like her”*.

The histories and traditions that these learners had been exposed to had formed the way in which they had acted in their learning environments in many ways. The kindness and caring nature

displayed by the participant's aunt had a major and long lasting effect on the participant. The net result was that he started modelling the same behaviour in and around the home and even taking it out into the community, especially the school where it had been so noticeable. The aunt had become the role model for this young, ever-learning adolescent.

In conclusion, Greenleaf (1977, p. 27) points out that with servant-leaders:

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other peoples' highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

These learner leaders had demonstrated that they had the energy and curiosity which was fuelled by an intense desire to want to learn to lead by serving others. It was not easy at first, but the true 'grit' that they had displayed paid dividends in the long run. The learner leaders were willing to expose their weaknesses in order to develop their strengths. Greenleaf (1977, p. 57) points out that, "Although one may start serving in menial ways, the quality of one's inner life will be manifested in one's presence, which will lift others up, making life's journey possible".

It is my strong belief that as these learner leaders continue their journeys through life they will be reminded of the truths they uncovered and discovered as a group of young people searching for a better future, a future where they could stand out and be called leaders, not because of their titles or their power or their gender or their status, but because of the example they set. They know that they can make and be the difference.

In the next chapter I draw my research study to a conclusion by presenting my findings in a way that centres on a retroductive reflection.

CHAPTER 9

RETRODUCTIVE REFLECTION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



(Participants begin to recognise their potential to grow and lead, to change and to lead.) (Knott-Craig, 2013)

We can only begin to lead others once we have changed within (Participant)

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Having completed my Master of Education in Leadership and Management (ELM) in 2008 and having witnessed young adolescent boys transform their boarding house, I believed that it was time for me to work in a culturally rich but environmentally poor community exploring the development of learner leadership. I had developed a sufficiently inquisitive curiosity to want to understand how learner leadership development played out in a different culture that makes up our amazing country, South Africa. As Mandela stated, “We must act together as a united people, for reconciliation, to build together, for the birth of a new world” (Mandela’s Inaugural Speech, 10th May, 1994) and I believe that this has been my calling, ‘To make a significant difference in the lives of the young people that I may be privileged to engage’.

In Chapter One, I argued that there were ominous signs of a calamitous scarcity of virtuous leadership globally. The position of leadership has been exploited in a selfish manner in many instances; yet there are also some amazing examples of world leaders who were able to demonstrate what it meant to be human by representing their own humanity through an uncompromising lifestyle. They were prepared not to surrender to the threatening squeeze of unreasonable abuse of people that has engulfed our global community today (See Section 1.1).

According to the work of Tutu (2010, p. 34), “We are made for goodness”, yet this may all change as lives may be ‘poisoned’ by our upbringing through our cultures and histories. Nonetheless, my focus in this research study has been to investigate and explore how learner leaders - using their cultures and histories - are able to challenge (question) the leadership status quo in their communities and schools, and to collectively empower one another to make changes to the way that they lead in their school environment in a selfless manner.

In this chapter I present these findings in a way that centres on a retroductive reflection. In the process, I summarise the context in which the study was undertaken, the meaning that was derived from the interaction within the learner leader activity system, the discoveries that were made and the causes of the challenges that the research site faces. I then propose ways of making learner leadership possible, in a sustainable manner, in the sense of developing learner leadership further in the school and the community, given the overwhelming challenges that the learner leaders are faced with in their community.

9.2 WHAT MUST BE TRUE IN ORDER FOR LEADERSHIP TO DEVELOP?

In this final chapter of my research study, where the mode of inference has been predominantly induction and deduction, I now turn to retroduction to conclude this considerably dynamic journey that I have experienced with the learner leaders. In using retroduction I focus on applying a mode of extrapolation whereby, through positing and identification, causal mechanisms are explained that have produced events within the learner leader activity system that have tended to generate and sustain/condition the challenges of learner leadership to be what they are (Easton, 2010; Houston, 2010, pp. 82 – 83; Danermark et al., 2002, p. 43; Sayer, 1992). I then present an analytic summary of conditions that need to be met in order for learner leadership to ensue.

9.2.1 The Baobab tree analogy of learner leadership

In Chapter One, I briefly referred to using the African baobab tree as symbol to highlight the phenomenon of learner leadership development in an African setting and to question what must be true in order to make learner leadership development possible (See Section 1.1) (Figure 50).

In many regions of Africa, this enduring tree, with its amazing root system, symbolises community, its culture and traditions (structure). It is seen as a place of gathering, and a place of learning and growth – a Tree of Life – due to the contribution that it makes in supporting life. In the African culture, it is said that the tree creates a meeting place where animals search for solace from the harsh African elements under its branches. The research study created the opportunity for learner leaders to share responsibilities, thoughts, and become reciprocally dependent on each other, developing together due to their cooperative efforts displayed throughout the study. The African tradition of Ubuntu was the kernel being displayed here, “I am what I am because of others”, which defined the relations that would eventually be established within the learner leaders’ activity system (www.africanhistory.about.com).

The Baobab tree demonstrates its resilience against some of the harshest elements (Conditions) that the environment can throw at it. It is described as an ‘upside down’ tree which symbolises

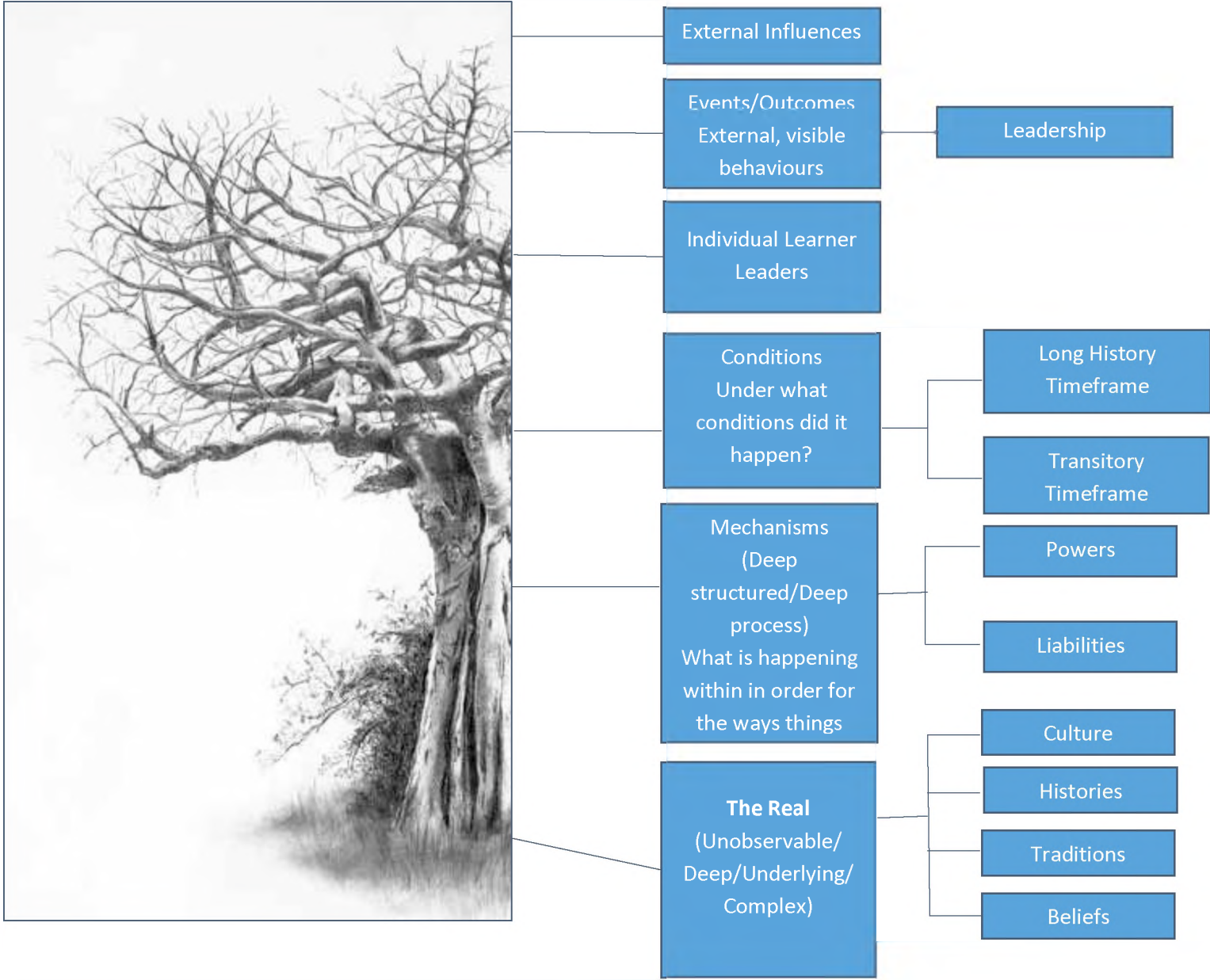


Figure 50: The Baobab Tree Analogy of Learner Leadership Development

the legacy of the past. In this study, I have demonstrated that the learner leaders were able to turn their understanding and practice of leadership upside down. They demonstrated a willingness and the necessary resilience to survive. Under the ‘branches’ of the study, the learner leaders have been able to share their experiences, “One’s own knowing is enhanced when other voices are part of that learning experience” (Wenger, 1998, p. 34). Here I use the structure of the baobab tree to encapsulate what had to be true in order for learner leadership development to take place in the learner leader activity system.

I believed that there was always going to be a complex interaction between the learner leaders in this research group. This is because they come from such varied personal, social and economic situations - different responses to similar circumstances. In this research study, I have argued that leadership occurs through the exertion of influence which requires reciprocal interdependence of the learner leaders, which is underpinned by their cultures and histories, the very conditions that they have grown up in. The way in which they have grown up has ultimately influenced their reaction to the leadership situation that they find themselves in which gave rise to a number of events occurring during this research study, driven by mechanisms.

At this juncture, I would like to start by pointing out that there were two timeframes that were at play in this research study environment, underpinned by mechanisms, their causal powers, liabilities and conditions (Table 25). I would like to clarify that these timeframes have a significant role. The deep-layered timeframe surfaces the causal mechanisms that exist within the learner leader activity system, whilst the transitory timeframe explains the conditions that are necessary for learner leadership development.

9.2.2 A deep-layered timeframe - causal mechanisms

Firstly, there is a history which is a lengthy, deep-layered process where the causal powers of the mechanisms are being manifested. Culture and the histories of the learner leaders played a significant role in shaping each individual in their own way. Traditions, customs and values were formed at this deep cultural and historical layer which have shaped the learner leaders individually over time to take their place in their communities and society at large.

9.2.2.1 Inescapably situated in their culture and histories

In the research study, I have argued that the learner leaders were inescapably situated in their particular cultures and histories which shaped (often dictated) their reaction to the leading of others. I maintain this because, in the first instance, their circumstances (See Section 2.3) have had significant effects (often outwardly unobservable) on their development as leaders and the practise of leadership. In the second instance, the socioeconomic circumstances (See Section 2.3), that they had been exposed to, resulted in them being disempowered to take any action on current situations, as they knew no better.

Nonetheless, by using critical reflection, I was able to encourage the learner leaders to eventually revisit many cultural and historical assumptions, prejudices, and values that existed which all reinforced their existing perceptions and behaviour of leadership. These causal powers had the ability to enable and lead to transformation, under specific conditions, yet also had the power to constrain any form of development. Sayer (1992, p. 116) in fact does point out that, “According to the conditions, the same mechanism may sometimes produce different events, and conversely the same type of event may have different causes”.

Even so, I guided the learner leaders through a process of scrutinising their preconceived understanding and perceptions of the meaning and practice of leadership which surfaced a number of contradictions (See Section 7.2.1; 7.2.2). This, I believed allowed them the space to develop a greater self-awareness where feelings of fear, anger, frustration, guilt, anxiety and shame were surfaced. I believe it was here that the learner leaders began to realise their own vulnerability to prejudicial thinking and behaviour towards one another, based on their previous experiences which were greatly influenced and shaped by their culture and histories.

The sharing of common vision and understanding, where the outcomes of leadership received prominence encouraged critical reflection. This in turn promoted the formation of support networks which translated into greater collaborative effort on the part of the learner leaders.

9.2.2.2 Consequence of apartheid

Nonetheless, the lives of the learner leaders have reflected a life bearing the wounds of the legacy of the past. In Chapter Two I described the devastating personal, political and economic effects

that apartheid had had on the community, which had the makings of causing irreparable damage to the point that the mental outlook of all future generations was at stake (See Section 2.3). Inadequate access to social amenities, schools, and employment triggered the breakdown of communities and homes. The day-to-day drudgery of deficiency demoralized communities, leading to the corrosion of individual dignity. I pointed out, in Chapter Two, that poverty essentially concerns the inability of individuals, households and communities to reach and maintain a socially acceptable minimum standard of living due to the lack of resources (See Section 2.1.4; 2.5). Traditional families were methodically being dismantled through poor social capital, sexual and violent behaviour, single parents (mostly as a result of HIV and AIDS), and resultant broken homes. These adverse socioeconomic conditions tended to constrain the learner leaders, restricting their leadership capacity within their school and their community.

Table 25: Mechanisms, their Powers, Liabilities and Conditions

Mechanisms	Powers	Liabilities	Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Histories • Socialised patriarchy • Situated Knowledge • Socioeconomic environment • Scrutinizing Self-Identity • Pathologised Silence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion/Bullying • Demanding position • Willingness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help • To organise • To listen • Influence • Relationships • Collaboration • Subversive questioning and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socioeconomic environment • Lack of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Role models •Resources •Platform(s) •Understanding •Opportunities • Broken homes • Confusion • Exclusion • Ignorance 	<p>Impoverished leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-centered approach • Individualistic • Gender specific (male dominated) <p>New kind of leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of being valued • Value of Inclusion • Recognition of change within (Transformational agency) • Recognition of Responsibility

9.2.2.3 Lack of male role models

Women (including grandmothers) headed households - where men were not able or willing to shoulder their responsibilities as leaders in the home - affected the shaping of the young male for adulthood in the home. They struggled to model their leadership behaviour in a positive manner due to the absence of a good male role model, especially when one considers that they live in a male-dominated environment that permeates the South African society. Where male role models did exist, they were often described as being negative – unemployed, alcoholic and drug abusers, gang members - leading to abusive and destructive behaviour (See Section 6.3.1.2), after whom they patterned their behaviour on. In this study, I have revealed that the lack of suitable role models and the conflict between the values of the learners and the lack of conformity to the rules of both the school and the community tended to condition the behaviour of the learners in a negative manner (See Section 6.3.1.2 B).

9.2.2.4 Wrestling with stress

Stress levels that develop from the perceived inadequacies experienced in the home (poverty, lack of support) and poor education) could result in high levels of conflict within the community and within the learner population of a school. As I have alluded to, many of the problems experienced by the learner leaders - that impact learning in the school – are brought into the classroom from society. This could lead to some deviant and counterproductive behaviours being displayed among learners (Colparvar, Kamkar & Javadan, 2012, as cited in Kadyakapita, 2013). Learners could become highly cantankerous and less motivated to participate in resourceful problem-solving, conflict resolution and collective decision-making processes or support collective decision-making (Kadyakapita, 2013; Carlson & Buskist, 1997; Santrock, 2003), and may possibly be drawn toward displaying inappropriate behaviour and end up bunking school and/or joining gangs, because this is where they feel that they have an identity (See Section 6.3.1.2 A and B). This behaviour could also lead to development of low levels of self-esteem.

9.2.2.5 Low levels of self-esteem

In using the research intervention, I was able to disclose that learner leaders often displayed low levels of self-esteem. The conditions that they were exposed to daily had an undermining effect on them. Research points out that people who have high self-esteem tend to influence a person to

be assertive (Kadyakapita, 2013, p. 234). On the one hand, high self-esteem – displayed by learner leaders - tended to influence them to be in control of their life situations, to evaluate possible behavioural options available to them and to choose how they would act in any given situation (*ibid.*). On the other hand, a learner with low self-esteem tended to be influenced in a manner in which he or she would avoid being assertive, conceding to the authority of peers (*ibid.*). What became apparent to me, in this study, was that some of the learner leaders were inclined to allow their position to be managed by their peers who were more self-assertive in a way (Santrock, 2004; Ford & Blumenstein, 2013). This was significantly prevalent with regards the girls and younger boys in the group tasks that were initially carried out in the study (See Section 7.2.1.2 P2; 7.2.1.3 P3).

9.2.2.6 Reigned by socialised patriarchy

I have alluded to the fact that socialised patriarchy had a noticeable influence on the learner leaders and there was initially always going to be uncertainty and ambiguity as to who was going to take the lead in the coeducational group, and how leadership was going to be practised in the group (See Section 7.2.1.3 P2). I have suggested that leadership could be described as an action where influence is exerted which relies on the reciprocation of relations and mutuality, and that leadership is not about being embodied in one individual (See Section 4.4.4). The internal structures and processes found within their environments - in which the learner leader has grown up in - had a deep effect on their behaviour and reaction to the leadership situation that they found themselves in (See Section 4.5). The mixed array of practised values, based on their cultures and traditions, guided them in particular directions which were often in conflict with the values and principles of their peers. However, their personalities and traits were well displayed during the research study. This had a bearing on how they all reacted and carried out the tasks that were presented to them.

Nonetheless, Bloch (2009, p.30) suggests that,

While we are never victims of the past, we cannot simply shrug off the way the society we inherited has influenced the institutions and culture of the present. Institutions and attitudes from the past channel the perceptions and shape the possibilities of today.

Although many of these learner leaders lived in abject poverty - having had their families marginalised through the processes of social injustices - they still remained resilient, presenting themselves with a positive attitude, with dignity (neatly dressed) and character (always smiling), oozing hope.

9.2.3 The transitory timeframe - Conditions that need to be

Secondly, there is a transitory timeframe that needs to be considered which has a much shorter duration – a three (3) year research period of data collection. The research intervention created a platform (CL) from which the learner leaders were able to challenge the existing conditions of an impoverished kind of leadership within the learner leadership activity system. In the intervention, the CL workshops provided a platform from where the learner leaders challenged personal and group values, as well as existing traditions that were practised in the homes of learner leaders.

The group at first accepted the norm that the oldest male learner leader would take complete control of the task and group. Though group members were initially tolerant - with weak interpersonal relationships with their other members of the research group - this behaviour soon resulted in the feeling of exclusion being experienced and expressed by group members (See Section 7. Contradictions). Causal powers such as demanding control, coercion, being in control, domination of the discussion, wanting to give advice, were pervasive within the group. The liabilities of these powers resulted in a number of liabilities being surfaced, for example, individuals being excluded from the tasks, leaders being overstretched and not realising it, ignorance of the practice of leadership and confusion being revealed, to name a few.

9.2.3.1 Acknowledgement of who you are

Research points to leadership being described as influence (See Section 3.2). It is the ability of a leader to engage with a person in such a manner that either has a positive or negative effect, an influence on the person, who then follows the leader.

A critical approach to leadership should be to encourage learner leaders to begin to think about why certain actions and behaviours – on their part as learner leaders - lead to particular responses on the part of their followers. Learner leaders need to be empowered (taught) to recognise and acknowledge who they are and where they come from, and shaping their lives in response to this.

Shields (2004, p. 112) suggests failure to engage with ‘who we are’ and ‘where we come from’ “pathologizes” silence: this needs to be broken by encouraging the learner leaders to understand that they and their lived experiences are not abnormal or unacceptable, and to acknowledge and celebrate their roots. According to Swartz (1997, p. 105), “Their beliefs and attitudes have developed over time and function below a level of consciousness and language, they are extremely resistant to change” (as cited in Shields, 2004, p. 112). Nonetheless, Shields, (*ibid.*) suggests that this structured and societal deficit of thinking, on the part of the learner leaders, could be broken through new approaches and enduring change. They need to recognise their culture but be willing to adapt to change (Section 7.2.2.5 Extract 38).

In order to do so the learner leaders would need to be encouraged:

- to explore what is actually happening in their activity system and with their followers through investigation and analysis;
- to collect data to inform their understanding and determination of these causal mechanisms and occurring behaviour;
- to determine strategies that could/would work within the system, providing feedback to followers;
- to think about their intuitive powers in order to sensitize themselves to the highest priority needs of their followers;
- to develop relationships with their followers which are selfless in approach;
- to begin to develop a personal leadership philosophy that embodies a selfless approach
- to cultivate a set of practices that enriches the lives of their followers, building better relations, and ultimately creating a more just and caring world.

9.2.3.2 Subversive questioning

Learner leaders began to question the existing leadership status quo that was practised in their communities and homes, resulting in new sets of thinking being manifested. This subversive questioning triggered a “conflict of motives” (Sannino, Engeström & Lemos, 2016, p. 8) within the group of participants, leading to a heated debate challenging the grounds of their culture. A rich and expansive explanation ensued which opened up the opportunity for a practical and

creative understanding being developed in dealing transformation, the germ cell being the fear of change (See Section 8.2.2). The surprise exposé of the use of the metaphor of the donkey cart revealed a change in thinking about how one could still embrace change without having to change one's culture (See Section 7.2.2.4 SC4). What the learner leader was alluding to was that the structures that existed within their culture could be said to be invariant under certain changes, meaning that the current structures in their culture could still continue to exist whilst they - the constituents themselves - experienced and underwent change to their characteristics which were relevant to their development as leaders (Sayer, 1992, p. 24).

Although the initial engagement between the learner leaders was antagonistic and vibrant they were beginning to listen to one another attentively. Recognition of being valued in the group resulted in the inclusion of members of the research study that had initially been side-lined in many of the tasks. Learner leaders began to recognise the value of team work resulting in different behaviour patterns being developing. Learners were creating opportunities for others to share their ideas, began to work together in their groups, there was better communication and learners were encouraging each other (See Section 8.2.6.).

9.2.3.3 Interdependent relationships

Relationships between the learner leaders could be described as being a “necessary causal relation” since the relation between the learners cannot exist in isolation (Easton, 2009, p. 121). The relation between the follower and the leader was necessary, in that the object – the leader - is dependent on the relationship between the himself/herself and the follower (Sayer, 1992). In Chapter Three, when reviewing the development and practice of leadership, I contended that a leader could not lead if he or she did not have a follower. Although all the research participants participated as learner leaders there were moments when individual learners took the lead when others had to learn to take their places as followers. This relationship was difficult at first because of the influence of the practice of leadership in their homes underpinned by their cultures and histories. In the study, I have demonstrated that these learner leaders were able to find ways in which they were able to relate to each other over the research period of three years, although sceptically at first.

These relationships that developed were not necessarily rigid in any way. However, any change that took place in the practice of leadership within the activity system resulted in a change in the learner leaders' behaviour towards leading (Easton, 2009.). In order for the learner leaders to develop their skills as leaders they needed to demonstrate that they relied on one another in their newly woven relationship with each other. This took time. "Change in one body leads to change in another body with which it has necessary relations" *ibid.* p. 121).

The change that the learner leaders experienced was due to the effect of the change in the lives of the individual learner leaders who began to influence their peers' ways of thinking and behaviour (See Section 7.2.1.2 P2; 7.2.1.3 P3; 7.2.2.4 SC 4). Learner leaders began to realise that in order for them to work as a collaborative group they needed to recognise the value of each individual member of the activity system (See Section 8.2.6). The whole learner leadership activity system depended upon the relationship between the learners. These internal relationships could not exist independently but rather interdependently. The activity system relied on the collaborative efforts of the learner leaders. However, the learner leaders could exist and function without the group as individual learner leaders when called upon.

9.2.3.4 Platform for collaboration

However, it was only once a platform for collaboration was established that local, collective meaning was derived about the essence of leadership and that interdependent relationships began to develop. This gave rise to new conditions being established as the learner leaders engaged with each other. The learner leaders were enabled to participate more freely in the tasks that were undertaken resulting in a greater feeling of belonging being achieved. The learner leaders introduced new sets of conditions (the SALTED model of individual mastery) that helped them pave the way forward in altering their behaviour in developing their leadership skills (See Section 8.3.2).

9.2.3.5 Transformative agency

Sannino, Engeström and Lemos (2016, p. 7) suggest that through the process of expanded learning during the CL workshops, the learners would have been enabled to break away from a traditional, patriarchal frame of leadership action and have taken the initiative to transform it collectively - beyond the scope of research site and study - which they describe as "transformational agency".

The learner leaders “joint activity” had been significantly developed through the CL workshops that enabled them to explicate and envision new possibilities of practising leadership within their school (Haapasaari, Engeström & Kerosuo, 2016, p. 233). Haapasaari et al. (*ibid.*) argue that transformative agency goes beyond the individual as it seeks possibilities for collective change efforts.

This is well documented in the service activities that some of these learner leaders initiated during and since the completion of the research study. The principal pointed out to me that some of the participants had started Mathematics and Science tutor groups in the afternoons. When asked about their initiatives they explained that they had a responsibility to help their peers prepare for tests and exams (See Section 8.4). In a recent post-research follow up session with the research participants (initiated by them) the learner leaders led a discussion informing me of their ideas to initiate some group community projects. These ideas ranged from establishing a Learning Academy in the school, the development of an afterhours Learner Leadership Programme and an Environmental Awareness Group, who would reclaim the environment to its natural state. Using the CHAT activity system, that they had become familiar with over the past few years during the research study, the participants identified what their object would be, who their subjects would be, and what tools they would require. They had determined rules that would need to be followed and what role each person would fulfil. Although these activity systems are in their infancy, the learners have embarked on actions that will take time and their activities will evolve but in order for these ideas to be implemented, continued “complex debates and stepwise crystallisations of their visions will need to take place” (*ibid.*, p. 233).

When asked, “Why do you want to implement these projects?”, one of the participants explained that he had developed this inner yearning to help others by observing the actions of his aunt that he stayed with. He stated that, “*She always gives of herself in such an unselfish way that I want to be like her*”.

9.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Even though I adopted a rigorous research approach in this study, it was restricted to a single case study in its latitude and methodology (See Section 5.4.2; 6.2.1) (Sayer, 2000; Danermark et al., 2002). My aim was to deliver a critical understanding but practical illumination of the causes and

challenges of how learners responded to developing a culture of leadership within their school. I was concerned with researching how leadership was learned and practised in their community and school. I also concentrated on developing an understanding of the fundamental causal mechanisms that were responsible in driving how the learner leaders' activity systems influenced learning and practice of leadership.

However, I did find that in setting up and carrying out the research study I was challenged as a researcher, on many fronts.

9.3.1 Lack of trust

When I first engaged the schools to participate in the study there was an interest expressed yet at the last-minute I had two of the three schools withdraw due to unknown reasons. Furthermore, within the participating school I initially found it difficult to engage with the adults and learners. Firstly, on the part of the learners who had volunteered to participate in the study, a lack of trust was initially manifested. This was understandable due to the fact that a white male had entered their territory to run an intervention with regards to leadership development. As I have already alluded to, the comment that I as a white man would not last long at the school (Paraphrased – See Section 8.2.4) played a significant role in understanding what I was up against as a researcher. Secondly, I found that a strong objection was expressed by the parents and teachers to being used as the subjects of the study. As was clarified by the principal there was generally a lack of support for the learner as so many of them either lived with one parent, or grandparents, or relatives, who just don't show any interest in the well-being of the learner (See Section 6.3.1.2). The teachers generally had no interest and did not want to be held accountable for anything that they had written or said. Thirdly, I also discovered that the willingness of the households to participate in the study was wanting. Many of the adults were apprehensive and suspicious about the study, becoming uncertain about providing information about their households (See Section 6.3.1.2).

9.3.2 Poor record keeping

Record keeping was almost non-existent. In the first instance the school's histories were found in a small box with a lever arch file displaying some records of meetings that had taken place over time. Piecing together information about the history of the school was exceedingly difficult and I had to rely on accounts offered by the principal and the few anecdotal notes I found in the file. In

the second instance, I discovered that the keeping of family records - which forms an integral part most African families' histories - was made exceedingly difficult due to the disintegration of the family unit that had been experienced by a number of families and the forced removals of communities by the apartheid state (See Section 2.2) (Ramphela, 2002, p. 22). Many documents that contained the histories of families had been lost in the removal process or with the disintegration of the family. These factors made data collecting exceedingly difficult and initially challenged the quality of the data collected.

9.3.3 Language of communication

The medium of communication that I used during the research study was English which became a major challenge throughout the study. I was not able to converse with the learner leaders in their home language which was isiXhosa. Although learner leaders were taught in English this was probably either their second or third language that they used to communicate. When giving instructions, or waiting for any feedback from the learner leaders in their groups always took time affecting the short contact time that was available. I did have an interpreter who accompanied me on many occasions but this too became very time consuming. I was restricted in time on the research site because many of the learner leaders needed to walk long distances in order to get home after school, so needed to leave school early.

Many of the recorded transcripts (audio/video) were also translated into English which also posed another problem in that many of the nuances in the dialogue were lost. This became a great challenge for me as I soon discovered that there are many instances where isiXhosa words and expressions were not able to be translated accurately. It was explained to me that there were no English words or expressions to relay the correct meaning of the recorded dialogue.

Nonetheless, I was able to engage a few isiXhosa speaking community members who helped me interrogate much of the data collected and providing necessary explanations.

9.3.4 Willingness to question

Learner leaders were initially hesitant to question instructions that were given. This resulted in much frustration for me in the early stages of the data collection process as I attempted to encourage the learner leaders to participate in the discussion or tasks undertaken. I soon learned

that questioning and providing answers to questions posed was not part of their customs; adolescents were expected to agree with the adult in their presence. It took time to get the learner leaders to participate in the discussions; it was once they understood that they were not questioning my authority as a person, and that they were being empowered to participate and make decisions, that they slowly began to get involved enthusiastically.

9.3.5 A Single case study

Although I have alluded to the reasons for my research study only being established on a single case study, where I was going to do research in three schools, my concern was about the possible lack of generalisability of the study.

Case studies are said to be generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. Just like an experiment, the case study “does not represent a ‘sample’, and the investigator’s goal is to expand and generalise theories (analytical generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisations)” (Yin, 1989, p.21).

From a critical realist perspective, I have attempted to expand and generalise my data by identifying the deep processes that were at work in the learner leader activity system which were under provisional conditions, shaped by specific mechanisms (Easton, 2010, p. 126).

Although I have attempted to explain every event in its detail in this study, which is said to be nearly impossible, I have been able to explain and describe what caused learner leadership to take place and be implemented under particular conditions, ignoring the less important details (*ibid*).

9.4 POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE STUDY

In drawing my thesis to a conclusion, Chapter Nine provides answers to questions that formed part of my research study’s focus (See Section 1.5) which contain the answers in summary form:

- What underlying or causal mechanisms (systemic, historical, social and/or cultural) facilitate or obstruct the development of learner leadership (agency) and community within the school?
- How and why do students collaborate to provide leadership in their school?

- How does working with/engaging with servant leadership affect the development (agency and capacity) of learner leadership in the school?
- How does the change in leadership style/philosophy impact on the culture, behaviour and interpersonal relationships in the structure of the school, and between its members and the school community?
- How can the principles of servant leadership be optimised to yield improved and sustainable leadership practices and community development in the school?

I believe that members of the field of Educational Leadership and Management will find this research evidence useful in developing and providing guidelines for further research interventions into learner leadership development. I believe that using Critical Realism and the Cultural Historical Activity Theory would develop an inquisitiveness that could be used to inform institutions that have any interest in learner leadership development, providing answers and a ‘deeper’ understanding to how the youth think and behave.

9.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Using Critical Realism and the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) I would encourage and recommend the following areas for future research:

- a. It would be important for research to consider exploring similar interventions in a broader spectrum of the South African society and its schools, using a range of diverse schools, for example, between individual Independent/State/Under-resourced Schools; between individual English/Afrikaans/Traditional African language schools, in urban/rural settings. The research study could be a comparative study to determine and understand how underlying mechanisms and their conditions, that enable and produce learner leadership, could be different in other environments. The study could compare how learner leaders are able to construct their objects and activities in different environments, and what socio-cultural and historical factors influence their leadership practices in the community.
- b. In this thesis, the study time period was limited and I would encourage future research to look into similar interventions over longer periods of time, focusing on the sustainability of learner leadership development within similar learner leadership

- activity systems. It would be worthwhile following an intervention that a school(s) have agreed to participate in. The study could investigate the impact that the intervention has on the community and whether it would be permanent and be able to be sustained.
- c. Due to the nature of this study of leadership, the focus and the scope of the study was on the learner leader and I was not able to focus on including the learners' teachers and their parents in the study for specific reasons. A critical area for further research could be unlocked here in that it could help advance a greater understanding how adult leaders – in their capacity as community leaders - are able to construct their objects and activities, and to investigate whether there is any difference to the learner leaders' construction. It would also be interesting to determine what socio-cultural and historical factors influence the adults' leadership practices in the community.
 - d. A longitudinal study could be carried out on a select group of individuals to track their development as leaders. It would be interesting to determine how their thinking and behaviour towards leadership develops over time. In the case of this study - as I have shown - there is evidence of significant long-term (possibly sustainable) leadership development among the learners who were part of the study.
 - e. An international comparative study could be carried out, one in which the learner leaders' activity systems, from similar disadvantaged backgrounds, could be compared. The study could focus on determining and understanding how underlying causal mechanisms, their powers and their conditions, that enable/produce learner leadership, could be different in a global setting. The study could compare how these learner leaders are able to construct their objects and activities in different environments, and what socio-cultural and historical factors influence their leadership development and practice of leadership in their communities.

9.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has served to highlight and present a summary of the significant research findings in response to the research questions presented, the theoretical frameworks that informed the research methodology and their implications for the study. I have highlighted significant characteristics that have arisen from the research study's findings and their implications to learner leadership

development. I have shared the contribution that this study could make in providing new knowledge and understanding to learner leadership. I have also identified areas for future research.

In conclusion, my study has demonstrated that when adolescents feel that they are being valued and included in the development process of leadership their willingness to engage with the process became pre-emptive. The study has revealed that when developing an understanding of the learner leaders' behaviour, using their socio-cultural and historical contexts, they become empowered to actively participate. Learner leaders demonstrated the willingness to engage with each other over tensions that arose. Learner leaders were confident to voice their feelings and opinions through the process of participation and collaboration without feeling threatened. Through this synergy an inclination for debate and dialogue was exhibited. They were willing to consider changes to their leadership mindsets that were deemed to be positive and that would provide a collaborative leadership environment.

However, the learner leaders have also demonstrated in this study that for leadership change to take place within their communities, they would need to be willing to change within. Just as with the baobab tree and the gift of life, growth and changes are seasonal and influenced by prevailing conditions, and so too do the learner leaders develop and mature cyclically into leaders who could answer the calls of society for more just and selfless leaders.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON LEARNER ABUSE

news24 Prefects: Initiation 'in boy's best interests'

2014-09-04 10:30



(Shamrock)

Jeff Wicks, **The Witness**

Pietermaritzburg - Prefects at a leading KwaZulu-Natal school who “tortured” a 14-year-old boy in an initiation ritual claim to have “acted in his best interests”.

The revelation was contained in a letter of apology to the former pupil, understood to have been penned by his attackers from [REDACTED], which The Witness has obtained.

The teen was removed from the school when his parents found evidence of **third-degree burns from a steam iron** on his body.

His traumatic ordeal peaked when he was branded with the iron, but was preceded by a three-month spate of physical and emotional abuse, the victim and his mother charge.

'Grotesque traditions'

The letter was signed by four matric boys who were implicated in the abuse scandal which rocked the Pietermaritzburg school fraternity.

Other initiation rituals included daily beatings, a “Volstruis”, during which they were stripped of their clothes and forced to run down a passage while they were struck by older boys, and boys being stripped while their seniors took photographs of them.

In the letter, the boys described the entrenched initiation as “grotesque”.

“We would like to formally apologise to you for the trauma we have caused you and your family through the grotesque traditions we encouraged you to take part in during you time at [REDACTED].”

“We trust that with the emotional strength that you possess you will, in time, be able to overcome the trauma that we have caused,” they wrote.

The boys, who also face criminal prosecution, said that the fallout had made them realise that their actions have consequences.

“Through the events that have taken place over the last two months we have realised the magnitude of the effect that our actions have had on the people around us. We have come to understand, with your assistance, that all our actions have a far greater influence on everything and everyone around us than what we could ever have imagined,” the letter reads.

'Goal of shaping you'

The boys added that they thought the initiation would prepare the boys for later life.

“We would like to reassure you the ultimate result of our actions was not our intention. We believed that we were acting in your best interests, with the goal of shaping and preparing you for the rest of your years through high school.

“We unfortunately did not foresee these events causing such a negative deviation from the path that you had already chosen to follow,” they said.

“Fortunately we can now grow to strive and aspire to be proud individuals through the countless lessons we have learnt. We hope that you can find it in your heart and grace to accept our deepest apologies,” the letter reads.

"Teachers need help with bullies" (29/03/09, Sunday Times Review, p. 7)

Teachers need help with bullies

Many don't have the skills to detect bullying and counsel perpetrators, writes **Prega Govender**

DREADING being called "a bitch" again by a classmate, a young schoolgirl begged her mother to let her stay at home this week.

The diminutive grade 5 pupil from Jinnab Park Primary in Warmbaths, Limpopo, was on the verge of becoming an emotional wreck after she was subjected to a barrage of insults by a vicious class bully.

A Free State schoolgirl, who experienced a similar form of bullying, opted for home-schooling at the beginning of this year after suffering months of humiliation at the hands of another pupil last year.

The two are among thousands of pupils who have fallen victim to bullying.

Psychologists agree that school-yard bullying is on the increase, and they maintain that many teachers don't have the necessary skills to detect bullying or to counsel bullies.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many schools don't have the services of counsellors to handle bullies.

According to Childline, which receives reports of bullying at schools almost on a daily basis, some teachers are failing to monitor pupils on school playgrounds during lunch breaks, which is when most of the bullying occurs.

The dilemma facing most schools and parents is how to handle school bullies.

Contrary to popular opinion, that bullies should be severely punished, both Childline and psychologists this week agreed that bullies were "crying out for

How schools and parents should handle it

Childline's national director Joan van Niekerk, University of the Witwatersrand psychologist Malose Langa and Professor Corene de Wet from the University of the Free State offered this advice:

- React calmly and firmly. Do not reinforce negative behaviour by shouting at them.
- Make them aware that there are consequences to their actions.
- Avoid administering corporal punishment or punishing them with menial physical labour and detention; and
- Offer them counselling and get them involved in group work so that they can have positive role models to emulate.

help" and needed to be treated with kid gloves.

Childline's national coordinator Joan van Niekerk said school authorities often neglected bullies when the issue of bullying was addressed.

"When we deal with bullying, we think of support and

treatment for the victim, when in actual fact it is the bully who needs most help.

"Fustling them in an extreme or physically violent way only reinforces the behaviour we want to eliminate. Bullying is a real cry for help and one has to respond in a positive way."

In the UK and US, the term "bullycide" has been coined to describe suicides sparked by bullying at schools. Between 1994 and 2005, 75 "bullycides" were recorded in the UK.

Van Niekerk said "sanctioned bullying", where authorities turn a blind eye, takes place mainly on the sports fields.

"In rugby, for example, there are acts of violence by one child against another, sometimes in the name of tackling. We need to also look at this form of bullying," she said.

One of the most infamous forms of bullying is cyber-bullying, perpetrated mostly by girls. This involves bullies circulating nasty SMSes on their cellphones about a specific girl.

"Girls bully with their tongues. We come across a lot of bullying from girls," said Van Niekerk.

She echoed comments from psychologists that teachers were "not sure" how to handle bullies — a situation she described as "very concerning".

"You do see situations in which bullying goes unchecked simply because there is no sense or how it should be handled," she said.

Childline has also received reports of a disturbing trend



OUT OF HAND: Psychologists point to an increase in bullying in schools and claim that the behaviour often goes unchecked

Picture: GALLO

among teachers — to encourage children to beat up other children.

Educational psychologist Gloria Marsay blamed the violence shown on television and movies for the upsurge of bullying in schools.

"We expose our children to this violence and they believe it's normal. If we, as a society, begin to look at what our children are exposed to in the mass media, we would be able to contain this [bullying]."

Marsay conducts workshops based on the theme "creating safe spaces for healing in classrooms". The aim is to help

bully-Prankle bullies.

Teachers don't have enough personnel for professional support, said Malose.

She said teachers should give children, a safe and supportive space in which to discuss issues affecting them.

Malose Langa, a psychologist based at the University of the Witwatersrand, said that while being engaged in assessment, bullying, children were prone to emotional bullying.

Langa is conducting research among boys at four Gauteng schools — two in Alexandra and two in Sandton — about what it means to be a

bully. He has given 15 boys from grades 5 to 12 the opportunity to take photos of everyday happenings. He analyses their photos, in an attempt to ascertain why they post a particular photograph.

Quite often the boys mention the 'zulu sewan' (boys who are defiant and do not obey school rules). If a boy is called a 'zulu', it means he must stab someone.

He said more than 100 boys admitted they were bullied when they moved from primary to high school.

One of the respondents said that boys don't readily spread

rumours. If boys have a problem, they deal with it now and get it over and done with. They fight.

Langa said, "Bullying is a symptom of an underlying emotional problem, instead of sitting down with the child, we see the child as a problem."

Some kids also realise that the only way to stop being bullied is to become a bully. It's a defence mechanism.

He said teachers should counsel bullies rather than report them to principals.

Langa expressed concern over the apathy displayed by some teachers, who did not

Telltale signs displayed by the victims

- Common signs include:
- A reluctance or refusal to go to school because he or she fears being bullied again;
 - A child who returns home from school bruised, and with tattered or torn clothes. Children often tell their parents nothing happened because they think that if they speak out, they will be only be bullied again;
 - A child becoming withdrawn or spending lots of time on his/her own;
 - A child who doesn't want to socialise with his/her peers;
 - Poor grades at school;
 - A child returning home with torn books. Bullies sometimes don't just hurt children but also try to get them into trouble by damaging their books; and
 - A child who is generally depressed or unhappy.

even bother to intervene during playground brawls.

But pupils are not the only ones to be bullied at schools, according to recent research conducted by Professor Corene de Wet from the University of the Free State.

De Wet, who interviewed 10 teachers (three men and seven women), found that they were often bullied by their principals.

Referring to her principal, one respondent said: "He doesn't like you, he'll target you. He is persistent. It doesn't matter how hard you try, he'll continue prying until he finds fault with you."

Commenting on bullying among pupils, De Wet said she favoured a system of restorative justice, where both the bully and the victim spoke openly to each other.

"The bully must understand that what he has done is not okay. Parents often disavow their bullying children by saying, 'Boys will be boys.' This is a huge problem."

She said it was important for parents, whose children were being victimised by bullies, to listen to their children.

"It sounds terrible but I think sometimes it's okay to tell your child that he or she doesn't have to go to school today," said De Wet.

— govender@penguin.co.za

is the mum of a boy who was apparently made to give up his possessions.

SCHOOL BULLY TERROR!

Boy had his shoes, phone and jacket taken

By THABO MONAMA

WHEN a 12-year-old boy was caught with a breadknife in his school bag, his mother became suspicious.

Her son and his cousin weren't naughty boys and she wanted to know what was going on.

"The boys confessed that they were being bullied at school and they needed to protect themselves," said [redacted] (36) from Diepkloof zone 4, Soweto.

"I didn't know that my son and his cousin were under threat until I got a letter from school." The letter said [redacted]'s son had been suspended from school because of the knife. She spoke to the kids and they told her that big boys who call themselves Aboskthotheni were taking their possessions, including expensive shoes.

"The older boys said only they are entitled to wear expensive labels," said [redacted].

She went to [redacted] Primary on Monday for a meeting and was shown the knife confiscated from her son.

The parents heard that the boys will have to clean the school yard every day after school until the end of the year as punishment.

[redacted] said: "My son lost his pens and books and I thought it was normal. But then he also lost his phone, a pair of shoes and a jacket.

"He never told us his things were taken from him by force. I'm concerned that the boys who are terrorising our children were not punished."


Gauteng education spokesman Charles Phahlane said: "The principal confiscated knives from the boys. Their parents were called to the school.

"The boys were found guilty in a disciplinary hearing and will have to sweep floors and clean toilets as part of their punishment.

"The department will address bullying at the school."

Some of the expensive shoes that older boys allegedly won't allow the younger boys to wear.

Photos by Thabo Monama



Grocott's Mail

[NEWS](#) | [EDUCATION](#)

Thu, 9 Jan, 2014

Proud matric moments at Ntsika

Malibongwe Dayimani

A proud Ntsika Senior School principal Madeleine Schoeman could not contain her excitement when speaking to *Grocott's Mail* about the achievements of the class of 2013.

"This is the best group we've had in many years," said the former Victoria Girls High principal who took over the reigns at Ntsika in 2011.

The school achieved a pass rate of 62%, with seven Bachelor passes and fifteen Diploma passes. This is a serious overhaul compared to the 2011 and 2012 results of 46,3% and 28,8 % respectively.

At the top of the class of 2013 is Nosibabalo Tetani from Extension 9 with a Bachelor pass scoring over 70% in five subjects.

Tetani has been accepted at Rhodes University for an extended course in BA Journalism and Media studies.

Tetani shared her journey with us and what became clear is that it wasn't smooth sailing for her. She said it was a challenge having to share a room at home, as it meant that she did not have a conducive study space.

"I managed to make things work and my cousin who was also doing Matric was very supportive, so she was my study partner at home," she said.

Tetani also said transport was a big issue during her evening classes, as Ntsika is situated in Extension 7 and she lives in Extension 9.

Shoeman attributed the success of the school to the hard work of the learners and teachers alike and other stakeholders such as Rhodes University.

In a statement to the press she said, "These are the achievements of so many of the learners, especially those who did not think twice about sacrificing evenings, weekends and holidays to study at school. They used every opportunity that came their way, such as initiatives by Rhodes University staff, the Mobile Science lab, lessons offered by subject advisors of the District Office, the Dimension Data e-learning machines, extra lessons at school, and many, many past

exam papers. These learners' success bears testimony to the efforts of the wider Grahamstown community and the commitment of many, many people."

APPENDIX C - PERMISSION GRANTED FROM HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Tel: +27 (0) 46 603 8383
Fax: +27 (0) 46 622 8028
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
E-mail: h.vandermescht@ru.ac.za

12 July 2012

Ian Knott-Craig
Kingswood College
Grahamstown

Dear Ian

Research proposal

I am happy to inform you that the Education Faculty Higher Degrees Committee has approved your research proposal. Well done! It has been a long hard road but I think the product benefited from the numerous revisions, which will help to make the research journey much less onerous.

The committee raised a few issues of a minor nature, which we will look at soon.

Strength for the journey that lies before you!

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hennie van der Mescht', with a horizontal line underneath.

(Prof) Hennie van der Mescht
(Coordinator and Supervisor)

APPENDIX D – EXAMPLES OF LEARNERS' MOTIVATIONAL LETTERS

Dear Sir

I ~~personally~~ personally chose to be part of this group for many reasons. At first I didn't know what the point of me being here, because I was kinda forced to be here. Now as time goes I know the real point of me being part of this group and it is very exciting to know that now. As always at first I now love its going to be being here but I now know that I judged a book by its cover. I should first start by thanking you Sir for actually taking your time and actually be here with us. To me that means a lot. The main point of me being here is because I ~~want to become a leader~~ and by doing that I need to grow and do new things with people. I really like ~~working as a group~~ because being in a group and actually ~~learning to one another~~, you actually ~~achieve~~ ~~more~~. Me as a person I personally ~~love~~ like writing in a group of people. But stepping to the programme I ~~started to realize~~ that its very important to work with people and learning to them you'll learn great things. Working with people you actually achieve more. I now say I'm looking forward and actually being part of this programme and I look forward to it in many means. I'm fully sure that by the end of this year I'll actually have great memories throughout.

Dear: Ian

The reason why do i want from your class, is that i want to be a great leader and i want to leander more about a leadership and to learn about ~~Team work~~ to be a great leader to care and communication to you team and work hard to you team to take more in you team mgdo.

Why i want to do in you class is to leader more on other people guidance to learn more about skills that are guid me to be what i want to be. is to give other people second chances. Why i want to do in you class to be a great leadership is do care about other people and give them guidance and lead them to do the right thing.

The Reason why i want to be a great leadership is to be a great leader does not care who you are and where do you come from are a rich or poor. to be a great leadership you must lead first not last cause if you lead last you want be a great leader. A great leader all way fight until his/her is power less.

Yours sincerely

Dear Mr

The minute I heard we must write a letter of motivation. I just became so excited because I knew the reason why I joined this Youth leadership group. The main reason why I'm here is firstly gain knowledge I'm here to learn of how to work as a group of people and work written to everyone's. I want to become a leader and by becoming a leader I need to go through a certain stage in my life and I'm willing to be here throughout the year, and surely by the end of this year I will stand up and say I've learnt a lot of things but not least thank you very much Mr for being here with us for working this opportunity and teach us new things, and hopefully we gain something out of it.

Your faithfully

Why am I part of this course

My name is [REDACTED], I am 19 years of age and I am currently doing grade 10 here in Ntshaka Senior Secondary School. I am a disabled young and ambitious boy who also has a passion of singing and I am currently assigned as an Organiser at my church in our youth's ministrie.

When talking about my reasons of attending such course as this its simply because I wanted to grow up and be able to gain skills as a leader and have a chance to be able to lead those who are younger than me and those in the same situations as I am to be able to live a sustian and independent life.

There are many young disabled south africans out there who are being mislead or not attended to because of those issues that they occupy throughout their lives and because of this they need those who will be they role models and people to look up to.

In this course I hope to gain more skills of being a leader as its a Youth leadership course.

APPENDIX E - REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM DISTRICT DIRECTOR

13 Park Road
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140
14 July, 2012

The District Director of Education
Office of the District Director
Private bag X 1001
Corner Milner Street & St Aidens Avenue
Grahamstown
6140

Dear Mr. Fetsha

RESEARCH: RESEARCH STUDY ON THE LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I am registered as a full, part-time student at Rhodes University. I am currently studying for my doctorate degree in Education, focused in the field of Leadership and Management in Education. My student advisor is Professor Hennie van der Mescht.

The aim of my research is to investigate the development of learner leadership. In this investigation I would like to:

ascertain how and why students are able to work and interact together in a meaningful way;

determine how they will be able to build a caring, empathetic and dynamic community;

determine how the participants respond positively to servant leadership as an alternative leadership process to “command and control”.

I am requesting that you allow me to carry out this research study in three of your schools (Mary Waters Secondary School, Ntisika Secondary School and Nombulelo Secondary School) which fall under your jurisdiction as the District Director for Grahamstown. Once I have been given permission by you to go ahead I will then approach the principals of the three schools mentioned above.

Should you agree to my request and the principals have agreed, the learners will be selected randomly from learners who are willing to participate on a voluntary basis, and be willing to commit to the study for a period of two years. Each learner will write a motivational letter stating why they should be included in his study, demonstrate a willingness to participate and complete a letter of acceptance. Additional data will be collected from selected participants through a series of observations, interviews

and focus groups. As these interviews and focus groups will be audio-tape recorded, their permission will be sought and their anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. All transcripts will be proof read by the participants to ensure that the details are accurate as reported.

I believe that the data that is collected could lead to a more effective leadership process being established in your school.

I hereby make a request to undertake research in your school. Please feel free to contact my supervisor at 046-6038383 or email H.vanderMescht@ru.ac.za if you require more information.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knott-Craig

APPENDIX F - REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM SCHOOL

13 Park Road
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140
14 July, 2012

The Principal
Ntiska Secondary School
P.O. Box 8011
Siphiwo Mazwai P.O.
Grahamstown
6143

Dear Mrs Schoeman

RESEARCH: RESEARCH STUDY ON THE LEARNER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I am registered as a full, part-time student at Rhodes University. I am currently studying for my doctorate degree in Education, focused in the field of Leadership and Management in Education. My student advisor is Professor Hennie van der Mescht.

The aim of my research is to investigate the development of learner leadership. In this investigation I would like to:

- i) ascertain how and why students are able to work and interact together in a meaningful way;
- ii) determine how they will be able to build a caring, empathetic and dynamic community;
- iii) determine how the participants respond positively to servant leadership as an alternative leadership process to “command and control”.

I was hoping that you would allow me to use your school as my research site for implementing an intervention in learner leadership development. Should you agree to my request, the learners will be selected randomly from learners who are willing to participate on a voluntary basis, and be willing to commit to the study for a period of two years. Each learner will write a motivational letter stating why they should be included in his study, demonstrate a willingness to participate and complete a letter of acceptance. Additional data will be collected from selected participants through a series of

observations, interviews and focus groups. As these interviews and focus groups will be audio-tape recorded, their permission will be sought and their anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. All transcripts will be proof read by the participants to ensure that the details are accurate as reported.

I believe that the data that is collected could lead to a more effective leadership process being established in your school.

I hereby make a request to undertake research in your school. Please feel free to contact my supervisor at 046-6038383 or email H.vanderMescht@ru.ac.za if you require more information.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knott-Craig

APPENDIX G - PARENTAL REQUEST FOR CONSENT

13 Park Road
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140
14 July, 2012

Dear Parent

RESEARCH: RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNER LEADERSHIP.

I am registered as a full time student at Rhodes University. I am currently studying for a Doctorate in Philosophy in Education, focusing in the field of Management and Leadership in Education. My supervisor is Professor Hennie van der Mescht.

In order to qualify for this degree, I am required to complete a thesis on a topic relating to education. I have chosen to focus on the development of learner leadership at Ntsika Secondary School. My research will be to investigate the perceptions of leadership and attitudes of the learners towards the practice of leadership, individual and at school.

The aim of my research is to investigate the development of learner leadership. In this investigation I would like to:

- i) ascertain how and why students are able to work and interact together in a meaningful way;
- ii) determine how they will be able to build a caring, empathetic and dynamic community;
- iii) determine how the participants respond positively to servant leadership as an alternative leadership process to “command and control”.

If your child participates in this research study, they will be required to:

- i) complete and return a questionnaire;
- ii) participate in an interview and a focus group with me, that will be convenient to them;
- iii) allow the interviews and focus groups to be audio-tape recorded for later transcription and use in my research thesis.

As these interviews and focus groups will be audio-tape recorded, their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout. Some of the photographs taken during the various activities undertaken

by the learners will be selected and used in the thesis but anonymity and confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

I believe that the data that is collected could lead to a more effective leadership process being established in the school.

If you are happy that your child participates in this study, will you please complete and return the consent form.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knott-Craig

APPENDIX H - PRINCIPAL'S CONSENT

NTSIKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Tel: 046 637 0401
Fax: 046 637 1221
ntsikasecondary@gmail.com



P.O. Box 8011
Siphiwo Mazwai P.O.
Grahamstown
6143

Education is the Pillar of the Nation

11 October 2012

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to inform you that IAN KNOTT-CRAIG has been given permission to conduct his research towards his PhD at Ntsika Secondary School. Please ensure that he observe all ethical considerations as laid out by his research institute, Rhodes University. He may use photographs of the school but please ensure the confidentiality of the research participants in use of selected extracts and photographs. Letters of permission - for learners to participate - must be received from the parents of the research parents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'MSchoeman'.

Madeleine Schoeman
PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX I - DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S CONSENT



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Private Bag X 1001, Corner Milner Street & St Aidans Avenue; Grahamstown; 6140.
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. Website: www.ecdoe.gov.co.za

Enquiries: A.T FETSHA

Tel.: (046) 603 3300

Fax: (040) 603 3287

TO: IAN KNOTCRAIG
FROM: DISTRICT DIRECTOR: GRAHAMSTOWN
DATE: 13 OCTOBER 2012
RE: PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH AT NTSIKA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Dear Mr. Ian Knott-Craig

1. You are hereby granted permission to do research at Ntsika
2. Senior School as per your request.
3. For any further logistical arrangements in doing research please contact the school principal Mrs. Schoeman.
4. I trust that you will observe ethical considerations that neither the school nor the department is fit disadvantage because of the research; instead this should be for the growth and development of all concerned.

Best wishes in your research.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR GRAHAMSTOWN

A.T FETSRA

APPENDIX J - PARENTAL/STUDENT CONSENT FORMS

Consent Form

I, _____, hereby agree to the participation of my child in the doctoral research study with Ian Knott-Craig. I understand that he will investigate the practise and perceptions of leadership. I understand that the investigation will lead to an intervention where the attitudes and practises of leadership will be challenged by means of a number of activities and group work activities.

I grant you permission to use any written, verbal reports and to publish suitable photographs in your thesis of my child with the proviso that their names are kept confidential.

I hereby grant my child _____ permission to participate in the study.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX K – EXAMPLES OF LEARNERS’ COLLAGES

LEARNER 1

I am a small boy



My first child

I am with my family



I am a leader



That my car



I am with my wife



That's my dream

One day I will sit like that with my wife



I wish on day I will have my on cars



My first born in life



→ The reason I paste this picture of an animal is that my mother says that (sisilwanyaha sakokwaba)



LEARNER 2

Who I am

Me

Met 'n bietjie hulp kan 'n glorieryke toekoms meer as net 'n droom word.

Met 'n bietjie hulp kan 'n glorieryke toekoms meer as net 'n droom word.

Rewards

future me

Victories At last

As a fully Professional leader who's influential along in good ways

As an old family man who's helpfull to his grandson