The media, Equal Education and school learners: an investigation of the possibility of 'political listening' in the South African education crisis

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"I wish our citizens would take to the streets about education in the same way they did about service-delivery and E-tolls. Unfortunately, we haven't seen that and all we see is NGOs like Equal Education organising their learners and parents to do that. We need regular people, with regular jobs, living in regular places to take to the streets and say: "We are not going to deal with schools with no toilets anymore, that's just not good enough". We need more anger." – Victoria John, education journalist at the *Mail & Guardian.*

Abstract

This study sets out to investigate democratic participation in South Africa and the role that media play and can potentially play within this context. It considers a social movement, as one way in which citizens can organise themselves and make their voices heard to improve their chances of making a meaningful contribution to democracy. It employs Susan Bickford's theory of 'political listening', which offers a potential solution to the lack of political representativeness and inclusiveness, by focusing on the way citizens relate to each other through speaking, listening and dialogue. This study examines whether the interaction between learners and the social movement Equal Education could be considered 'political listening', and the current and possible role of the media within this context of participation. The study also attempts to develop and make a contribution to the language of description for the theory of political listening in order to map it onto the data.

Using evidence or data gathered through observation of Equal Education's youth group meetings with learners and in-depth interviews with learners, youth group facilitators, Equal Education staff members and journalists, this study shows how the interaction amongst learners and between Equal Education and learners could be considered political listening and how the social movement works as a democratic project which offers learners an opportunity to exercise their citizenship. Furthermore, it also details the current role of the media and possible role of the media as perceived by Equal Education, learners and by journalists who report on Equal Education's activities. The study does not make conclusive claims about whether 'political listening' occurs between Equal Education and learners and the media because the study is exploratory in nature and involves a lot of trial and error when it comes to applying the theory of political listening to interview and textual data, which is a communication context that the theory is only beginning to chart.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Background and context

1.1. Introduction

This study seeks to investigate the interaction that takes place between Equal Education and learners in the struggle for equality in basic education in post-apartheid South Africa and whether that interaction could be considered 'political listening' in that it operates in such a way as to allow young people who are seriously disadvantaged by the public education system to nevertheless speak out and act as citizens. The situation between Equal Education and learners will be treated as a case study or an example of citizen participation in democratic processes in highly unequal social circumstances. By looking at the news coverage of the social movement in *The Argus* and *The Cape Times,* and by discussing the relationship between EE and the media with both members of EE and journalists, the study will also consider the role of the news media within a context in which it is vital that the national government address the severe inequities of the education system. Susan Bickford's (1996) theory of 'political listening', which details how citizens could interact with one another to make politics more representative, will be used to make sense of the interaction between learners and their peers, between Equal Education and learners, and the current and possible role of the media within this context of burgeoning citizen participation in the face of government failure to rectify the legacy of apartheid-style education.

This initial chapter will discuss the social context and background within which the research problem is located. This information is necessary to understand the research problem thoroughly and the nature of the environment in which the study has been conducted. It will start by discussing democratic participation in South Africa and the formation of social movements, which is one of the ways in which citizens can organise themselves to improve their chances of participating in democratic processes. Equal Education's activities and how it operates will also be detailed to give readers the contextual background to this particular social movement. Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the possible roles of the media in the context of citizen participation in democratic processes.

1.2. Democratic participation in South Africa

Patrick Heller (2009) argues that the quality of democracy is not dependent on formal processes, such as voting, but it is determined by the extent to which citizens, especially those who are marginalised, have the capacity to participate in public life. Citizen participation is only possible when there is a strong civil society which can keep those who hold positions of power accountable (Habib, 2005; Habib, 2013). A weak civil society, on the other hand, does not provide spaces in which citizens can effectively participate in political life, which in turn weakens political processes and public debate. A weak civil society also robs democratic institutions of their legitimacy, which are dependent on their accountability to the public (Habib, 2013).

It is important to distinguish between the status of citizenship and the practice of citizenship because representative democracy in the developing world is often confused with effective citizenship (Heller, 2009). By 'status of citizenship', Heller refers to the guarantee of the basic structures of electoral democracy and basic rights, free will, freedom of association and a vote. The practice of citizenship on the other hand is when citizens can participate in decision-making processes about issues that affect them and public policy issues. Heller (2012) argues that South Africa has a high degree of representative electoral democracy but a low citizen participation rate in that democracy. This democracy would only be strengthened by citizens' ability to practice citizenship and to participate in both the daily governance issues and democratic processes in a manner that elicits real consequences (Wasserman, 2013). Although the status of citizenship is guaranteed in South Africa – in the sense that all citizens are guaranteed all rights, can vote and electoral democracy is guaranteed – the practice of citizenship is not (Heller, 2009). Ordinary citizens find it difficult to engage with the state in a manner that translates into having an effect on decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives. Examples of this would be the building of RDP houses for the poor in South Africa. The owners of these houses are not consulted on how many rooms or shape the house will take. It's all decided by a senior manager and implemented without any input from ordinary citizens. It is this lack of citizen consultation and input that, as Friedman (2011) has argued, result in many of the so-called service-delivery protests which are protests against unwanted services.

Habib (2013) explains that a viable democratic system does not yet exist in South Africa. Electoral democracy has been a single-party race since the first democratic elections in 1994. The transition to democracy has also seen the previously strong civil society organisations, such as the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and Community Policing Forum (CPF), dismantled, some by absorption into the ruling party and others caving under pressure from the ruling African National Congress "leaving a vacuum of authority" (Glaser, 1997:7). Some of the citizens who were members of these civil society organisations were deployed into government positions by the ruling party. Those who question government decisions and attempt to hold government accountable are often seen as representing opposition parties rather than as claim-making citizens. As a result, state and civil society relations have become characterised by "patronage and populism" with very little success in holding government to account (Heller, 2009:126). The African National Congress (ANC), the party which carries the legacy of the struggle for liberation, has dominated every election with overwhelming support from the majority, made up of poor South Africans, leaving other parties scrambling over the minority middle-class votes.

There is a "bifurcation of civil society" in South Africa between those who are organised, into labour movements, non-governmental organisations and social movements, and those who are not (Heller, 2009:144). Citizens who are affiliated to organised groups have a better chance of engaging the state than citizens who are not organised. The most notable example of superior engagement with the state was the Treatment Action Campaign in its fight for the mass distribution of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) (Robins, 2006). The unorganised citizens are usually the poor rural and township dwellers. For these unorganised members of civil society there are few points of contact between them and the state and there is a lack of a set procedure that they can follow in order to engage the state (Heller, 2012). With a narrow possibility for voice or intervention they "have increasingly resorted to contentious action, including widespread 'services protest' that have become South Africa's most challenging political problem" (Heller, 2012:658).

For the poor and mostly uneducated rural and township dwellers civic participation not only means mastery of the English language but also learning bureaucratic language and procedures. Robins et al. (2008) argue that language used for participation plays a deciding role in formal

democratic institutions or state-provided spaces. The linguistic codes and tools that are used to communicate in these spaces are inaccessible to those who have no engagement experience and who are not trained to take part in 'disciplined' engagement. Those who are not familiar with this mode of engagement are often regarded as "incoherent and unruly" (Robins et al., 2008:1082). One option that might guarantee effective engagement or get their voices heard is through representation by 'educated' members of their societies who can understand the bureaucratic language required. These elite citizens act as the go-between for both the state and its poor citizens. They relay democratic messages from their poor communities to the state and from the state to these communities. However, in emerging democracies the elite citizens who are part of civil society can also play a repressive role. Robins et al. (2008:1083) argue that civil society in Third World countries is made up of a group of elite, middle-class citizens whose views masquerade as the views of all citizens.

The transformation in South Africa to democracy has also transformed "an ostensibly homogenous, progressive, anti-apartheid civil society into one composed of at least three distinct blocs, non-governmental organisations, survivalist agencies and social movements" (Habib, 2013:676). Non-governmental organisations are single cause and/or charity organisations acting on behalf of, or in solidarity with, "the poor and disadvantaged, and for those who are thought to be, and perhaps are, unable to speak for themselves, or at least to whose voices those in power do not listen" (Morrow, 2004:327). Examples of NGOs are Amnesty International, which is a human rights organisation, and the East Cape Land Committee, which deals with issues of land. Survivalist agencies are informal, community-based networks and agencies "that enable poor and marginalized communities to simply survive the daily ravages of neoliberalism" (Habib, 2013:682). An example of survivalist agencies are the Unemployed People's Movement of Grahamstown and the Homeless Peoples Federation which fight for the rights and survival of the jobless and homeless. Ballard et al (2005:617) define social movements as "politically and or socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located" (see Section 1.4 for details). Examples of social movement are the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which deals with issues relating to the distribution of antiretroviral drugs and support for those infected with HIV and AIDS, and Abahlali baseMjondolo, which represents the

interest of shack-dwellers in South Africa. Habib (2013:683) argues that what sets NGOs and social movements apart from survivalist agencies is that "both of these types of organizations are more formal community-based structures that have a distinct leadership and membership, often supported by a middle-class activist base".

These segments of civil society have the potential to force government to be accountable to its citizens or to at least point out the lack of accountability. Glaser (1997) argues that the importance of such civil society organisations or formations is not based on the number of constituents each organisation represents but the issues they campaign for, since civil society is plural in nature. Some of these social movements have already started empowering citizens to challenge the status quo through grassroots uprisings that are referred to as 'service delivery protests' in South Africa.

Tapscott (2010) argues that in developing states with a weak civil society, like South Africa, any attempt by citizens to mobilise is seen as a threat to elected politicians and the status quo. Although the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa has made the notion of participation a defining feature of governance, it sometimes appears to view itself as being the sole representative of popular struggle and voice in the country. In some cases, attempts to represent other aspirations through formal institutions are seen as a political challenge from opponents rather than legitimate demands by citizens and they do not yield any helpful response (Tapscott, 2010; Della Porta and Diani, 1999). Faced with the challenge of not being heard citizens are often forced to seek other ways of raising their grievances. Social movements are one way in which citizens can organise themselves to interact with those who hold power in South Africa (Tapscott, 2010). These social movements "are not only a critical countervailing force to oligarchical tendencies of political parties, but can also raise, define and politicise issues that political society is often insensitive to" (Heller, 2009:133).

1.3. Social movements

Social movements have become a significant part of the political sphere in post-apartheid South African society. Although these collectives are prevalent in many societies, social movement scholars have many definitions of what constitute these organisations. Most of these definitions

cover many of the characteristics of social movements. Here I will only focus on the two that are cited the most in explaining the social movements, which are Tarrow (1994) and Ballard et al. (2005).

Tarrow (1994:4) identifies four characteristics that define a social movement. These are collective challenge, common purpose, solidarity and sustained interaction. He defines a social movement as a group of people with common purposes and solidarity, who mount a collective challenge against elites and those who are in power, through sustained interaction. Ballard et al (2005:617) define social movements as "politically and or socially directed collectives, often involving multiple organisations and networks, focused on changing one or more elements of the social, political and economic system within which they are located". Most of these movements exist within civil society, where they represent members of the public who are unable to represent themselves against those who hold power. These movements are not political parties or trade unions although their members could also be members of political parties and trade unions. Such collectives could be made up of members who do not necessarily share the same geographical location or even the same economic standing, but who do share a common cause. As such, an organisation could have members scattered all over the world (Ballard et al, 2005:617).

Social movements occupy an important space in South Africa's history. They played a significant role in mobilising people in townships when the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned by the apartheid government (Madlingozi, 2007). The most prominent of these organisations was the United Democratic Front (UDF), which encompassed "a coalition of civic associations, student organisations and congresses, women's groups, trade unions, church societies, sports clubs, and a multitude of organisations" (Madlingozi, 2007:82). Most of the organisations that made up the UDF were community organisations that mobilised their members locally. The formation of the UDF was important for linking all the various struggles against apartheid and directing these struggles toward the apartheid government as a single cohesive unit. In its 1983 inaugural conference, the UDF brought together 565 organisations and 1.65-million members. This structure allowed for grassroots voices to be heard at a level that could challenge and influence government decisions (Madlingozi, 2007:83).

Social movements use media to generate more support for their struggles. Tapscott (2010) argues that the success of movements in framing their struggles in the media and for the public depends on their knowledge of the media industry and its processes. He explains that movements that are experienced in dealing with the media "plan events that meet journalistic standards of newsworthiness, write press releases, call reporters, and craft their 'sound bites' for the media" (Oliver and Myers 1999:39 cited in Tapscott, 2010:272). This allows journalists to find ready-made news items crafted according to their journalistic standards, although it often means publishing press releases rather than doing their own reporting on the issues.

Della Porta and Diani (1999) argue that the ultimate goal of a social movement is not only to sway public opinion in favour of its struggles, but to win support from those responsible for implementing policy, and by extension having an influence on policy. Some of these movements have been more successful than others in capturing the attention of or pressurising institutions that are responsible for implementing laws and policies. These movements are also instrumental in appealing against government decisions on behalf of civil society. In their constant interaction with government they represent themselves as "institutions of democracy from below" (Roth, 1994 cited in Della Porta and Diani, 1999:237).

Ballard et al (2005:627) reject the view that social movements are "spontaneous grassroots uprisings of the poor" but argue that they are a result of a "sufficient base of material and human resources, solidarity networks and often the external interventions of prominent personalities". These prominent people help attract donors who allocate funds for court cases and other expenses (Ballard et al, 2005:625; McKinley, 2004). However, Pointer (2004:273) argues that although many of these prominent people and 'activist intellectuals' have served as publicists for these movements, they are sometimes guilty of romanticising such movements while failing to articulate the feelings of other members of the organisation who do not make it into the public eye.

Social movements have the potential to challenge the state's hegemony but their success partly depends on the number of people they are able to mobilise (Thompson and Tapscott, 2010). Most of these movements do not necessarily challenge the political order but instead their struggle is about changing the position of their members within that social order. This usually

7

takes the form of helping citizens to stake a claim on certain rights that come with being a citizen, such as the right to land and housing. Social movements that have adopted this role operate as "new forms of citizen engagement with the state" (Thompson and Tapscott, 2010:20). Thompson and Tapscott, (2010) argue that in Third World countries social movements have surpassed political institutions as institutions of choice for the attainment of democratic rights for citizens, particularly for the poor and marginalised in society. This is one of the distinguishing features of the new or post-apartheid social movements.

1.3.1. Post-apartheid or new social movements in South Africa

The most common characteristic of the post-apartheid social movements is that they emerged after the first democratic elections in South Africa (Ballard et al, 2005:621). This resurgence of social movements is a result of the fact that during apartheid the political arena was dominated by anti-government movements and organisations which became redundant when the apartheid regime was ousted. Even the smallest organisations that represented the views of ordinary South Africans during the apartheid period suffered the same fate. This was caused by a change in the relations between the state and civil society. These relations changed from being adversarial to collaborative and development-focused, at least in the first few years of democracy. As a result of this change in relations, movements and organisations that were formed during the apartheid period were "absorbed into the post-apartheid government, thus leaving opponents of the government without a 'voice' or mechanism to organise opposition" (Ballard et al, 2005:622). This paved the way for the creation of new forms of collectives.

Furthermore, unlike their predecessors which were all fighting the apartheid regime these new collectives are not united in terms of the causes that they are fighting against (Ballard et al, 2005:623). The issues that these movements represent are diverse; they include gender equality, land redistribution, housing, eviction, education issues, privatisation, the environment, labour issues, lack of service and delivery of unwanted services. Ballard et al. (2005) argue that most of these organisations draw from class-based ideologies and politics inscribed on the issues they are against. These include anti-Growth, Employment and Redistribution program (GEAR), anti-

globalisation, anti-market, anti-eviction, anti-privatisation of water, pro-transparency in allocations of land and housing, and so forth.

Post-apartheid social movements vary according to their geographic locations (Ballard et al, 2005:624). Most of these movements start with a local issue and then build across geographic scales (Ballard, 2005:624). For example, the Anti-Eviction Campaign is based in Protea South (in Soweto) where it has mobilised many of the informal settlement dwellers. Although many of these organisations start off as local initiatives, they create links and networks with other movements nationally and internationally. In certain cases, this support from other locations with similar problems leads to the creation of other branches of the same organisation and membership to multiple organisations. Some of these organisations choose not register themselves and therefore remain informal (Ballard et al, 2005:625). Thompson and Tapscott (2010:4) argue that how social movements go about mobilising membership is a differentiating factor between new and apartheid-era movements. The post-apartheid social movements recruit their members locally. These movements are not necessarily part of any bigger or umbrella organisation that unifies their struggles into a collective. The most common characteristic of these members is that they are only active in their communities without any other presence or participation in national issues.

Ballard et al (2005:625) outline a typology of post-apartheid social movements based on what the movements are opposing, the identity of people they represent, the political context in which these movements operate, their relation with the state and their role in democracy. First, poverty and inequality continue to spiral out of control as South Africa's democracy takes hold. The results of the 2011 census have shown that the inequality remains stark 19 years into democracy (De Wet, 2012). Many are losing their jobs whilst basic services such as water and electricity are privatised, leaving those who are unemployed unable to pay for such. Movements that were born out of these conditions often fight against eviction, homelessness and privatisation (Ballard et al, 2005:626). Bebbington (2007) argues that these movements are against capital accumulation that occurs through exploitation and dispossession. These movements argue that capital accumulation does not reduce poverty but worsens it, while also degrading the environment. Thompson and Tapscott (2010:12) point out that this deprivation leads communities into creating networks and developing methods of engaging with those in power to change their "material, social and

political circumstances". Engaging with power is seen as the only way poor people can change their circumstances, which often leads many of these movements to resort to protest when their demands are not met.

Second, identity plays an important role in the formation of post-apartheid movements. Ballard et al. (2005) argue that economic migrants and refugees are often marginalised both economically and socially. Economically in the sense that they have to go through many hoops to be considered for employment and other benefits that citizens of the host country don't have to go through. Socially, xenophobia remains a problem in South Africa. An example of a social movement that represent refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa is People Against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty (PASSOP), which represents the interests of refugees and asylum seekers in the Cape Town area.

Third, the post-apartheid social movements are products of South Africa's democracy which guarantees these movements' rights (Ballard et al, 2005:628). The South African constitution provides the possibility for civil society to voice their opinions about governance and their rights. Mobilisation by these movements is aimed at achieving actual citizenship, which might result in material gain (Thompson and Tapscott, 2010:2). The constitutional guarantee of these rights allows for movements to challenge the government, which would not have been possible under the previous regime. The relationship between the state and social movements depends on the issue in question.

The fourth characteristic of the new social movements is that the relationship between the new social movements and the state can be both collaborative and adversarial depending on what is being contested (Ballard et al, 2005:629). Some of these movements radically challenge the political economy and the state while others are more willing to work within the current system. Many of the ones that collaborate with the state run the risk of being co-opted, which is the fate that many apartheid-era movements suffered when the African National Congress (ANC) came to power.

Fifth, social movements have the potential to strengthen democracy in South Africa (Ballard et al, 2005:630). Many of the post-apartheid social movements operate within the new status quo. These do not necessarily challenge the status quo but they are committed to the constitution.

These movements hold government accountable for what it promised and force it to broaden the beneficiaries of government services. Furthermore, a culture of democracy exists within these organisations. In their research into the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign, Desai and Pithouse (2004:261) attended the organisation meetings and observed that "at these meetings everyone can speak, everyone is obliged to listen, and decisions are taken by a show of hands". People spoke openly within the organisation and practice their citizenship within these organisations.

1.4. Equal Education

Equal Education (EE) is one example of the post-apartheid or new social movements that were born out of the newly-found democracy in South Africa. Learners play a fundamental role in the way that EE works. The social movement's activities and campaigns are based on what the learners themselves raise as issues and challenges that they encounter in their schools. The shape that a campaign will take is also based on learners' experiences and perceptions of their circumstances. Continuous engagement with the constituency it represents (learners) ensures that it remains relevant and connected as a social movement. It employs a range of strategies and approaches depending on the circumstances and its objectives around those circumstances. This social movement is considered to be one of the most successful ones in that it has not only challenged government but it has also forced government to address education problems. EE's success also extends into the media attention and coverage it receives from South Africa's mainstream newspapers. Not only do journalists allow EE to set the agenda on education coverage, they also often give over space within their pages to allow EE representatives to write opinion and commentary on the education situation.

The movement's headquarters are in Khayelitsha, a township just outside of Cape Town, with a regional office in Johannesburg and a network of members across South Africa. It collaborates with its sister organisation, Equal Education Law Centre when working on cases that end up in court. It helps learners deal with issues and problems they face throughout their basic education schooling. Unlike most social movements, EE does not focus on a single cause, instead it deals

with issues such as equality in education, learners being expelled, textbook delivery, teachers who do not teach and school infrastructure amongst others.

It was founded in 2008 by members of the Treatment Action Campaign (Equal Education, 2013). It started with research on the condition of school infrastructure across schools in the Western Cape. This research revealed the failure of the current government to equalise infrastructure between schools that during the apartheid era were formally reserved for white learners and those that were meant for their black counterparts. EE started campaigns to raise money for building libraries and repairing windows, to encourage learners to go to school on time and to ensure textbooks were available in time for the re-opening of schools in January (Equal Education, 2013).

On its website and Facebook page, Equal Education claims to be "a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members working for quality and equality in South African education, through analysis and activism" (Equal Education, 2013). This organisation enjoys an overwhelming platform for publishing its ideas in both mainstream national and regional newspapers. It has a well-managed website and active Facebook, Twitter and Mxit accounts. Its activities include organising marches with pupils, parents and teachers and taking the Department of Basic Education to court over lack of government regulation on Minimum Norms and Standards for Schools, textbooks and the lack of infrastructure conducive for learning (Equal Education, 2013). It has also taken legal action against government for failing to provide learners with better schooling facilities.

Equal Education consists of eight units:

- A Secretariat

- A Policy, Communication & Research Department

- A Community Department

- A Youth Department

- A Fundraising Department

- Campaigns, Camps and Projects

- Operations & Finance

- An Administration & Logistics Department (Equal Education, 2013).

Learners from township and rural schools make up the majority of EE's membership. They are directly affected by inequality in South Africa's education system and the social movement plays a supportive role to these learners (Equal Education Annual report, 2010 & 2011). These learners are referred to by EE staff as "equalisers" and they are organised into Youth Groups. These groups each meet once a week a week between Tuesday and Friday to discuss "current affairs and social issues affecting youth in South Africa" (Equal Education Annual Report, 2011:08). This is also a space where learners plan campaigns that they undertake in their schools and in support of other learners in their respective schools. They (learners) also use this space to learn about the causes and effects of educational inequality in South Africa. The Youth Groups also offer learners an opportunity to develop their leadership skills through leadership training with Youth Group leaders. This includes weekly activities such as meetings, and occasional camps and outings (Equal Education Annual Report, 2010 & 2011). Most Youth Group leaders or facilitators are Youth Group graduates who also receive leadership training, while the rest are students from the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. EE's educational advisors, in turn, support the heads of Youth Groups by co-developing "educationally strong and well-structured activities for Youth Groups" (Equal Education Annual Report, 2010 & 2011:08).

Equal Education's aim is to try to address the inequalities in basic education which have been inherited from apartheid. These inequalities will be discussed further in the section below.

1.5. Inequality and Education in South Africa

The quality of basic education and infrastructure in the South African education system varies from area to area. This is one of the situations that democratic South Africa inherited from the apartheid regime. This regime created a four-tier education system, one for each of the so-called races (Fataar, 1997:76). The white schools were located in urban areas where only white people could reside, while the black schools were located in townships and rural areas where black

people could legally live. This government introduced the Bantu Education policy in 1953, which was meant to prepare black people to be cheap labour for the apartheid economy (Fataar, 1997:76). This policy was a further extension of apartheid's separate development philosophy. It prioritised funding to white schools while very little was spent on improving the quality of infrastructure and education that black learners received (Fataar, 1997:76).

South Africa's entry to democracy into 1994 did not translate into equality of infrastructure in schools. It instead shifted the control of schools to local government. The inter-provincial formula for allocating funding to schools, as outlined in the National Education Policy Act (RSA 1996b), "has been unable to address historic inequalities" (Lewis and Motala, 2004:125). This policy continued the disparity of funding between poorer schools across provinces and between schools that are in poor residential areas and those in higher income areas. Another policy intervention which failed to produce the desired results is the Norms and Standards for Schools Funding policy meant to guide the distribution of provincial funds to schools (Spreen and Vally, 2006). This policy stipulated that 60% of the non-personnel funding go to 40% of the poorest schools. The policy has on average been able to only distribute 7.8% of the budget and the emphasis on poorest schools excludes many schools in poor neighbourhoods (Spreen and Vally, 2006).

Furthermore, 2002 research conducted by the Education Policy Unit in Gauteng has shown that expenditure on teacher salaries was higher in richer schools because of the concentration of qualified teachers in these schools (Spreen and Vally, 2006). This concentration of teachers also allowed for more subject choices than in poor schools. The learner-educator ratio in these schools was lower than their poorer counterparts, which have higher learner-teacher ratios.

1.6. HOW MEDIA CAN CONTRIBUTE TO DEMOCRACY

The practice of citizenship in South Africa requires support from media that have an ethical obligation not only to provide a "platform for citizens to speak to each other" but also to "connect horizontal discussions between citizens to the vertical axis of political power" (Wasserman, 2013:79). The media is one of the institutions that should make citizens aware of their rights and provide them with information that enables them to make informed decisions and

should be a means through which they can construct their identities as citizens. Their contribution to democracy is also strengthened by the media's reporting on citizen participation in different areas of life. Steenveld (2004:104) emphasises that it should be through the representation of its readers as having a stake in society alongside business and government that "media contribute to their readers' identity as citizens, who are valued for their contribution to making democracy real". It is through this facilitation and promotion of the various aspects of citizenship that the extent of the media's role in facilitating democracy should be measured (Steenveld 2004:105).

Media theorist Dahlgren (2009) pays attention to the role of the media in citizen participation and argues that the dimension of interaction is crucial for the public sphere, which is a central feature of democracy. There are two parts to interaction that he argues for: interaction between citizens and the media and interaction between ordinary citizens and those who hold power in society. The role of the media should be to allow citizens, who talk about political issues, to make a "transition from the private realm into the public one, making use of and further developing their cultures of citizenship" (Dahlgren, 2009:74). Furthermore, Papacharissi (2009) argues that the media should support democracy by providing a means through which citizens can exercise or demand their citizenship rights. In a democracy, journalism can serve functions such as "informing the public, investigation, analysis, social empathy, public forum, mobilisation, and publicising representative democracy" (Papacharissi, 2009: viii).

The power that the media exercise in supporting democracy "might entail the privilege of choosing to listen or not, the power to enter into dialogue or not, to seek to comprehend the other or not, the privilege of demanding answers and explanations and justifications" (Dreher, 2010:101). Challenging the news media to listen to voices other than those of powerful people can be seen as a challenge to the privilege these institutions have. The challenge can go as far as questioning the conventions of news. Refusal to listen on the part of the news media can be understood as an active refusal to "open up the possibility of active engagement with the other" (Dreher, 2010:100). This view is important in acknowledging the role of reporters in news production, which should be aimed at supporting democracy and citizens' interaction with it.

However, in the case of a highly-unequal society like South Africa, Dreher (2009:254) argues that "the politics of recognition demands a shift in entrenched patterns of cultural value and social esteem, pulling focus and interventions to the institutions that produce and maintain inequalities of attention and respect, including media institutions and their hierarchies of news value, entertainment value, interest and credibility". This means a shift from looking at the media simply as a platform for everyone to speak, to exploring the nature of relations between those who speak and those who listen as mediated by the media (Dreher, 2009:454). There is an unequal distribution of power in both 'voice' and 'listening', and often those that hold positions of power are given a voice and are listened to by mainstream media to the detriment of those who are marginalised (see Sections 2.8 and 2.10).

1.6.1. How South African media can impede democracy

Although there have been changes in ownership of the media in the last 19 years South Africa has failed to get a diversity of people participating in the press as part of an enlarged public sphere (Tomaselli, 1997, Duncan 2011). The press remains cordoned off to the majority of the South African public. Tomaselli (1997) argues that press ownership in South Africa is under the control of a few capitalists, who are interested in maximising profit by selling media as commodities. This commodification happens at three levels in the media industry; content, audience and labour (Mosco, 2009). Commodification deflects the media from the role of enhancing the practice of citizenship in society. Instead, content changes from what is in 'the public's interest' to what interests and entertains the public (Curran 1986, in Karamagi, 2012). The audience, in turn, are treated as consumers of the media rather than citizens (Carey, 1993 in Karamagi, 2012) who need the media to make sense of their everyday lives. Media professionals are themselves turned into labourers who are assumed to be without any ideological position except to produce a commodity that is appealing to the masses (Mosco, 2009).

De Beer and Wasserman (2005) argue that the opening of the South African media to global players in the industry had a negative impact on South African mainstream newspapers. The entry of global players meant that South African media companies faced the same commercial pressures that other media outlets owned by the same foreign investors faced. These commercial

pressures led to "a reduction of staff, a 'juniorisation' of newsrooms, a preference for commercial imperatives when making editorial judgements and an erosion of specialised reporting" (De Beer and Wasserman, 2005:39). De Beer and Wasserman (2005) argue that although the composition of the newsroom and owners may have changed, the target audiences are almost same as they were during apartheid. Mainstream newspapers still target mainly white readers and a few affluent black readers (De Beer and Wasserman, 2005), who can afford what is advertised in these newspapers.

In addition, Steven Friedman (2011) points out although the South African mainstream press claims that it speaks truth to power, it does so on behalf of middle class interests. It has shown very little interest in South African grassroots activities and gravitates towards what is happening in the suburbs and what interests its middle-class readership. Friedman (2011) argues that the mainstream press only started reporting about protests in 2009 even though these protests started in 2004. He explains that "a press which takes five years to notice that the poor across the country have taken to the streets in protest at the quality of government service is entirely unaware of the world beyond the suburbs" (Friedman, 2011:111). This grassroots dissatisfaction is covered in the mainstream press as strange and mysterious acts with little interest in finding out the motivation behind the protest contrary to 'ratepayers' revolts' by suburban residents which are covered extensively (Friedman, 2011). Berger (2007) holds a similar view about the media in developing countries. He argues that the media in these areas carry the perceptions and thoughts of the elite class and do not reach the masses. Throughout Africa's colonial history the media has always been on the colonisers' side and now in the postcolonial era the media is on the side of the ruling class (Berger, 2007). Its contribution to democracy is constrained by its reach, and content.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the social context in which the research problem of this study is located. It has also introduced the study to the reader and some of the themes that will be revisited throughout the study, such as democratic participation and the possible roles of the media in democracy. This chapter has also discussed social movements and the role they play in

helping citizens to practice their citizenship. It has also discussed Equal Education and the work that it does with learners. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework that informs this study.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework and Literature review

2.1. Introduction

As argued in Chapter 1, South African citizens find it difficult to make a meaningful contribution to democracy by getting their concerns and issues recognised by the government. Although the media has the potential to strengthen democracy by communicating citizens' concerns and issues to government and by communicating information that helps citizens practise their citizenship, they are often unable or unwilling to perform these functions. Susan Bickford's (1996) theory of 'political listening' is a potential solution to these problems of representation and lack of inclusiveness. This study aims to explore the possibilities of 'political listening' between learners themselves and between Equal Education and learners. It will also investigate the possible role of the media within the social movement's struggle for equality in the South African basic education system. This chapter will discuss Susan Bickford's theory of 'political listening'. It will also draw on other research that cites and relates to Bickford's (1996) work to assess if it can contribute to democracy and if so, how, through a focus on the interaction between citizens and their government, citizens and the media and among citizens themselves. The central question of this chapter is whether this theory can contribute to democracy and if so, how.

2.2. Political Listening

Susan Bickford (1996:2) argues that politics in general and democratic politics, in particular, require 'political listening' in order to work properly and to be truly representative of all citizens. This is the type of listening that allows actors to pay attention to one another. Unlike other psychological conceptions of listening which invoke notions of compassion and empathy, political listening is "not primarily a caring or amicable practice" (Bickford, 1996:2). This is because political actors are not sympathetic to each other in situations of conflict. It is in these conflictual contexts where communicative interaction is important, not necessarily for resolving

19

the conflict, but for actors to engage with each other's thoughts and ideas. This interaction enables political actors to democratically decide on the best way to deal with the conflict at hand and to spell out a solution. It is in these conflictual contexts where Bickford's conception of listening functions as "a central activity of citizenship", because she argues that the willingness to listen in a communicative process is the only way which guarantees the possibility of continuous engagement or discussion (1996:02).

Dreher (2009:446) argues that there is a growing emphasis in research and advocacy work on the "democratic potential of voice, representation, speaking up and talking back in the media". Due to this potential, non-governmental organisations in many countries, for example, Australia and the United States of America, have been involved in developing strategies for members of minority groups to speak up and talk back through the media. Although a lot can and has been achieved through the politics of voice and giving marginalised people a voice, Dreher (2009) argues that it is important to address the lack of attention to listening in order to complement the limits of voice in these programmes. Who gets to speak in the media is just as important as who gets heard and the outcome of being heard, because speaking alone does not guarantee being heard unless there are willing listeners. Audrey Thompson (in Dreher 2009) insists that dominant groups should learn to listen to unfamiliar voices and confronting stories and histories because listening means engaging with the tough questions. This kind of listening is only possible in instances where those who are used to setting the agenda and having their interests dictate interaction are prepared to cede this control. Dreher explains that:

> …listening across difference need not aim at understanding or knowledge of 'others', but might instead gravitate towards understanding networks of privilege and power and one's location within them. This shift may also enable a politics of listening to avoid the pitfalls of identity in favour of a politics of interaction. A focus on listening and privilege thus highlights incompleteness and connection rather than knowing and mastery. In this sense listening entails the recognition of knowing as well as not knowing. As opening up possibilities through listening can require decentring and denaturalizing, it might mean unlearning as well as learning. For those who enjoy the prerogative of not listening, it means giving up the privilege (Dreher, 2009:451).

This emphasis on unsettling privilege brings about a type of listening where discomfort, ceding control and insecurity are at the centre of the interaction. Dreher (2009) warns that unsettling privilege can also lead to 'unproductive guilt' on the part of those who are privileged. Krista Ratcliffe (in Dreher, 2009) argues for an ethical imperative where instead of adopting a guilt/blame listening logic, individuals are aware of their privileges and lack of privileges and act

to address the situation. This means that the type of listening that is proposed is not one which simply focuses on the responsibility of the privileged nor should it imply a lack of responsibility on the part of marginalised speakers.

To acknowledge listening as a major activity in communication is to also tackle the intersubjective nature of politics (Bickford, 1996). Politics is premised on both the separateness and the relatedness of different beings. The separateness or difference between beings could be a source of conflict. Here, Bickford (1996) is arguing for a particular kind of politics that is "constituted neither by consensus nor community, but by the practices through which citizens argue about interests and ends – in other words by communication" (Bickford, 1996:11). Citizenship in this sense is not merely a legal status that one assumes by residing in a particular country, but a practice that entails an engagement in political talk with others in the political realm. Heller (2009) refers to this as the practice of citizenship, and argues that the quality of democracy is determined by how well citizens participate in public life rather than the status of democracy, which is the legal guarantee of the basic structures of electoral democracy and basic rights (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). Bickford (1996) argues that oral exchanges in public settings can and should help citizens sift through conflicting claims and become aware of the consequence of certain actions. This interaction should help citizens to better understand themselves and their interests because, argues Bickford (1996), it is through acting politically together that citizens may become aware of the link between their personal interests and the interests of the political community at large. In other words, participating in public affairs should help citizens understand how their individual interests and the interests of their community are bound together. Participation should equip citizens with skills and qualities necessary for democratic participation. This transformation is only possible through the kind of communicative interaction that does not involve just talk but one that "must require a particular kind of attention to one another" (Bickford, 1996:12) or what she calls listening.

The kind of listening that Bickford argues for is based on "civility, empathy, and respect towards one another" (1996:13). This practice enhances equality between actors since it is mutual. The emphasis of this listening is not analysing what is being said or merely tolerating other actors' views but it is geared towards figuring out what unites actors through empathy. Listening creates an opportunity for a different outcome or for something else to happen (Bickford, 1996). This

21

new possibility is only possible when actors surrender the desire to control the outcome of a conversation. This practice of listening is useful in situations of adversarial interaction because it does not repress conflict for the sake of reaching consensus, but instead provides citizens with the possibility of finding common ground. It is through the presence of conflict that communicative interaction is rendered necessary. Communication takes place between two or more individuals. The separateness and difference of both these parties could be a source of conflict, but communication can also narrow the divide between these parties by getting them to engage with each other. What makes interaction possible is not "bonds of civic friendship" or shared interests, but the quality of attention that citizens give each other (Bickford, 1996:19). However, it is in deliberation where we can truly understand adversarial procedures and where communication is necessary because of the inherent conflict (Bickford, 1996).

2.3. Deliberation

People deliberate about the means to attain certain ends rather than the ends themselves (Bickford, 1996). We deliberate about what is uncertain and ends that are achievable through human agency. This deliberation occurs in order for citizens to act because people do not deliberate about ends in situations where these ends are predetermined but instead they deliberate about the means to attain such ends. They deliberate about what is uncertain and what they can change. Citizens can also deliberate about what counts as ends because there may be certain ends that a community aims for but the content and subject of those ends may vary from individual to individual. Deliberation is often conflictual in nature. Conflict usually stems from the uncertain things that deliberation attempts to figure out. It also comes out of the nature of the very people who are involved because a deliberative constituency is made up of people whose opinions, interests and needs often conflict. Bickford (1996:34) points out that deliberation should not only be limited to those who hold positions of power in society but should be opened to everyone's participation because "as citizens with particular places in the social structure, we each have some knowledge to contribute". Getting every citizen involved is crucial for politics to be representative and for the political decision-making process to get buy-in from citizens. What

Bickford (1996) presents here is a normative framework of how deliberation should occur in order for it to contribute to democratic politics.

In addition, Mutz (2006) explains that citizens need to hear the viewpoints of others in order to exercise effective citizenship. This is because hearing conflicting political views helps citizens expand their "capacity to form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent" (Arendt, 1968:241 in Mutz, 2006:8). These interactions with others who hold different viewpoints are essential for citizens to get a complete understanding of the situation at hand. It also helps legitimise policy decisions in the eyes of citizens, since in a situation in which deliberation has taken place results in decisions that are arrived at through public inputs from all citizens (Mutz, 2006). In order for deliberation to be effective plurality must take centre stage.

2.4. PLURALITY AND POLITICAL ACTION

In her discussion of Hannah Arendt's work, Bickford (1996) argues that plurality and political action are inseparable, because they both require attention to others in order for individuals to realise the capacity to make their presence felt in the world. Politics, for Bickford and Arendt, is when individuals act and speak together. What is central to politics "is the ability to attend to citizens' perceptions of their needs and interests, their interpretations of others' actions" (Bickford, 1996:33). It is also imperative to recognise the individuality and uniqueness of each citizen. What connects politics and plurality is that the former forms the basis for speech and action but plurality is characterised by both equality and distinction. She explains that without equality it is not possible for human beings to understand each other, their pasts or to even plan for their future. This is not the kind of equality that is private. It is one that individuals afford each other in the public realm. The kind of equality that human beings may exercise towards each other in the public realm is political equality. Bickford (1996:57) argues that "political equality is an equalising of unequals; it gives equal standing to those who may otherwise be unequal. Political equality makes peers out of those who are different." Speech and action is only possible when individuals have an equal standing and see each other as peers. Political equality creates an environment where individuals can listen and be listened to by others (Bickford,

1996). It is because of every individual's distinctiveness that they require voice or speech to communicate their uniqueness. This uniqueness of each citizen appears through speech and action. Although plurality is the fundamental feature of what it is to be human, it can be under threat during "conditions of tyranny, mass society, or anytime the public realm and its attendant political equality is supplanted or destroyed" (Bickford, 1996:59). In these conditions of socio-economic inequality the basic factor that is required for plurality, which is equality, is trampled and there is no room for individuals to speak, act or even be recognised as unique beings. Unique individuals are homogenised and seen as a mass with a similar identity and perspective. Individuals appear as a mass 'what' instead of a unique 'who' in the public realm (Bickford, 1996:59).

Solidarity is important to political action because of its ability to treat "the oppressed as actors and equals, not merely as victims" (Bickford, 1996:76). Solidarity means assuming that others have taken an interest in the world, treating them as though they are capable of speaking for themselves and capable of political action rather than treating them as though they must merely be cared for. Solidarity guides how we talk and listen to one another in the public realm. It does not only apply to how the poor must be treated but it applies to society as a whole; the rich, the poor, men, women and so forth. All these different social groups can only be brought together by solidarity. Arendt regards the kind of attention that citizens should show each other in the public realm as respect (Bickford, 1996). Respect, she argues, enables us to see past 'what' a person is to 'who' the person is. Respect enables us to see others as different from us, yet as a unique 'who', just like us. This respect is not just about seeing but it also has to do with hearing in the public arena. Bickford (1996) argues that individuals possess the ability to represent others in mind and opinion. She refers to this ability to represent others as representative thinking (this will be discussed further in Section 2.7).

The unique self that human beings reveal in the public realm is one that is difficult to define. Arendt (in Bickford, 1996) cautions that the words that we use in attempts to say 'who' somebody is steers us into 'what' they are. We get trapped into explaining the qualities they share with others like them and as a result they lose any sense of uniqueness. The claims and opinions are only considered as part of what they are rather than who they are. They only speak as, for example, the poor, the unemployed and so forth. The unique 'who' (self) is revealed in

public through what one says and does, speech and action, because when an individual speaks in public he/she reveals his/her opinion which belongs exclusively to that individual (Bickford, 1996). These opinions make up a story in which the individual making claims is in the centre. The identity of the person making claims does not only stem out of what they say or do but from the context in which the claims or actions were made. In this sense, it is not the content of one's opinion that shows one's uniqueness or what makes them who they are but it is the context in which the opinions are made. However, who individuals are depends on others, who see individuals as they cannot see themselves. The appearance of individuals differs according to spectators' perspective (Bickford, 1996).

The multiple perspectives of others can help individuals to make sense of the nature of reality that the world offers. Bickford (1996:63) explains that "it is not that a multiplicity of perspectives lets us perceive a reality that is beyond appearance; rather the multiplicity of perspectives on what appears is what constitutes reality". In other words, being in the company of others who see and hear the same things as we do strengthens our sense of reality. The quality of reality comes from knowing that we are talking about the same thing and that our perspectives are directed at a common subject matter. In this sense, it is imperative that revealing one's uniqueness or distinctiveness through speech and action happens in the presence of others. It is not merely the presence of others which makes real one's public self but rather their active attention. Without paying attention to each other, human beings do not meaningfully appear to each other even though they might be present in the same geographical space at the same time. Appearing meaningful to each other requires that we "make ourselves present to each other through what we say or do" (Bickford, 1996:64).

What politics needs are individuals who feel compelled to speak and act from their distinctive perspectives and for these individuals to accept that their perspective will be challenged and altered by others who are also present and taking part in the discussions (Bickford, 1996). These individuals should also negate any desire to control or impose their ideas on other individuals. In this sense democratic politics is characterised by unpredictability and messiness. Taking the risk of participating in such activities is part of the democratic character. It is this intertwining of "individuality, uncertainty, and togetherness" that makes politics democratic (Bickford,

1996:66). However, individuality and uniqueness are not guaranteed. They are a number of ways in which citizens can be denied individuality and uniqueness.

2.5. Factors that deny individuality and uniqueness

Subaltern citizens are kept out of the public realm through stereotyping. Bickford (1996) argues that the marginalised are made invisible in the public realm through stereotyping by the dominant culture. Stereotyping denies individuals their uniqueness and complexities by presenting the dominant culture's perspective and experience as universal or the norm, whilst presenting a distorted image of individuals who fall outside the boundaries of dominant culture. These individuals appear in the public realm as objects. Bickford points out that "what makes some people invisible as citizens in the wider public realm is not their literal absence from the scene but rather the imposed 'masks' that present a false face and prevent what the mask covers from being audible and visible" (1996:101). These masks conceal the 'who'; the citizen with unique identity and perspectives. Individuals are denied plurality by being seen as members of a group rather than individuals with unique thoughts and stories.

2.6. The private, public and social realms

Drawing on Arendt Bickford (1996) draws a distinction between the private and public realms. The private realm, she argues, is defined by needs which cannot be ignored. This is where the body's needs, such as food and shelter, are met. The public realm, on the other hand, is a space where individuals can exercise freedom and public action. Arendt's public realm is similar to the public sphere, mentioned in Chapter 1, in that it is also a realm where citizens can engage each other in political talk and matters of common interest. For Arendt, the problem with the contemporary world is that the public realm has been taken over by the social realm. This social realm is a hybrid realm where household needs or the body's needs appear in the realm reserved for freedom and public action. This is often caused by the problem of poverty. However, two problems arise when poverty becomes a political issue. Firstly, participants are no longer perceived as plural, unique individuals but instead they become "interchangeably alike, with

identical and predictable needs – in effect a mass" (Bickford, 1996:72). Participants are no longer perceived as unique 'whos' but instead they are seen as 'whats'. The 'who' is the unique characters that every individual possesses, the 'what' is the social or economic conditions that individuals may find themselves in. The 'who' is the unique self, while the 'what' is the socio-economic characteristics that may be used to describe individuals as a group. In this sense, when poverty enters the public realm it is used by those who are in power to rob the poor of their individuality and uniqueness and their individual ability and need to speak for themselves. They all get lumped together into a category of 'the poor' as though they all share identical experiences and perspectives (Bickford, 1996:73).

Other socially-defined categories such as race, gender, class and so forth have a direct impact on our appearance in the public realm (Bickford, 1996). This is an extension of Arendt's argument that 'who' we are in the public realm is affected by what others perceive us to be. By disclosing who we are through speaking in the public realm we also reveal elements of 'what' we are. The way one speaks may reveal their race, gender and cultural identity. In diverse countries different languages and dialects could also point to different identities.

There are numerous publics that exist within the public realm. These publics stem out of common struggles, experiences and a shared identity (Bickford, 1996). It is in these spaces where individuals learn to speak and act in public. These publics and the relations within and between them take place in a context of inequality. As a result of this prevalent inequality, "the norms of various subaltern publics may conflict with the norms of the dominant culture, as conveyed by the media, teachers, public officials, or other figures of authority". The norms of the dominant culture not only affect how people speak but also distort what they say. They create 'beliefs' about how certain groups of people speak, in order to keep their voices outside the dominant public realm (Bickford, 1996).

2.7. Representative thinking and 'making-face'

Bickford (1996), in her discussion of Arendt's work, argues that the thinking self is able to represent multiple interests in thought without losing their uniqueness and individuality. Representative thinking emulates dialogue in that an individual represents the interest of others,

which they would voice themselves in the context of interaction, without negating their own interests and perspective. This enables the individual who is representing others to voice out difference. However, representative thinking should not replace paying actual attention to others, which is the backbone of listening, because individuals cannot attribute viewpoints to others without hearing them speak. This is important because we do not enter the public realm with ready-made opinions but instead:

> …we also must reach some sort of judgement about how to act together. The formation of this kind of judgement (particularly if it is to be not partial) must be formed through actual political communication with others, and not simply through the imaginative and necessarily limited act of representative thinking (Bickford, 1996:87).

This means that as much as representative thinking is important, it is through listening practices that individuals get to understand the interests of others and are able to empathise with others. Communication with others allows individuals to formulate opinions that encompass others' contributions, and enables them to represent others in an impartial manner (Bickford, 1996).

Anzaldua (in Bickford 1996:122) argues that politics requires individuals with "multiple-voiced consciousness, a plural self". These are individuals who are able to stand for more than one perspective at any given moment without having to relinquish their own perspectives, irrespective of whether it is in conflict with the other perspective or not. This representation of two perspectives represents a struggle within the self. Anzaldua argues that a third element to this representation is the ability to switch between the two modes without being fragmented. But switching modes requires "courage to be open to the possibility of contradiction and conflict within oneself, to hear different voices and see from different vantage points, but to move beyond those shared vantage points to a unique view" (Bickford, 1996:123). This process is not just limited to a specific group of people but it involves recognizing one's experience and challenging its conventional constructions. This process of switching mode is externalised through speaking and acting. Anzaldura calls this external switching of identity 'making-face'. 'Making-face' is different from the imposed stereotypical masks, which fragments us. Identity, in this sense, is constantly getting constructed though being present in the public realm rather than just internally. This identity is created through speech and action in the public realm (Bickford, 1996).

2.8. Listening and power

Bickford (1996) argues that what are considered to be the norms of communication are just ways of speaking that are used by powerful or dominant groups. What tends to be heard in the public realms are the ways of speaking of those who control or dominate the political, social and economic institutions. There are four components or ways of speaking or linguistic phenomena that are used to distinguish the social status of the speaker. These are structure, voice quality, effective disposition and framing of utterance (Bickford, 1996). Structure is the logic and grammar of the way an argument is packaged and delivered to listeners. What is seen as 'model' speaking closely resembles written speech, which means that those who cannot read or write are already at a disadvantage. This so-called model speaking benefits highly-educated individuals in society. Second, voice quality can also be used as a tool for discriminating against those who do not speak with a dominant accent and pitch. The third component is effective disposition when speaking in a public setting. Bickford (1996:97-98) argues that "in many public settings, an objective, rational demeanour is often favourably counterposed to emotional or passionate expression". The ability to speak dispassionately is favoured against being emotional. The final component is the framing of utterance, which points to whether it is asserted, qualified or phrased as a question. A more hesitant way of speaking or a questioning way of speaking is seen as a sign of insecurity. Interactive context, which is "who is speaking, who is listening, and what is being talked about", play a significant role when it comes to the recognition of other ways of speaking (Bickford, 1996:98). This discussion of the different ways of speaking and the respect or esteem afforded to them suggest that when Bickford (1996) talks about speaking and listening, she is referring to them as physical activities rather than as a metaphor for something else.

Levin (in Lloyd 2009:480) argues that listening can also mend the breakdown in communication infrastructure which is necessary for the advancement of "rational consensus, legitimation, equity and justice". He argues that better listening is an ethical responsibility for every individual and it is a necessary pre-condition for voice. Royster (cited in Lloyd 2009) argues that that the listening that Levin refers to can only occur when the resources of listening, speaking and being understood are evenly distributed amongst all in society. Listening in this sense must not

foreground speaking or voice, but it should pave the way to being heard and forging shared meaning (Lloyd, 2009:481).

Bickford (1996) argues that listening focuses on the structure of the relationship between the self and the other. This view of listening is useful to political listening because it frames political listening as:

> …an activity that does not require self-abnegation or a radical suspension of my own perspective. Rather, in listening I must actively be with others. Listening as an act of concentration means that for the moment I make myself the background, the horizon, and the speaker the figure I concentrate on. This action is different from trying to make of oneself an absence that does not impose on the other (Bickford, 1996:23).

This relationship of interdependence between the speaker and listener, who are different-but-equal, makes this this type of listening a matter of agency and a practice of citizenship. However, "both speaking and listening are central activities of citizenship" (Bickford, 1996:4). Placing an emphasis on listening does not mean undermining the role of speech in political engagement. They are interdependent processes.

2.9. Voice in listening

Couldry (2010:01) distinguishes between two common ways in which the word 'voice' is used. Firstly, voice can be used refer to the sound that a person produces as they speak. The problem with this type of voice is that it does not account for the different ways in which one can give an account of themselves using sound. Secondly, in the political sphere 'voice' is used to refer to "the expression of opinion, or more broadly, the expression of a distinctive perspective on the world that needs to be acknowledged" (Couldry, 2010:01). Using voice in this way is useful in situations where certain groups have been marginalised in terms of being denied an opportunity to narrate their perspectives. This approach lays the foundation for media which seeks to address the inequalities in representation of different groups. But this approach to voice, Couldry warns, could become banal. It could lead to a situation where every individual acknowledges that they have voice and they all celebrate the voice they have instead of looking at what that voice is able to do or achieve. Couldry (2010:01) uses the term voice differently. He draws a distinction between two levels of voice: voice as a value and voice as a process.

2.9.1. Voice as a value

This refers to the "act of valuing, and choosing to value, those frameworks for organising human life and resources that themselves value voice (as a process)" (Couldry, 2010:02). This means favouring ways that enable voice to be perceived as a central to everyday activities. It also means discriminating against frameworks that organise the social, economic and political sphere, like neoliberalism, which undermine or deny voice. Couldry argues that neoliberalist discourses privilege a view of economic life that does not value the ability for one to have a voice and imposes this framework on politics. Thus neoliberalism effect reduces politics to the mere act of implementing market functions and eliminates the place of the social in politics. Valuing voice means discriminating against an organisational framework that devalues and prevents voice; and favouring processes that allow voice to be expressed efficiently. Here, voice is seen as a value. (Couldry, 2010:02). This value of voice is central to human life irrespective of the political or economic system in place.

2.9.2. Voice as a process

Voice as a process refers to the process through which individuals give accounts of their lives and the condition of those lives (Couldry 2010:07). This is a process which allows individuals to tell their stories or narratives, which are the defining features of what being human means. By extension, to deny voice is to deny an aspect of human life. However, defining voice as the ability to tell one's narrative and being acknowledged as doing so raises a number of principles that should be recognised.

Firstly, voice is socially grounded (Couldry, 2010). Couldry (2010) argues that voice cannot be practiced by individuals in isolation from other individuals. This is because the ability to have a voice is dependent on a range of resources. These are practical resources, such as language, and symbolic status required for recognition by others as having a voice. Both these are part of the material nature of voice. Voice is impossible without its material nature, even though it is unequally distributed throughout society. In addition, voice as value means that a purely individual account of voice without any involvement by others is not only unimaginable but would also miss the social aspect of life.

Secondly, voice is a form of reflexive agency (Couldry, 2010:08). This means that voice does not just emerge randomly into a given space but it is a result of thinking and taking responsibility for one's narrative. In this sense, voice is always interlinked with individuals' actions. This means that voice entangles individuals in the back-and-forth exchange of narratives. This back-and-forth also serves as a reflexive process where individuals talk about their actions in relation to other individuals' actions. They make sense of their own lives through these exchanges (Couldry, 2010:08). This reflexive nature of voice relates to Bickford's (1996) and Arendt's ideas of plurality of individual citizens. What Couldry, Bickford and Arendt are saying is that citizens depend on other citizens' perspectives to make sense of their own lives.

Thirdly, Couldry (2010:08) argues that "voice is an embodied process". This means that voice cannot be separated from the experiences of the individual who bears it. Voice is an expression of the world from an individual position, which is shaped by their experiences. Voice involves a claim that every individual's experience of the world is unique, an 'embodied uniqueness'. However, an individual is shaped by an array of experiences, which creates an internal plurality of each voice. This internal plurality of voice means that when individuals reflect, they make sense of an aspect of their lives in relation to another and to other people's experiences. This elevates voice from just speaking to speaking and listening, an act that allows individuals to express their unique narratives in relation to the others (Couldry, 2010:09). This idea of internal plurality of voice is similar to Bickford's and Arendt's conception of the plurality of individuals discussed earlier in this chapter (in Section 2.4).

Fourth, "voice requires a material form which may be individual, collective or distributed" (Couldry, 2010:09). The material form of voice is not under the exclusive control of individuals because individuals rarely create the means through which they narrate the stories but they make their contribution as subjects of a narrative form. When such means to narrate one's story are available, it becomes difficult to separate individual input from collective or distributed input.

However, a denial of voice occurs when narrative resources are not distributed equally in society or are distributed in such a way that certain members of society cannot control or adapt them in order to create their narratives (Couldry, 2010:09). This creates a situation where those who do not have access to narrative resources view themselves through the eyes of those who represent

them. Bickford (1996) uses the metaphor of a 'mask' to warn us of the dangers of representation. She argues that when individuals from marginalised groups are represented they are represented with a 'mask' that is representative of every member of that group. This 'mask' masks them of 'who' they are and instead reveals 'what' they are.

Five, voice is undermined by practices that do not take the expression of voice as fundamental to everyday activities (Couldry, 2010:10). Voice can be undermined by the principles of the organisation of social life, such as neoliberalism. These models undermine the expression of voice not only by failing to recognise a place for individuals or citizens to voice their perspectives but by also blocking any alternative narrative that might render the expression of voice useful or valuable. Such narrative model is referred to as 'voice-denying rationality' (Couldry, 2010:10).

2.10. LISTENING AND THE MEDIA

Media institutions and practitioners play a fundamental role in the production of privilege and domination as well as providing the tools that can be used in fighting against domination (Dreher, 2009). The media should be governed by ideas of communicative justice if it is to contribute to listening and the unsettling of privilege. For the media, Dreher (2009) cautions, justice should not merely be about giving publishing or broadcasting space for certain groups of people to speak but instead it should be about paying particular attention to the relations between speakers and listeners that the media mediates. The redistribution of media resource to groups that did not previously have these resources will not guarantee that they are listened to or treated as though they have something 'important' to say unless there is a shift in respect and esteem given to voices of people with certain identities. Recognition forms the basis in which political listening can happen through the media because:

> The politics of recognition demands a shift in entrenched patterns of cultural value and social esteem, pulling focus and interventions to the institutions that produce and maintain inequalities of attention and respect, including media institutions and their hierarchies of news value, entertainment value, interest and credibility. If the politics of voice emphasizes the (re)distribution of means and opportunities for speaking, a politics of listening would seem to align more closely with struggles around recognition (Dreher, 2009:454).

The ability to speak up does not necessarily guarantee that those voices will be heard by the media or by extension the powerful in society (Dreher, 2010). Whether a voice is heard or not by the media is dependent on what media practitioners assume the audience will want to listen to. These assumptions often lead to stereotypical reporting about issues of marginalisation and citizenship. News values and predetermined story angle/focus may work to obstruct any possibility of dialogue between those who are reporters and the subjects of those reports (Dreher, 2010). Those who speak within these reports are only granted a voice as a stereotypical representative of the group that they belong to. As a result of this framing, Dreher (2010) explains, representatives of these groups often trade contesting of these stereotypes for getting coverage, even though it might be their stereotypical representation.

Furthermore, individual journalists have always been privileged with the autonomy which comes with their profession. Dreher (2010:101) argues that the power that the media hold "might entail the privilege of choosing to listen or not to, the power to enter into dialogue or not, to seek to comprehend the other or not to, the privilege of demanding answers and explanations and justifications". She explains that challenging the media to listen, let alone listen to other voices than those of powerful groups can be seen by the media as an attempt to challenge their privilege of not listening. This challenge will also extend to the conventions of news which have a bearing on the way journalists hear stories and the interest of readers, listeners or viewers (Dreher, 2010).

Wasserman (2013) argues that media should play a vital role in democratic politics, which depend on listening. The media's and journalists' duty in these instances should not only be to provide a form of stage/platform where citizens can engage each other, but it is their duty to connect these discussions from grassroots level to political power. 'Listening' journalists and a media that listen can and should facilitate politics through "the amplification of voices needed to take local struggles to the national or global arena" (Wasserman, 2013:79), and contribute to the struggle for visibility and to being heard (Couldry, 2010). Couldry (2010) acknowledges that media institutions are effective in voicing counter-democracy and not so good in reporting on new forms of political cooperation and political acts that could arguably be considered as ordinary democratic acts. Friedman (2011) makes a similar point about the South African press' reportage of the so-called service delivery protests (see Chapter 1 Section 1.3.3).

Husband (2005, cited by Downing, 2007:12) argues for 'the right to be understood' as a 'third-order' human right. By virtue of being human, every individual has the right to be understood irrespective of what they are talking about or how they choose to express themselves. This is an extension of the 'right to communication' which places great emphasis on speaking while ignoring the fundamental issue of listening. Without the 'right to be understood' all the communication technology or instruments will not bear any communicative engagement. Everyone will speak but no one will understand, since listening is a conscious act. The 'right to be understood' should be the guiding principle that media practitioners and those with power operate by (Downing, 2007). This will allow the diversity of issues into public debate. He argues that this obligation can and should be facilitated by the media.

Couldry (2006, cited in O'Donnell et al. 2009:431) argues that media practitioners should put aside the position of 'principal knowers' in order to hear the others. He argues that the relationship between media scholars or practitioners with audiences should be based on paying attention to the voices of those that are negatively affected by the unequal distribution of symbolic material. The relations between the audience and media practitioners should be reversed. It is only in foregrounding the audience that media scholars and practitioners can listen to the other side which might disagree with some of their ideas or practices. This way, everyone affected by the media can contribute to the realities being mediated by the media. This will enhance the media's contribution to the "more culturally inclusive goal of global social well-being" (O'Donnell et al. 2009:431).

2.10.1. Practices that help journalists to become better listeners

In her research on Special Broadcasting Services radio programmes, Penny O'Donnell (2009) discovered three journalism-related listening practices. These are purposeful listening, hearing dissent and intercultural dialogue with strangers. She explains that purposeful listening is when the media makes a conscious decision to listen to alternative voices that will not usually make it into mainstream media. These are people with opposite or alternative views to the dominant ones. The purpose of such an exchange is not about reaching a consensus but rather to open up debate and for all the parties to listen and engage with each other's views. Hearing dissent

involves mainstream media granting space to radical messages from marginalised groups. In print media these messages could appear on pages that carry the so-called 'major stories'. They can be aired during prime time on broadcast media. This strategic positioning will ensure that the messages are listened to. However, this could prove a costly exercise for marginalised groups since the media would only give these messages prominence as advertisements or advertorials. It would only work with major organisations that represent these groups. Effective listening on the part of the media can be measured by the number of citizens' stories that would not usually be published by mainstream media (O'Donnell, 2009:513).

2.10.2. Possible responses to limited listening by the media

Dreher (2010) argues that speaking up about an issue does not necessarily guarantee that the media will report on those issues or that their reports will not be biased. The ability for individuals to speak through the media is affected by what the media producers or journalists perceive to be what the audience or readers want to hear or read. Marginalised groups often have to resort to proactive strategies rather than reacting to news media coverage in order to attract the attention of news media or inform the wider public of their activities. She identifies five interventions that a marginalised or issue-driven group can adopt to improve their chances of coverage in the mainstream media. These are checking the performance of news media, learning the game, building networks, talking back to news media and activities that work outside the news. These activities often overlap in the way they are employed by different groups.

Dreher (2010:89) points out that checking the performance of news media involves monitoring mainstream news media outlets (both radio and print) for "irresponsible reporting" and to commend the media house for "fair, balanced or positive coverage". This allows members of the public to report any misrepresentation, misinformation or discriminatory media reports that are published or broadcasted by media outlets. However, monitoring the media and logging complaints about media reports renders both strategies reactive. Instead of dealing with larger trends that are already prevalent in the media, the two strategies focus on specific incidents. They operate within standards set by media professionals and media institutions themselves. Dreher (2010:89) adds that they "police and reproduce the conventions of news rather than necessarily

challenging those conventions or developing new possibilities". These mechanisms force viewers and readers to be treated as victims of media reports seeking redress or disgruntled consumers rather than challenging the existing hierarchies of media production. Media monitoring and complaints may pave the way for other strategies that may contest news conventions and media power. Learning the game is one such strategy which contests news convention and challenges media power (Dreher, 2010:90).

Learning the game involves learning media skills and news conventions in order to get better coverage of their issues from mainstream media (Dreher, 2010:90). This involves training community members to improve their engaging with media and media advocacy. Media advocacy is more of an on-going process than developing source skills. It involves "strategic media monitoring, training of media spokespeople, developing contacts and background information, networking and building professional relationships with journalists, letters to the editor, media releases, media events, fact sheets, interviews, writing op-ed pieces and editorial board meetings" (Dreher, 2010:90). These strategies could help identify journalists who report fairly or favourably about the issues in question who are likely to report on new agendas and promote alternative stories. Successful training of community members in media skills could also lead them to develop their own media, which could be used by mainstream news outlets.

However, Dreher (2010:90) adds that although media skilling and training of community members contributes to the diversity of voices representing communities in mainstream media, they do not translate into change in news framing and news agendas. Many of these community representatives appear in news stories responding to issues and agendas set by media professionals. These representatives are framed as representing the so-called 'special interests'. The media training or skilling that they receive could also be a way of teaching these community leaders about news values and journalistic modes or routines that serve the hegemonic view. Training could also help community members understand that their stories are only relevant within a specific context set by media institutions and their professionals. In this regard, media skilling and training could also be a form of silencing these already marginalised communities. Another strategy, building networks, could also lead to fair coverage by mainstream media (Dreher, 2010:91).

Dreher (2010:91) explains that building networks with journalism students who are still at university and who have not yet experienced mainstream newsroom environments could create long-term change in news media. These networks could be developed by producing training modules and online resources that could be presented in seminars at different universities. These training materials should be developed in conjunction with the lecturers from the institutions where they will be provided to learners. However, intervening in journalism education is a difficult task. There is no guarantee that journalism training institutions will make room for such workshops or make them compulsory for every student to attend or integrate them into the curriculum. Although these could be useful in engaging media students with 'difficult' issues or topics in community, the outcomes of this strategy are hard to measure. The next strategy that Dreher (2010:92) proposes, talking back to news media, is a strategy with outcomes that are not as hard to measure.

Talking back to the news media is when communities that are affected by a certain issue create media events to address these issues. Dreher (2010:92) explains that the strategies that are employed in talking back to the news media "are orientated not only to telling different stories, but aim rather to critique media institutions, make direct political demands and present oppositional counter-narratives". These 'media events' provide an alternative framing to that of mainstream media on the same issue. These events may also criticise the conventions of news which positions news as facts and as the only true representation of social reality. These activities contest the convention of news and suggest that news values are not natural but constructed (Dreher, 2010:94). Another response to the media's grip on news agendas is to develop activities that are outside the news.

The activities that are developed outside the news are responses to the news agendas but are not aimed at seeking publication from the mainstream news media (Dreher, 2010:94). Here, Dreher is referring to activities that are aimed at contesting the dominant ways in which a certain group of people is presented in the media. These activities employ the use of familiar images for different ends to those of the media where they were initially published or broadcasted to address the issue with a wider public. This is also a creative way of talking back to news since it operates outside the news conventions and everyone is free to voice their opinions in without restrictions. This is particularly important because some of the stories that members of the public might want

to tell may fall outside of the criteria of newsworthy stories. It is also a creative way of avoiding the restrictions of news where only community representatives are consulted and speak on behalf of the whole community (Dreher, 2010:95). However, journalists also have a role to play to improve their listening to citizens. They can facilitate better relations between them and citizens through journalism-related listening practices.

2.11. Indicators of listening

The theoretical perspectives above provide arguments for the need for political listening and voice to strengthen democracy. Since this thesis examines a specific series of contexts in which political listening may or may not be taking place, it is necessary to understand what factors are required for such listening to take place or what the indicators are that political listening is occurring. It is difficult to judge whether those who are being spoken to are listening or not. Bickford (1996:153) suggests three factors that could be used to judge if listening has taken place. First, silence can be used as an indicator of genuine listening. Silence is the basis through which dialogue comes along. This silence is not the absence of sound but it is the opposite of speech. The two are interdependent processes. Silence is "an effort to make room for a variety of expressions which may surprise and challenge" whoever is listening (Bickford, 1996:154). But silence can also be a form of communication which is the opposite of listening. It might indicative of the decision by others not to engage with others viewpoints. In other words, it could be an intentional silence. This could be motivated by a desire to manipulate the other by listening for the other's point-of-view while one remains shielded. This could also be a "wilful silence" that actors use to protest against what is being said others (Bickford, 1996:156). As a result, all that is being said falls on deaf ears and loses any meaning since message and meaning are not the same thing. Powerful groups can also use silencing to deny voice to other groups or they might not listen to other groups. They do not regard the oppressed as listeners but they instead place a greater emphasis on finding voice for the oppressed. Exempting a group from listening on the basis of that group's oppression is excluding them from political action (Bickford, 1996:156).

Listening can also manifest itself through question-posing. Bickford (1996:156) argues that by posing questions and digging deeper, political actors show their desire to understand what is

being said. Questions assure the speakers that the audience are paying attention to what is being said by constantly trying to understand when what is being said is not fully clear. This question-posing may be evidence of contradiction or result in contradiction of views between the speaker and the listener. This is not necessarily a bad thing since conflict paves way for communication and the goal of communication is not consensus. However, asking questions could also be a form of lack of engaged listening. A question can demonstrate one's unwillingness to listen because it "puts forth the terms of discussion in some specific way" (Bickford, 1996:157). These are questions that demand excessive clarity as an attempt to avoid paying attention to meaning. These questions are designed to evade and obscure those remarks. This could often lead to the final measure of listening, arguments.

Arguments are central to political listening and figuring out of issues as a collective (Bickford, 1996:157). Arguments show that there is listening and even though the responses do not show any consensus with what the speaker said they show a desire to engage with the speaker. Like question-posing, arguments could also be a sign of the unwillingness to listen. It can be used as a defensive mechanism to divert from the responsibility of engaging with what is being said. These factors are not definite indicators of listening and what could be seen as a sign of listening could be the opposite of listening (Bickford, 1996:157).

Thill (2009:539) explains that the signs of listening, especially in the contexts of diversity and inequality, are when there is a "backgrounding of the self" and a "foregrounding of the other" by citizens. This is when individuals give up their privileged positions as speakers and listen to others who usually occupy the position of listeners. In this case the hierarchy of inequality is reversed. But listening also requires a 'broader notion of responsiveness' (Thill, 2009:540). This responsiveness requires of citizens to recognize others and treat them as though they have something important to say. Most of the indicators that have been discussed so far can only be seen in face-to-face encounters between citizens. It is nearly impossible to see these indicators in mediated communication such as written texts.

Dreher argues that the in order to focus on listening we need to pay attention to the significance of "response and recognition" (2012:157), "attention and response" (2012:159), "openness and recognition" (Dreher, 2012:159), and examine who is being "treated as a resource" and being

"given recognition and authority" (Dreher, 2012:160). However, there is often limited listening in spaces where listening should take place. The indicators of this limited listening are "a form of censorship" and the reduction of authority of speakers (Dreher, 2012:164).

The concepts that are listed above have been used in research by a group of Australian researchers attached to a project called the Listening Project. They have begun to develop a typology to detect whether listening is taking place in interactions involving the media but these concepts are not yet well developed theoretically and methodologically. So, a concept such as 'recognition' comes up on several occasions with other concepts. For the purpose of this study, these concepts have been split into single words, to make it easier for me to work with them. For the purposes of analysis, these concepts are understood to mean the following in this study (although I recognise that the meanings ascribed here may not be exactly those intended by the theorists):

- 'Response' is understood to refer to when there is evidence of reaction, follow-up, plans or actions that are reaction to something expressed by a marginalised person or group.

- 'Recognition' refers to evidence of seeing from another's perspective and understanding their view.

- 'Openness' is when there is evidence of individuals being treated as though they are unique; the backgrounding of self of the listening and the foregrounding of the speaker and evidence of empathy.

- 'Resource' refers to when individuals are treated as having something to contribute.

- 'Authority' is when all participants or individuals have equality to speak and contribute in a specific context (not related to position, role or power outside of this context).

2.12. How 'political listening' has been used in other studies

This theory of political listening was used by Australian researchers as part of the Listening Project, a media research project which ran from 2008 to 2010 (Listening Project, 2013). This

research project used 'political listening' to assess and investigate how members of minority groups are reported about in mainstream media, and how they can speak and be listened to by mainstream media. This theory was mostly used to assess physical situations where people interacted in a face-to-face encounter. The researchers in this research project would attend an event organised by members of a minority group in an attempt to get better coverage from the mainstream media or to produce their own media. These researchers observed how these activities unfolded and how they were covered by the media and then they used the theory of 'political listening' to assess both the activities and the coverage.

Typical examples of these articles are Dreher's (2009) research paper on the activities of Arab and Muslim Australians in their attempt to get better mainstream media coverage, and in O'Donnell's (2009) work on Australia's Special Broadcasting Services' activities. Dreher's (2009) research article focuses on how radio and television 'listens' to voices of Muslim Australians to produce shows or coverage that humanises and normalises them. What the researcher does is to use the theory of political listening to make sense of how the show unfolds and what is said on the show. O'Donnell's (2009) article on the other hand, looks at the behaviour of journalists when they report on minority groups. Both these research articles make sense of physical activities or contexts in light of the theory of 'political listening'. The listening that is referred to in both these articles is a physical one rather than one which is a metaphor for something else.

Similarly, a discussion of the different ways of speaking and the possible responses to them detailed in Section 2.8 suggests that when these theorists talk about speaking and listening they are referring to physical speaking with a voice and making a sound, rather than using the two words as metaphors for something else. This study is different in that it uses the theory of 'political listening' to make sense of a face-to-face context, interview data and journalistic texts. It does not use the theory to exclusively analyse situations of physical speaking with a voice but it is stretches it to accommodate mediated communication. This creates some difficulty when it comes to looking for characteristics of speaking and listening in written texts. Characteristics such as pitch and listening cannot be identified in written texts but I would be looking for characteristics such as speaking in an emotional or rational way which can be identified in journalistic texts.

The theoretical framework discussed above is particularly useful in trying to understand how citizens can interact with each other in a manner that is democratic and encourages participation by all citizens irrespective of their political views or social status. Studies on participation have mostly focused on encouraging an equal distribution of voice to all citizens but there has been little focus on 'listening' as an important feature in politics and participation. It is important to investigate whether 'political listening' can exist in the context of South Africa, with its conflictual past and its current very significant inequality between the rich and the poor, and the role that the media play or should play in fostering this relationship. The social movement Equal Education, the learners who participate in its youth groups and the news coverage it inspires will be used as a case study to assess the usefulness of this theory in a South African citizen participation context.

Chapter 3 - Research methodology and methods

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the journey that I embarked on in the process of collecting data for the study. It will start with the aims of the study and move on to the theoretical tradition that underpins the research. It will then discuss the different methods that were used to collect data that will provide explanations for some of the research questions set out and explain why these methods were used in this particular way. I will also discuss validity and accuracy concerns, and ethical considerations towards the end of the chapter.

3.2. Aims of the study

This study aims to investigate if and where the most effective 'political listening' is taking place amongst learners and between learners and Equal Education and where efforts should be focused in order to improve the listening. It will also consider what the role of the media is and could be in fostering and paying attention to voice and listening in grassroots contexts. In order to do this, three questions were asked and methods were used in this order:

Table 3.1. Research questions and methods to gather data to answer each question

Questions	Data collection methods
Drawing on Bickford's and Dreher's factors, can the relationship between learners themselves, and that between Equal Education and learners be understood as one of political listening?	In order to get the answer to this question, I observed learners and their facilitators during youth groups and interviewed learners and their facilitators.
What do these two parties think the role of the media currently is and potentially could be in their struggle (is it or could it be one of political listening)?	To get answers to this question I interviewed learners and Equal Education staff members who deal with media queries. I also

	looked at articles to see how what was said in interviews matched/didn't match with coverage of EE.
How do journalists who cover education issues respond to the ideas of EE and learners about the role of the media in the struggle for equal education (how open are they to taking on a position of 'political listener')?	To get answers to this question I interviewed two journalists, one from the *Cape Times* and the other from the *Mail & Guardian*.

3.3. Research Orientation

3.3.1. Values underpinning the research – Qualitative Research

This study has adopted the qualitative research tradition to gather data that will answer the three questions that were raised under the aims of the study. The qualitative tradition is committed to "seeing the world from the point of view of the social actor," (Bryman, 1994:77). This is important in terms of getting an understanding of why people behave or act the way they do under certain circumstances. This logic is accompanied by the idea that every individual brings a distinct set of influences because of their personal experience, race, gender, geographical locations and their social positions in society. Qualitative research tries to capture this contextual information through a number of data gathering tools (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In an attempt to get this contextual information I observed the interaction amongst learners and between learners and the facilitators (during youth groups) and interviewed learners, facilitators, Equal Education staff members and journalists.

The purpose of conducting research in the qualitative tradition is to describe and understand human action rather than to come up with explanations (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:271). Qualitative researchers focus on generating 'thick descriptions' of the subjects' activities within their contexts. These descriptions are long and detailed and use the terminology of the subjects themselves. This helps in understanding the types of meanings allocated to certain activities within that context.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) point out that "qualitative researchers always attempt to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves". Likewise, this study attempts to understand the nature of the relationship between learners and between learners and Equal Education, and the role of the media, within the context of the struggle for equality in basic education. It is an attempt to understand what the social actors think of their relationships or interaction and what they think of the media. This research tradition provides a description and an understanding of human behaviour and action as opposed to explaining those actions. Unlike in the quantitative tradition, research in the qualitative tradition is conducted in the natural settings of the subjects of that particular research. Studying subjects in their natural settings allows for researchers to observe human activity as it happens (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:271). I observed learners as they interacted with each other and with their facilitators during their youth groups to get a sense of how these parties relate to each other and negotiate their interests during these meetings. By studying the subjects of research in their natural setting the researcher sees events as they unfold rather than having to reconstruct them for the purpose of research. This allows the researcher to see things from the perspective of the subjects being studied rather than imposing their own perspectives on the subjects' behaviour and activities. Getting the insiders' perspective can also be rewarding in cases where there are significant differences in "language, culture and belief" between the researcher and the subjects of study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Due to the unstructured nature of qualitative research and often its lack of association with a hypothesis, it embarks on an exploratory study where researchers discover and understand social phenomena rather than measure them against a hypothesis (Bryman, 1984:84). Research, in the qualitative tradition, ventures into new territories that have not been explored. This study is, to an extent, exploratory in the sense that what I am looking at has not been looked at before and the theory that I am using the theory in a form of a trial and error process to see if it can be applied to a real life situation. The fact that qualitative research does not require the researcher to follow any rigorous method allows for researchers in this tradition to discover unexpected trends and findings (Bryman, 1984:84). The researcher can alter the research project to accommodate these new findings.

3.3.2. Relationship between the researcher and the researched

My relationship with the subjects of this study was guided by the principles that underpin qualitative research. The primary principle that guided data collection in this qualitative research study, as Smith (1983) has argued, is the acknowledgement that social actors' knowledge of the world and their actions are based on their interests, values and personal experience; social context. The findings generated by this research are a result of the subjects' history and social environment. I, as the researcher, interacted with the subjects of this study in an attempt to understand their actions from their perspectives. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994:3) point out, a qualitative researcher "understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:3). All these influences will have an impact on the findings. Interference by the researcher and interaction with research subjects are, in this case, inevitable since I understand that the ideas and thoughts that this study will generate are context-specific and are generated from personal experiences that I probed (Smith, 1983).

Smith (1983:8) takes this debate a step further by drawing a distinction between subject –object relationship and subject – subject relationship. He argues that the relationship that exists between the researcher and the subjects of research in the qualitative tradition is the subject – subject relationship. In order to fully understand the meanings that are assigned to certain actions or activity the researcher has to immerse himself in the context that those actions are played out (Smith, 1983). This is particularly the reason why I went to observe Equal Education's youth groups to get a better understanding of the context in which learners and Equal Education interact. This context is of great importance in making sense of what learners think of their relationship with the social movement.

The researcher in this study is the most important research tool, as is always the case in qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). He is the glue that held the research together. The researcher performed many tasks, ranging from reading, interviewing and performing an introspection of his or her influence on the research. The data generated by the study will be dependent on the role that the researcher plays (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2).

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Since the method or rubric for measuring 'political listening' is not fully developed, this study's "rubric for listening research is deliberately an open and dynamic one" (as was the case for O'Donnell et al.'s (2009:424) study. Since this research project aimed to consider whether the relationships between EE and learners and between EE, learners and the media could be considered 'political listening', I was looking for data that showed factors that were identified in Chapter 2 as indicators of 'political listening'. These factors are 'response and recognition' (Dreher, 2012:157), 'openness and recognition' (Dreher, 2012:159), 'being treated as a resource' (Dreher, 2012:160), recognition and authority (Dreher, 2012:160), 'backgrounding of the self' (Thill, 2009:539) and 'foregrounding of the other' (Thill, 2009:539), 'responsiveness' (Thill, 2009:540), 'silence' (Bickford, 1996:153), 'question-posing' (Bickford, 1996:156) and 'argument' (Bickford, 1996:157). I also looked for data that contains indicators of limited listening such as 'a form of censorship' (Dreher, 2012:164), 'the presents and engagement of VIPs at events (Dreher, 2012:164) and the reduction of authority. I have taken some of these concepts and broken them down into one-word phrases, which I defined in an attempt to further develop the theory for the analysis of situations that it was not developed for yet.

The study used three data-collection methods. The researcher conducted a content analysis of articles published in South African newspapers during 2011, followed by in-depth interviews with learners, youth group facilitators and Equal Education staff members who speak to the media on behalf of learners and the social movement; then the findings of the in-depth interviews were relayed to journalists who frequently report on Equal education and its activities.

3.4.1. Content analysis

Content analysis, which is useful in establishing trends (Deacon et al., 2010), has been used as background to the study to establish who gets to speak in newspaper reportage about Equal Education's activities. Hansen et al. (1998:95) argue that the purpose of content analysis is "to identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and

their wider social significance". These characteristics or dimensions of texts are counted in order to draw conclusions about the phenomenon being studied.

3.4.1.1 Sampling

In this study, 30 articles about Equal Education's activities published in the *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* newspapers were purposively selected. It was important to see how the Cape Town papers covered Equal Education because they are the ones that pay more attention to Equal Education and give most coverage because of their proximity to the social movement's headquarters. The articles selected were published between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2011. This period was chosen because it was Equal Education's busiest year of activities since its launch in 2008. It embarked on marches to pressurise the Basic Education Minister to adopt the Basic Education Charter, intensified its '1 school, 1 library, 1 librarian' campaign, stepped up its campaign against late-coming in schools and started its legal battle against the Minister over the Schools' Charter. Fifteen hard news articles about Equal Education's activities were selected from each newspaper. In assessing voice and agency of learners in particular, the content analysis looked for evidence of the following factors from Dreher's conception of 'political listening': "response and recognition" (2012:157), "attention and openness" (2012:159), and that the voices were given "authority" (2012: 160); and 'responsiveness' from Thill's (2009:540) conception of 'political listening'. When these theorists talk about listening they are discussing what could and should take place in face-to-face interaction. They are referring to listening as a physical exercise rather than as a metaphor for something else. This study looks for listening in mediated communication, which the theory is not developed to be applied to. I am trying to use a theory as way of analysing a situation when it has not yet been developed for use in this way. I am attempting to apply the theory to contexts or types of communication that it is not traditionally applied to. This is quite a complex and messy task, which involves a lot of trial and error, with the possibility of finding out that the theory does not really work outside of the context it was developed for.

3.4.2. Observation

Deacon et al. (2007) point out that observations are useful in revealing the social realities of the subjects of research in their social contexts. It helps open a window for the researcher to peep into the lives of the subjects in their natural settings. The researcher has access to first-hand experience rather than relying on subjects' accounts. This helps the researcher to observe behaviour which cannot be extracted through other methods which rely on questioning subjects. It also gives the researcher access to what the people observed understand and believe in by looking at their behaviour (Deacon et al., 2007). Observation allows the researcher to make independent assessment of the research subjects, which helps to substantiate or dispute what came out of question-based data collection methods. This method also gives the researcher an opportunity to observe non-verbal behaviour, such as body language, attitude and togetherness, which cannot be accessed through other methods. The information generated through this method is colourful and in-depth which helps the readers and researcher to understand the subjects better (Deacon et al., 2007). There are three types of observation; simple observation, participant observation and ethnography.

Deacon et al. (2007:250) explains that in simple observation "the observer has no relationship with the processes or people being observed". This is the kind of observation that was used as part of the data collection methods in this study. I attended three youth groups, and one leadership committee meeting to observe interactions between learners and facilitators and amongst learners in Khayelitsha schools, where Equal Education has organised learners into youth groups. In the four activities that I observed I recorded the conversations using a tape recorder and wrote down notes on the activities of these events and the interaction between learners and their facilitators and among learners themselves. Note-taking was necessary to record the key issues that stood out and the behaviour of participants, which could not be captured by a tape recorder. Notes were taken as the meetings continued to ensure that I did not forget the details of these meetings. I would sit behind all the learners in cases where it was a small group or sit in the last row at the back away from learners to avoid being seen as a fellow participant in their activities. The approach that I took was that of a 'fly on the wall' within these youth groups although there were two instances where I was introduced and my intentions made

known to the learners. My introduction in the two only came at the end of youth groups when the facilitators were about to help me choose potential interviewees.

Although Deacon et al. (2007) advises that simple observation should be conducted in public settings where everyone has access to the setting and that those who are being observed should be unaware, this was not possible in this study. Youth groups are closed to the outside world, and even to learners who are not members of Equal Education. These groups are small and made up of learners from the same schools, who know each other, which makes it impossible for someone new to the setting not to be recognised. The only way into these youth groups was through the facilitators who knew what the observer was doing. This kind of observation is different from participant observation, in which the researcher takes part in the activities being researched.

3.4.3. In-depth interviews

With in-depth interviews the researcher gets a chance to understand the issue in question from the subject's point of view and to make sense of their experiences (Kvale, 1996). This form of data collection allows participants to talk about their experiences in their own words. It allows researchers to catch the point of view of participants on the topic in question. For this study I conducted 7 in-depth semi-structured interviews with learners who are members of EE, 4 interviews with youth group facilitators, two interviews with senior EE staff members who deal with media queries and two reporters, one from *Cape Times* and the other from the *Mail & Guardian,* who have covered many of EE's events. I decided to replace the other Cape journalist who could not take part in the study with the Mail & Guardian journalist because she is particularly interesting as a journalist and she wrote a piece for the Rhodes Journalism Review about her experience reporting on education and learners which caught my attention.

I wanted, as Byrne (2003) argues, to uncover information about individuals' attitudes and behaviours, which cannot be accessed using observations. This is information about the reasons behind certain human action and behaviour that can only be accessed by means of explanation by respondents who carried out such actions. It is particularly useful to researchers whose research seeks "to explore voices and experiences which they believe have been ignored, misrepresented or suppressed in the past" (Byrne, 2003:182). I used in-depth interviews in this study to

understand the nature of the relationship between learners and EE and between EE, learners and the media. This is information that cannot be gathered using textual analysis or observation, as it requires all the parties involved to motivate their actions with explanations.

The researcher played a fundamental role in these interviews. As Byrne (2003) explained, the researcher not only asked questions but he was also a co-producer of knowledge produced by the interaction between the researcher and the respondents. Since these interviews were semi-structured, the interviewer's purpose was to guide the interviews, which resembled a conversation. I encouraged respondents to speak at length about the activities that are carried out by EE, learners and the role of the media in these activities. I was also responsible for producing probing questions that were open-ended and flexible to accommodate the respondent's understandings and interpretations (Byrne, 2003).

In-depth interviews were chosen because of the method's emphasis on interviewees being meaning-makers rather than passive vessels with pre-existing answers (Warren, 2002). As such, the purpose of this method is to derive interpretations and rationales from respondents. Seidman (2006:9) explains that an in-depth interview is based on "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience". These interviewees are viewed as individuals with valuable experiences and understandings about a particular issue. Since they have first-hand experience of the phenomenon being researched their knowledge and views are worthy of exploration. The purpose of the interviews with learners, facilitators and members of Equal Education's media team conducted in this study was to get their insights about the nature of the relationship between EE and learners and EE, learners and the media. This is information about the interviewees' lived experiences that could only be collected through interacting with the research subjects.

3.4.3.1. Interview Questions

Wengraf (2001) draws a useful distinction between theory questions and interview questions. Theory questions (also known as research questions) are questions about the actual theory that is used in the study and are formulated in the theory-language. Interview questions, on the other hand, are questions formulated by the researcher using the language of the subjects to gather data

that will be used in answering the research questions (Wengraf, 2001). Theory questions influence interview questions.

The research questions used in this study were designed to gather data that shows evidence of the indicators of listening[1] that were discussed in the previous chapter. Most of these questions asked respondents for information that showed the presence of these indicators or the absence thereof, as in the examples of the questions to learners (with specific indicators of listening in brackets) listed below (also see Appendix 1 for a complete list of research questions asked):

> Do the people from Equal Education see your issues in similar way to you? Explain and give examples? (Recognition)

> Your facilitator might come from a different background/schooling system from you. Do you think someone who hasn't experienced the same problems and issues as you can really understand them? (Openness/backgrounding of the self)

> Does Equal Education take you seriously and treat you as though you have things to say? (Authority)

> Can you think of a situation where you were interviewed by the media or asked to explain something? Explain what the story was about? (learners being used a resource)

> Have you or do you know any learner from youth groups who has been interviewed by the media? (Resource)

> From what you see in the media, do you (learners not the education crisis) think the media take you seriously and treat as though you have things to say? Explain and give examples? (Authority)

These interview questions were designed to purposefully probe learners to give information that related to the theory questions. In this study, the influence of theory questions on interview questions is quite apparent and it is the only way in which the theory can get to talk to the data or the data to the theory.

3.4.3.2. Framing of interviews

Wengraf (2001) points out that it is important for the researcher to frame the interviews for the participants from the initial contact between the two. In my introduction to all my interviewees I assured that there was no wrong and right answers to the questions I was going to ask them and

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[1] These indicators are 'question-posing', 'argumentation', 'silence', 'response', 'recognition', 'openness', 'resource' and 'authority' (see Chapter 2 Section 2.11 for details).

that I was merely trying to understand the relationship between Equal Education and learners and Equal Education, learners and the media and how all these parties perceive each other. I also invited the participants to speak in their mother-tongue, which was Xhosa for most respondents, in an attempt to avoid creating a language barrier that English can create for those who are not first language speakers. Despite this offer, the majority of participants chose to use English as for answering my questions even though I asked most of these questions in Xhosa. Giving participants an option of speaking in their indigenous language was also an attempt to ensure that participants don't think of the interviews as being highly structured and 'serious', which is often associated with the English language in South Africa, since it is the language of business.

3.4.3.3. Sampling

The in-depth interview sample consists of 7 learners, 4 youth group facilitators, 2 Equal Education Staff members who interact with the media and 2 journalists. All these interviewees were purposively selected. The facilitators and learners were selected through snowball sampling, which is when researchers get their respondents through their initial contact who suggests other people for the researcher to talk to (Deacon et al., 2007). The suggested respondents, in turn, suggest other people for the researcher to talk to. This method was useful in this study since youth groups are closed to people who are not members of Equal Education. I was introduced to one of the facilitators by the Head of Youth Department at EE, the facilitator suggested and introduced me to other facilitators who I ended up interviewing. These facilitators suggested and introduced me to the learners I interviewed.

My selection of the Equal Education's staff members for interview was also purposeful. I selected the two staff members who were quoted the most in the articles that I did a simple content analysis of to get an idea of what reporting on EE's activities looks like. One of these staff members was on sabbatical and I replaced him with another staff member who also deals with media queries. The staff members that were interviewed are Yoliswa Dwane, Head of Policy, Communication and Research and Karabo Monatisi, a Junior Media Officer.

The selection of journalists also followed the same purposeful pattern that I used for selecting EE staff members. I selected two journalists who wrote most of the stories that I sampled for the content analysis. One of these reporters was on maternity leave and attempts to reach her were

unsuccessful. She was eventually replaced by a journalist from the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper who has also reported on EE's activities and is a thoughtful source that gives insight into the situation and so was important to the study. The *Mail & Guardian* newspaper is a weekly, national newspaper with a history of holding government accountable to its citizens.

3.5. Triangulation

Researchers have often favoured the use of more than one method to gather data for a single research project or study. This process is called triangulation. Spicer (2004:294) argues that "triangulation implies combining more than one method in looking at a particular research question to cross-check results for consistence and to enhance confidence in the research findings". This study used three data collection methods, one from the quantitative research tradition whilst the other two were from the qualitative research tradition. Using multiple methods to collect data in a single study is useful in terms of the potential to corroborate findings from the different methods.

Combining multiple methods in a study depends on what the researcher wants to use the methods for. In this study, content analysis from quantitative research tradition was used to facilitate qualitative research. As Spicer (2004:300) noted, quantitative methods are useful "in revealing patterns that are subsequently investigated through the use of in-depth qualitative methods". Content analysis was used in this study to establish the issues, trends and patterns in how stories about Equal Education were reported. It was used to give the researcher some sort of indication of who is given a voice and who gets a hearing in Equal Education's activities with learners and whether the relationship between EE, learners and the media could be considered that of 'political listening'. The findings of the content analysis were then followed up with observations of learners' activities with Equal Education and in-depth interviews with learners and Equal Education staff members and journalists. Combining these methods in this way, as Spicer 2004 argues, also helped to refine the research question. Combining both these traditions in this study helped me to identify the amount of space that EE is given to publish its ideas in the South African newspapers, and the voices or the lack of voices of learners in these stories.

3.6. Developing 'political listening' theory for data analysis

Bernstein (Maton, 2011:72) argues that "the development of theory is of little consequence if the results are unable to engage with empirical problems". For Bernstein, engaging with empirical data is not synonymous with painting the picture of the phenomena that the data emanated from or representing the reality of the context in which the data was produced. He argues that "concepts and data must be able to speak to one another, a dialogic relation between theories and things" (Maton, 2011:72).

For Bernstein, in order for theory to be translated into empirical description and empirical descriptions to be translated into theoretical concepts an external language of description is required (Maton, 2011). A theory that is difficult to apply to empirical circumstances has a strong internal language of description and a weak external language of description because it makes more sense as abstract concepts rather than empirically. Once the external language of description is "established for the specific object being studied, then the basis for analysis is visible for other researchers to engage with" (Maton, 2011:72).

In terms of Bernstein's distinction, the theory of 'political listening' that is used in this study would be classified as having a strong internal language of description and a weak external language of description. On an abstract level this theory seems well thought out and its theoretical concepts speak to each other and fit together. It lacks a fully developed external language to translate the theoretical concepts into the empirical circumstances and the empirical circumstances into theoretical concepts (Maton, 2011). In an attempt to use the theory of 'political listening' in this study, I have attempted to develop my own external language of description for 'political listening' detailed below. As this is a first attempt, it is open to change and shift.

Table 3.2. An external language of description for 'political listening'

Indicator of the	Definition	Example quote from respondents

presence of political listening/concept		which shows evidence of the indicator (indicated in bold).
Response	When there is evidence of reaction, follow-up, plans or actions that are reaction to something.	"When a learner raises an issue, let's say a sanitation problem at their school or a late-coming campaign at their schools for instance, my duty as a facilitator is to **take that information and report it to the Head of Facilitators then we (the facilitators) come up with ideas on how we are going to tackle it.**" (Facilitator 4)
Recognition	Evidence of seeing from another's perspective and understanding their view.	"…at EE we do not only have schools with infrastructure issues but we have some schools that are supporting but they have everything in their school. But **they understand the issues as comrades; an injury to one is an injury to all**. They get to come and support even though they do not have the experience. **They come to get to know how it is for their fellow brothers and sisters and to actually feel the pain they are feeling**." (Facilitator 2)
Openness	Where there is plurality of individuals, backgrounding of self, foregrounding of other and empathy.	"I don't know about Equal Education but our facilitators take us seriously. They are the same as us, they are black and they understand us and our communities. We don't know what the people in top positions think of us. Maybe as time goes on we'll understand what they think of us, whether they take us seriously or we are just here for the organisation to grow. As time goes we will get to understand these things." (Learner 2) (In the above statement, the learner is referring to 'openness' which stems from a similar racial identity.)
Resource	Being treated as having something to contribute.	"I think EE takes us serious because we were discussing a (Minimum Norms and Standards) draft with Angie Motshekga and there was someone who was writing down our views about things that should be done in our schools. **This person took what we said and submitted it to the Department of Basic Education**. I think EE takes us seriously." (Learner 3)
Authority	When all participants or individuals have equality in a specific context (not related to position, role or	"…they are good in standing up for what they believe in. They need me as their assistant but **they can do everything by themselves without**

	power outside of this context).	**me**." (Facilitator 3)

Table 3.3. Other concepts used in the analysis

Other concepts used in the analysis	Definition	Example quote from respondents which shows evidence of the indicator (indicated in bold).
Representative thinking	When individuals are able to represent multiple interests without losing their uniqueness and individuality.	…there are a lot of white people who are working here who studied or went to school in Model C schools. They are here today to fight for equality in South African education. It depends on your personality because **there are people who are here not because they feel the pain but because they are here for the sake of wanting to see change**. (Facilitator 3)
Uniqueness	This is 'who' individuals are rather than 'what' they are.	Sometimes when learners have issues it does not mean that it is going to be school-based issues. There are other issues. Sometimes I would receive a call around midnight and the equaliser would be calling about fighting at home. (Facilitator 4)
Stereotyping	When the distorted image of individuals is presented in the public realm. It is when 'masks' that present a false face and prevent what the mask covers from being audible and visible are imposed on individuals.	She (a principal) said in the Hanover Park area **pupils could 'easily be drawn into gangs'** and the school's plan was to keep children in the library in the afternoon.
Rational way of speaking	The ability to speak dispassionately in an objective and logical manner.	A number of pupils asked Motshekga **tough questions about school infrastructure**, provision of textbooks and poor results. One asked her: "Should we wait for the next minister or are you going to be our hero?"
Emotional way of speaking	Passionate expression of ideas without any adherence to rationality.	Amelinda Mute, a grade 11, said they were very excited about getting their own school library.
Checking the performance of news media	Monitoring mainstream news media for irresponsible reporting and to commend them for fair and balanced reporting.	….**only two cases where we were misquoted, when we sent out a press statement and there was this journalist that mixed up two press statements and then quoting from another organisation's statement and said that EE said**

		this whereas we did not say that. But they called us again to say that they are apologising for their errors and they also issued out a public apology in the newspaper. (Karabo Monatsi)
Learning the game	When citizens learn media skills and news conventions in order to get better coverage of their issues from mainstream media.	…**when we send out the press statement the media houses want to get some recognition to say that I was the first one to write about the press statement that EE sent out so some of the journalist they just edit the press statement and publish it**. (Karabo Monatsi) **I think they (Equal Education) are more in tune to what the media wants. They know that we like facts and figures so they include that in their press releases. They know that we like to go to the Department (of Basic Education) and say on this date of this year you promised this. So they will give us that information** and say that in 2012 the Minister promised that she would build these many schools, which means that we can now go to the Minister and say "but in 2012 you said you would build these many schools and you haven't". So they give us that type of information which is very useful. (Victoria John)
Building networks	Building networks with journalists	…it depends on each and every issue because sometimes you think it is a national campaign and want to spread it across. Instead of going to everyone, you narrow down the number of papers. Maybe you say you want these top ten papers to cover this issue and you call the journalists. **Throughout the years we have compiled a list of media contacts. In some cases when they want to follow up a story they give you their contact numbers and you keep that number in your media list and it becomes easier when want to call**. (Yoliswa Dwane)
Talking back to news media	When community or groups affected by a certain issue create media (and media events) to address this issue.	We get a lot of media coverage and I am wondering if that has to do with the type of cases that we take but it also has to do with the support that we get for each campaign. **You will not only have a media campaign on its own but you have an actual campaign, you can march, you can go to parliament and a dialogue continues even without a media campaign triggering a discussion around a specific time and a campaign.** (Yoliswa Dwane)
Purposeful	When media takes a conscious	Whenever you have a campaign strategy, not only

listening spaces	decision to listen to alternative voices.	a media campaign strategy, for us how it becomes stronger and relevant is when there are people behind the campaign in the sense that this is an issue that talks about human beings that is relevant to people's situations. (Yoliswa Dwane)
Hearing dissent	When mainstream media grant space to radical messages from interest or marginalised groups	When things are a little bit quiet, you follow up with op-eds. The body of those op-eds will mainly be about experiences. We illustrate the impact of whatever we asking for, whether we calling for certain resources to be given or directed towards under-performing schools or maybe you want a set of rules to be put (in place) for under-performing schools or school infrastructure, you don't mainly focus on or call for the regulation to be put in place but you go and get different experiences. You go to school and find some of the letter that the learners wrote and they are around the same circumstance and you take those quotes and put them within your op-eds. (Yoliswa Dwane)

3.7. Validity and reliability

Creswell and Miller (2000:124) define validity as "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them". Hammersley (1992:69) argues that validity in qualitative research means that an account in question "represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise". The selection of subjects that participated on the study could have an impact on the validity and the reliability of the study. I was referred to the learners who participated in the study by the facilitators. It is possible that the facilitators could have picked their favourite learners from their youth groups. It is also possible that the learners who had different views from the ones of those who were selected did not take part in the study. There are a number of facilitators who did not want to participate in the study; it is also possible that these facilitators have different perspectives to those of the ones that participated.

Another possible element that could compromise the validity and reliability of the study is response bias, which encompasses a range of responses to interviews or questionnaires that bias

the response. Sampling bias includes "social desirable or faking-good response as well as its opposite faking bad (or mad), acquiescence or yea-saying (the tendency to agree irrespective of the question) or its opposite or nay saying, extremity response set (always choosing extreme opposites) or its opposite, mid-point response set" (Furnham, 1986:385). It is possible that some of the interviewees could have any of the response strategy listed above which could have an impact on the validity and reliability of the study.

Deacon et al. (2007) argue that interviewer bias can also have an impact on the accuracy and validity of the study. This is when the interviewer influences the respondents to give answers that are desirable. This can also take the form of explaining the interview questions in a manner that leads the respondents into a particular answer.

3.8. Ethical considerations

Byrne (2003) explains that the interviewer or researcher should pay attention to ethical considerations in research topics that are sensitive and when minors are involved. The common principal is that research should "cause no harm" to its subjects (Ruane, 2005:17). The interviewees can be protected from harm by entering into a formal agreement with the researcher to participate willingly, to refrain from answering questions they are not comfortable with and are guaranteed anonymity. This consent is usually in a written format and signed by both the researcher and the respondent, and the respondent's parents in cases of minors (Byrne, 2003).

In this study, the subjects, subjects' parents (in the case of minors) and I signed formal written consent forms before interviews. This form guaranteed the anonymity of participants (who are minors), their voluntary participation and the freedom to stop participating in the research at any point in the study. Other interviewees who are not minors also signed consent forms except in cases where the interviewees could only be interviewed over the phone.

The next chapter will provide an analysis of the data in light of the theoretical framework. The tweaks of the theory of political listening that were done in this chapter will be mapped on the empirical data to assess the kinds of 'political listening' that may or may not be possible among learners, between learners and EE and between EE, learners and the media.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

South African citizens find it difficult to communicate their concerns to the government. Equal Education, a social movement based in Khayelitsha, is one vehicle through which learners can contribute to democratic participation or practice their citizenship in matters pertaining to basic education. This study seeks to investigate this democratic participation and the current and possible role of the media in that participation via the theory of voice and political listening. This research project examines the nature of interaction between Equal Education and learners, and the role that the media do play and could play within in the social movement's activities. I have also done a simple content analysis to see how Equal Education's activities are reported by the media. Susan Bickford's theory of 'political listening' and the Listening Project's researchers incipient typology of listening, which focuses on how citizens should relate to each to make politics more representative of citizens, was used to assess if the interactions between learners themselves, and between Equal Education and learners can be described as one of 'listening', and also to investigate the role of the media within this context of participation and the exercise of citizenship.

I went to Cape Town for a week, between October 7 to 11, to observe the interaction between learners and their facilitators in youth groups, and to interview learners, facilitators and staff members who engage with the media about the relationship between Equal Education and learners and how EE and learners use and think of the media. I attended three youth groups and a youth leadership meeting, which are both spaces or platforms where learners that are members of Equal Education meet with their facilitators to discuss issues and problems that they (and the youth in general) face in South Africa. It was necessary for me to observe these youth groups in a detailed manner because it was the only way in which I could get a sense of whether the organisation gives priority to the issues and problems that learners raise, and to see if dialogue and interaction between Equal Education and learners fulfil some of the indicators of listening that were identified in Chapter 2. I also conducted seven interviews with learners, four interviews with their facilitators and two interviews with Equal Education's staff members who interact

with the media and two interviews with journalists. This chapter will provide an analysis and discussion of data using the indicators of listening to assess the interaction between EE and learners and EE, learners and the media. It will also draw on media-related listening theory to make sense of what Equal Education and learners think the role of the media is or should be and journalists' response to EE's and learners' ideas.

4.2. Youth groups

The youth group meetings that I attended were held in schools where learners who make up the youth group attend their high school classes. These are typical township schools characterised by lack of infrastructure. Upon entry into these schools I was struck by the state of dilapidation that the school infrastructure is in. Most of the desks are old and broken. There are very few chairs in most of the classrooms. Judging from this small number of chairs and desks I think it is safe to assume that the steel frames from old chairs that are in some of these classrooms are used by learners to supplement the shortage of chairs. Most of the windows in the classrooms are either broken or cracked. The black and green boards that teachers write on show signs of being old too; they have permanent marks that have been written in Tipp-Ex and what looks like wet chalk that does not seem to fade even after being wiped. Some of the classrooms have big holes in the ceilings. In other classrooms the only signs that show that there was a ceiling are the bits of white board still left on the ceiling. There are no signs of a computer lab in these schools and as one of the facilitators pointed out, most of these learners only get to touch a computer after grade 12 if they are lucky enough to make it to university. Like many township or rural schools, libraries and science labs remain a pipe dream.

The topic for discussion in the week that I went to these youth groups was sanitation. Judging by the state of the toilets in the schools that these learners attend, there could not have been a more relevant topic. The toilets in these schools are dirty and privacy is a commodity that many of these learners do not get to enjoy, since the toilet doors are broken or missing. The youth groups started with singing and playing a game by learners and their facilitators. Learners appeared energised after these games. After the game learners settled down and the facilitator led the discussion by getting one of the learners to read a one page document about a sanitation

campaign by learners at Bhisho High School in the Eastern Cape (see Appendix 2 for the reading). This reading was followed by the distribution of sanitation surveys for learners to assess their schools. The purpose of the reading and the survey was, as the Equal Education's Samuel Shapiro, Equal Education's National Organiser, who collected the data and prepared the survey puts it, to

> …merely to get the learners to know simple things about what is going on in their schools and be able to tell their parents simply and be able to tell other equalisers. I use that method because explaining the complexities of sanitation to every parent… people lose interest and they don't really want to give us any attention. (Samuel Shapiro)

One of the issues that came up during youth group discussions is about how some of the principals are reluctant to have Equal Education conduct any of its activities with learners inside their schools. Learners mentioned how this hurdle should be considered in planning their campaigns. They were planning sanitation campaigns to help raise awareness about the state of toilets and to clean the toilets in their respective schools. They deliberated on how best to overcome this challenge and at the end decided that the best thing to do would be to plan the campaign as Equal Education members but present it to their principals as a campaign by learners which has nothing to do with Equal Education. They have to use one identity when they go to their youth groups where they plan these activities and switch to another identity when they present their plans to their respective principals. Facilitator 3 explains:

> …many people feel like we are a threat to the learners. Sometimes they feel like we preach that they should stand up against their teachers for their rights. Sometimes they think that we want to influence the learners to act in a bad ways towards teachers but all we are trying to do is to help them get more information about their rights and the responsibilities. (Facilitator 3)

> The reason is because when we say we want to spot the problems of the school, they think we want to put the school in the media or maybe they think we are going to put a bad mark on the school, we are going to say they are not teaching in a good way and they do not have good infrastructure. But highlighting the issues about infrastructure is not about them as teachers it is also about what the government is doing or where the government fails to deliver to people. (Facilitator 3)

This reluctance by principals to get EE involved in their schools also impacts on the coverage that learners' activities with EE receive from the media. Karabo Monatisi, EE's Junior Media Officer, explains:

> It is good and sometimes it is bad because sometimes they do not cover the issues that are happening in schools like Khayelitsha and other areas, not because they do not want to cover that but because some of the principals, when we do events in schools, they do not want the media to be involved. But we do have

journalists that come to those schools and check what we are doing. For example last year we had this campaign here at EE where we asked learners to write problems about their schools, whether the schools have shortage of computers and other stuff and they would write those letters saying 'my school does not have this'. Then we took those letters and we distributed them to the various media houses and the *Cape Times* published some of those letters. (Karabo Monatisi)

4.3. Analysis

4.3.1. The interaction among learners and between learners and their facilitators

The discussions that take place in youth groups are characterised by a sense of 'authority' (Dreher, 2012) that both learners and facilitators have over different activities that are conducted in these youth groups. In the youth groups that I observed, facilitators had authority when it comes to explaining the information that is required from learners to complete different sections of the survey that was distributed that week. Learners' authority was over the information that goes into the survey. This may also be an example of learners being used as a resource when it comes to information about the state of school infrastructure. In this situation, learners are also given 'recognition' (Dreher 2012) as the principal knowers of the information that is required by the survey.

Facilitators would often leave learners to discuss their plans and issues amongst themselves as they write down what learners are saying. This may be an example of Bickford's (1996) 'silence', which is evidence of listening. This was the kind of silence that was productive in terms of encouraging learners to discuss issues rather the kind of awkward silence which discourages participants from interacting. From the youth groups that I observed facilitators would ask learners to talk amongst themselves about how they would go about carrying out sanitation campaigns in their specific schools. The facilitator would keep quiet and let learners discuss their plans as he or she is writing down what is being said. It seemed to be the kind of silence that is empowering in the sense that it gave learners an opportunity to control their interaction and speak to each other directly without any mediators or interruptions.

When these learners interacted amongst each other, in the youth groups that I attended, they did so in a respectful manner and within the context of equality for all participants. In the youth

groups that I attended, when these learners discussed their plans on how they were going to carry out campaigns in their schools they all had a chance to add their inputs to the plans. They would often communicate different views and often ruled out each other's suggestions. They appear to separate the individual from their suggestions and when they criticised a suggestion they made it explicit that they were not criticising an individual but an idea and offered 'better' suggestions which were supported with more ideas coming from the learners whose ideas were 'rejected'. This kind of practice seems to be quite extraordinary form of speaking and listening. These groups are empowering for those whose opinions and ideas matter very little in government policy-making or on a national political level.

The facilitators would interject to ask a question about a learner's contribution in order to get a better understanding of what the learner is saying. This question may be a form of Bickford's (1996) 'question-posing'. Although 'question-posing' can either encourage or discourage interaction, from what I observed the facilitators in these youth groups use it as a technique to encourage continuous interaction. They seem to ask learners to explain things in order to get a better understanding of the situation rather than to discourage them from making inputs.

Facilitators also probe learners to think more deeply about the issues that they are raising and their potential solutions. Here, learners are 'treated as a resource' (Dreher, 2012) on basic education related issues and problems, which they experience on a daily basis. This treatment of learners as a resource is also an acknowledgement of their level of maturity. Facilitator 3 explains:

> …they are good in standing up for what they believe in. They need me as their assistant but they can do everything by themselves without me. (Facilitator 3)

Seeing these learners as being capable of "standing up for what they believe in" and as being able to "do everything by themselves without me" as Facilitator 3 explains above is an example of recognising the 'authority' (Dreher, 2012) of these learners. This facilitator elevates them to the same level that she is at. In this context both learners and facilitators are 'equalised' (Bickford, 1996). This means that the facilitator and learners are partners within this context; the facilitator sees them as equals.

These facilitators also write down the inputs that learners make and follow-up on the ones that they think are important or the ones that are common amongst youth groups. This act of following-up some of the suggestions or issues voiced by learners could be seen as a kind of 'response' (Dreher, 2012) to learners' issues. Response in the context of the communication between learners and the facilitators takes the form of looking at the issues and problems that learners raised to "come up with ideas on how we are going to tackle it", as Facilitator 4 explains below:

> When a learner raises an issue, let's say a sanitation problem at their school or a late-coming campaign at their schools for instance, my duty as a facilitator is to take that information and report it to the Head of Facilitators then we (the facilitators) come up with ideas on how we are going to tackle it. (Facilitator 4)

The deliberation by learners leaves facilitators with a lot of key information that they recorded during the process. It is the facilitators' duty to ensure that the problems, issues and suggestions that learners make in these youth groups are communicated to everyone in the movement. These facilitators gather this information and communicate it to the Head of Facilitators on a regular basis. Facilitator 3 explains:

> What happens is that they come with issues and you find that sometimes their issues are similar to those raised by learners from other schools. They will come with issue like sanitation, for example. On Mondays we always do the previous youth groups' review and that is where we raise problems that learners came with. (Facilitator 3)

The Head of Facilitators reports the information from facilitators to the rest of EE staff members during a weekly staff meeting. This is where the organisation looks at all the issues that come from learners to ensure that all the members of staff are familiar with what everyone is doing. The Policy, Communication and Research (PCR) department decide on issues that have the potential to be turned into campaigns. These are usually compiled in the form of a story or an anecdote and is accompanied by a survey that for learners to complete. The story is used as a reading during youth group whilst the survey is also distributed during youth groups for learners to assess different aspects of the schools. The information that is collected through surveys, which are completed by learners, forms the basis for a statistical report on the issue in question. For example, in the case of sanitation the survey forms the basis for a report on how many toilets different schools in Khayelitsha have, how many work, how many have doors and how many are clean. This is information that members of EE's Policy, Communication and Research (PCR) department communicate with government and members of the public through the media. The

final stage of this back-and-forth communication is the execution of a campaign on the issue in question by learners in their respective schools.

Furthermore, the platform that Equal Education has created for learners to interact with their facilitators and the rest of the social movement's staff members is used as a space where learners are free to communicate whatever is bothering them, irrespective of whether it is school related or not. Facilitator 3 explains:

> …it is when we having these meetings where we ask them if they are having any problems at their schools, and not only at school but at home also. That's when they express themselves. We give them an opportunity not only as their facilitators but also as their guardians. (Facilitator 3)

This act of giving learners space to "express themselves" probably stems from seeing learners as, what Bickford (1996) has termed, a unique plural individual. It seems from the interviews with facilitators that learners are seen as a 'who' with different perspectives rather than a mass of learners with identical perspectives (as a 'what'). They are treated as though being learners from township schools is not all that they are but they are young people with different ideas and perspectives which deserve to be listened to. Facilitator 4 explains:

> Sometimes when learners have issues it does not mean that it is going to be school-based issues. There are other issues. Sometimes I would receive a call around midnight and the equaliser would be calling about fighting at home. (Facilitator 4)

These learners are more than just learners; Facilitator 4 recognises their 'uniqueness' by pointing out their existence outside of the context of schooling. They are unique beings with issues and problems that are not always school-related. They sometimes bring problems that are "about fighting at home" (domestic violence), outside of the education setting. This revelation of issues or problems by learners to their facilitators depends on how learners view their relationship with their facilitators. Facilitator 1 explains:

> It is the way you ask the questions to them. Firstly you must try to find a comfort zone, sing some songs, and play some games so that they could feel comfortable with being around you, so that they could trust you. When they see you as a friend or as a mentor, they start revealing the issues they face in the schools. (Facilitator 1)

Most of the learners that were interviewed believe that their facilitators see and understand their issues in the same way that learners see and understand them. This may be an example of 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012), because facilitators see learners issues and problems through the perspective of learners. The learners emphasised the importance of coming from the same social

and schooling background as a prerequisite for their facilitators to understand them. They feel that the reason behind their good relationship and understanding with their facilitators is due to their shared experiences, both geographic and schooling. Learner 2 explains:

> "It matters that they come from a similar background as mine. If my facilitator was fortunate enough to go a good school, they will think what we are telling them are stories or fairy tales because they went to white schools. They will only tell us about how they enjoy their schools. They will fail to understand the situation we are in. It would be unreal to them because they would have never faced it in their lives."(Learner 2)

Learner 2's comments above show that the 'what' of their group shared experiences becomes really important in this particular context with its racial history and politics. The 'what' is used, in this context, as a basis for solidarity. The way it is used here adds a dimension to Bickford (1996), that the 'what' is not always a negative thing but that 'who' and 'what' together might be quite powerful.

Most facilitators made similar claims when it comes to their relationship with learners and being able to understand and see issues in the same way that learners see them. Most of them were members of the youth groups at the same schools that they are now facilitating. They believe that this shared schooling experience and the fact that they stay in Khayelitsha, where the learners in their youth groups reside, enables them to relate better with their learners and to better understand the issues and problems that these learners encounter. It is this shared experience and its racial history and context that play a significant role in this situation, because someone who shares your experience can be trusted to believe and understand you when your situation is being ignored. A focus on the 'what' is a positive one in this case, contrary to the 'what' being used to marginalise citizens. Facilitator 1 explains:

> …I come from the same background whereby maybe you have a single parent at home and sometimes your parents cannot really afford to get you into a better school. For my experience I got to go to a Model C high school then I had to come back because of school fees issues. So sometimes when they tell you their story it's not like they are talking to somebody who does not understand, they are talking to someone who also lives in Khayelitsha and who knows the lifestyle that they get to experience. (Facilitator 1)

Here Facilitator 1 draws on the 'what' as the basis for solidarity between them and their letters. The recognition with which they treat learners' problems and issues also seems to stem from the 'what' which both these facilitators and learners share, in terms of same schooling and social background. Facilitator 3 explains:

> I kind of feel the same way they feel because I come from the same background that they come from. I was doing grade 12 last year and I have experienced problems such as not having a chair to sit on. I also feel the same way that they feel sometime because I have also just come out of high school. (Facilitator 3)

Some learners even went further to explain how it would be nearly impossible for someone from a different social and schooling background to understand them and their struggles because they would have never experienced what the learners experience. They said that although they have an understanding with their facilitators they are not sure about other EE staff members who are not from similar schooling and social backgrounds. Learners 2 and 3 explain:

> I don't know about Equal Education but our facilitators take us seriously. They are the same as us, they are black and they understand us and our communities. We don't know what the people in top positions think of us. Maybe as time goes on we'll understand what they think of us, whether they take us seriously or we are just here for the organisation to grow. As time goes we will get to understand these things. (Learner 2)

When Learner 2 says the facilitators take them seriously because "they are the same as us, they are black and they understand us and our communities", he is drawing on shared experience and (racial) identity – 'what' – as the basis for what may be considered 'openness' (Dreher, 2012). Similarly, those who do not share this experience or who are not of the same racial identity are rendered unable to be empathetic by this argument. Their lack of a similar 'what' is seen as the basis of their inability of 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012). Learner 3 explains:

> I don't think they can understand. An example would be someone who is studying at a Model C school when I am at a school here in Khayelitsha. I face sanitation problems and lack of textbooks. Those who are in Model C schools never had lack of textbooks so they will never understand the problem I have since they never experienced it. It would be like I am telling a fairy tale. (Learner 3)

The comment that Learner 3 makes above about how his experience would be like a "fairy tale" to someone who has never experienced the circumstances that he faces at his school can be seen as a lack of faith in 'representative thinking'.

However, some facilitators feel that the good relationship they have with learners has nothing to do with shared educational background or social experience. Most of the facilitators said that although a similar social and schooling background helps them understand their learners better, it is possible for someone who is from a different social and school background to understand these learners. This may be seen as a kind of 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012) of learners' issues and the possibility of 'representative thinking' (Bickford, 1996) on the part of those who do not share similar 'whats' with these learners. Facilitator 3 explains:

70

> …there are a lot of white people who are working here who studied or went to school in Model C schools. They are here today to fight for equality in South African education. It depends on your personality because there are people who are here not because they feel the pain but because they are here for the sake of wanting to see change. (Facilitator 3)

Facilitator 3's comment above seems to suggest that the facilitators are able to see across the 'whats' to the 'whos' involved. Facilitator 2 explains:

> …at EE we do not only have schools with infrastructure issues but we have some schools that are supporting but they have everything in their school. But they understand the issues as comrades; an injury to one is an injury to all. They get to come and support even though they do not have the experience. They come to get to know how it is for their fellow brothers and sisters and to actually feel the pain they are feeling. (Facilitator 2)

Emotions seem to be used here as the basis for empathy and 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012) of learners' issues and problems. Facilitator 2 explains above that some learners from well-resourced schools support campaigns by learners who are affiliated to Equal Education because an "an injury to one is an injury to all" and "to actually feel the pain they are feeling". Here, emotions are the basis for solidarity. Engaging in activities that portray the issues and problems that these learners face on an emotional level may help to recruit more empathisers. Facilitator 1 explains:

> From seeing the pictures and the reading, the work that we do even if you come from Model C schools, with the information that we have compiled you will be touched by the situation and you will feel sorry for the learners that are studying in those situations. (Facilitator 1)

The comment that Facilitator 1 makes about "being touched by the situation" and that "you will feel sorry for the learners" by seeing a presentation of pictures and reading compiled by these learners may be seen as an emotional reaction to someone speaking being the basis for empathising and for solidarity. The reading is presented in a rational manner with minor emotional comments.

Similarly, some learners believe that it is possible for other people to understand their issues and problems without having to come from a similar background or having to experience similar conditions. Having people who are part of the movement because they want to see change seems to suggest a 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012) of learners' struggle because of their rational and emotional appeal. Learners said that there are a lot of people out there who are aware of the inequalities in South Africa's basic education who would like to help eradicate this problem.

They believe that their work with Equal Education so far is testament to this belief. Learner 4 explains:

> …we have managed to mobilise people from outside to come and join EE and to come and fight with us. It depends on how you present yourself to other people, if you present yourself in a wrong way they might not be able to understand you but if you present yourself in the right way people will see that this is a huge problem and we really need to act. (Learner 4)

Being able to "mobilise" people may be seen as a kind of 'response' (Dreher, 2012) to learners' activities with Equal Education. The people who are mobilised support (i.e "fight with us") learners as a reaction to the activities that these learners have been engaged in. This kind of response, Learner 4 cautions, "depends on how you present yourself to other people". This comment seems to resonate with Bickford's (1996) argument that in order to be heard speakers have to adopt a certain way of speaking, although Learner 4 does not explain what it entails to "present yourself in the right way". 'Response' (Dreher, 2012), this learner believes, is only possible if learners do not present themselves "in a wrong way".

Although many of the learners think highly of EE there are those who take the organisation for granted. This was evident in terms of the poor attendance at some of the youth groups I attended. I went to one youth group that was eventually cancelled because of lack of attendance by learners. I then moved to another one which only had 5 students although the facilitators assure me that there were over 20 learners who were supposed to attend youth groups in each of those specific schools. Facilitator 2 explains:

> Sometime there are those whereby you feel like they are not really taking EE seriously. They see it as a place where you get to come and chat and go and not do the real programme that we are doing as an organisation. It's whereby you go to a youth group and you do not get anyone from the youth group, you get to see how some people do not take the organisation seriously. (Facilitator 2)

Instead of seeing these interactions as something important like deliberation, what Facilitator 2 seems to be saying is that for some of these learners, youth groups are just a place where they "come to chat". These learners do not see it as a place for deliberation nor do they see it as a place where they can engage with "the real programme" set out by the social movement.

Learners who take Equal Education seriously equate being taken seriously by the social movement with being listened to. For these learners an indicator of being listened to and being taken seriously by EE by seeing its staff members listen to their contributions and suggestions

and write them down with the hope of following-up on these issues. What this seems to suggest is that being listened to and being taken seriously for these learners is indicated by a kind of 'response' (Dreher, 2012), which in this case is following-up on the suggestions that learners made. Learners 6 and 3 explain:

> Equal Education treats us serious because when we meet and we say something they listen to what we are saying and write it down and they treat it as a serious matter. They even treat the ideas that I bring as a leader from my school seriously. We work together. (Learner 6)

> I think EE takes us serious because we were discussing a (Minimum Norms and Standards) draft with Angie Motshekga and there was someone who was writing down our views about things that should be done in our schools. This person took what we said and submitted it to the Department of Basic Education. I think EE takes us seriously. (Learner 3)

The writing down of learners' comments "about things that should be done" at their schools, as Learner 3 points out above, may be seen as evidence of learners having 'authority' (Dreher, 2012) over what should be done in their schools. Having learners comment on policy may also be seen as evidence of treating learners as a 'resource' (Dreher, 2012) on education-related issues. It could also be seen as an act of 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012) of learners' views and ideas on the part of Equal Education. Submitting the comments that learners made to the Department of Basic Education may be seen as a kind of 'response' (Dreher, 2012) to learners' comments and issues.

The indicators that appeared strongly in this section are 'authority', 'silence', 'question-posing', 'recognition', 'response' and 'resource'. Some of these indicators, like recognition, kept on coming up in relation to the dialogue between learners and their facilitator because the relationship between the two is largely based on recognition of learners' issues and problems. The empathy that these facilitators feel is a result of this recognition. It is in these moments where equality of all participants is foregrounded and their uniqueness recognised. The interaction and dialogue that learners have with each other, their facilitators and other Equal Education staff members can be considered an interaction of 'political listening' because of the strong appearance of the indicators of listening. This conclusion would have been impossible to arrive at without observing the activities of leaners and their facilitators since most of the indicators can only be identified in the actual situations.

4.3.2. What EE and learners think the role of the media currently is and potentially could be

Most of the learners that I interviewed in this study believe that the media has a role to play in their activities with Equal Education. For many of these learners their activities with EE are known because media publicises them. They believe that if it was not for the media their activities would remain unknown to the rest of South Africa and the world. Learner 2 explains:

> Media play a significant role; they broadcast our marches so that the world can see that learners were not happy at this specific march about the education they are receiving. The world can see that South Africa has a poor education because learners march every year for equal education. It (media) reveals that education in South Africa is not equal and other countries that prioritise education can see what is happening in South Africa. The media is one of the sources that are powerful in educating people about this. (Learner 2)

The comment above seems to suggest that media's role in learners activities with Equal Education is that of facilitating politics through "the amplification of voices needed to take local struggles to the national or global arena" (Wasserman, 2013:79). It is through the media that "the world can see that South Africa has a poor education because learners march every year for equal education". Learners also feel that the media takes them seriously because journalists attend all the events they organise with Equal Education. Learner 2 explains:

> I think the media treat us seriously because whenever we have an event they are always involved. They want to see what we are up to whenever we meet. The media takes us seriously because whenever they see a bunch of learners in a meeting they want to know what the meeting is about because they know education in South Africa is in a crisis. They take us serious. (Learner 2)

This comment by Learner 2 seems to suggest that learners perceive that members of the media give them 'attention' (Dreher, 2012). Learner 2's comment suggests that journalists seem put aside their position as 'principal knowers', which is what Couldry 2010 (in O'Donnell et al. 2009:431) argues journalists should do to become better listeners. These journalists background themselves and foreground the learners. They treat learners as a resource for information in these events. However, all the learners who were interviewed in this study had only experienced the media at an event. None of these learners have ever been interviewed or knew someone who had been interviewed in their schools or outside their events with EE. It might very well be the case that news values play an important role in terms of journalists choosing to speak to EE rather than the learners themselves but I am interested in finding out why this is the case. Michelle Jones, a journalist from the *Cape Times*, explains:

I would love to (interview learners at their schools) but unfortunately I am unable to because most of principals don't allow members of the media in their schools. (Michelle Jones)

Some of the learners mentioned the lack of co-operation or reluctance by principals that Jones is referring to when it comes to activities planned with Equal Education during youth groups. Some of these learners have even talked about having to assume a different identity when pitching the campaigns they planned with the social movement to their principals.

This inability to go into the school shows up in a lack of learners' voices which is evident in the articles that I sampled for background information to the study. Learners are quoted in 6 out of the 11 news articles published by the *Cape Argus* and 4 of the 17 articles published in the *Cape Times* on EE's activities with learners in 2011. This pattern of not routinely giving learners a voice is also apparent in articles that are about learners themselves. Two such articles published by the *Cape Times* where learners are not referred to and not given a voice carried the following headlines: S*chool children in sleep-in protest for equal education* and *Pupils hungry for more books at lower prices*. In these articles, despite the reference to pupils and children in the headlines there are no voices from learners in the articles. Learners are undermined in the way they are set up in some of the articles as having agency and a voice on the title of the article only to find out as one reads the story that they are not quoted or used as sources in the article at all. Another example is an article about a Rastafarian learner who was suspended from school over dreadlocks which was published in the *Cape Argus*. The journalist chooses to quote the learner's mother (but not the learner), who appears to speculate about the details of what caused her son's suspension.

Although EE is given substantial 'authority', learners are given little 'authority' in these articles. There are a number of ways in which learners are undermined in some articles about EE's activities with learners published in newspapers. Learners are mostly given a voice in articles about new libraries. Their comments in these stories are usually emotional ones about their gratitude for libraries rather than analytical. Bickford (1996:97-98) argues that "in many public settings, an objective, rational demeanour is often favourably counterposed to emotional or passionate expression". The ability to speak dispassionately is favoured and respected over being emotional, except when the appropriate response if one of gratitude. In the case of these learners,

being given a voice or being quoted making emotional commentary somewhat undermines their intellectual abilities. This can be seen in the following article:

> Amelinda Mute, a Grade 11pupil, said they were very excited about getting their own school library. (*Cape Times*, 30 March 2011)

> Petersen said the school had never had a library and the pupils were "very excited" at the opportunity to use the books. (*Cape Times*, 28 February 2011)

There are also instances where teachers talk about learners as troublemakers who need to be protected from themselves. For example:

> She (a principal) said in the Hanover Park area pupils could 'easily be drawn into gangs' and the school's plan was to keep children in the library in the afternoon. (*Cape Times*, 28 February 2011)

There is one story where an EE staff member speaks not only on behalf of learners but also talks down to learners as an adult who know better. This talking down is done in a patronising manner and suggests that learners are not always capable of making the right choices like in the example below.

> She (Kelly Rutherford) also reminded pupils that with the right to education came responsibilities, including to attend school and respect teachers. (*Cape Times*, 28 June 2011)

In some of the articles where these learners are quoted, they are often denied the dignity of a name. In other words, their individuality is undermined. Their quotes are attributed to 'what' (Bickford, 1996) they are, instead of 'who' (Bickford, 1996) they are. This act of giving learners a voice to speak while denying them a name shows that their comments and questions are given more 'authority' than the speakers themselves. For example:

> A number of pupils asked Motshekga tough questions about school infrastructure, provision of textbooks and poor results. One asked her: "Should we wait for the next minister or are you going to be our hero?" (*Cape Times*, 28 June 2011)

> At the launch of the library, the pupils said they had been forced to spend hours travelling to a public library to complete research, and assignments were often handed in late. (*Cape Times*, 30 March 2011)

However, there are articles that give learners a voice and attribute their comments and questions to their names. This act of giving 'authority' to learners' voices occurs less often in the articles. In instances where these learners are given a voice and their names attributed their comments, they speak rationally. Below are examples of some of the things learners said.

Phatiswa Shushwana, a pupil at Luhlaza Secondary School in Khayelitsha, opened the summit on Saturday by calling on national Department of Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga to ensure every school in South Africa was equipped with basic infrastructure. (*Cape Times*, 28 June 2011)

Zameka Qoytwa, a Grade 7 pupil from Linge Primary School in Nyanga, said she participated in the march and would continue to take action for a better education system for pupils across the country. (*Cape Argus*, 13 July 2011)

Furthermore, most of what EE education staff members and learners think of the media seems to relate to some of Dreher's (2010) five interventions[2] that an issue group can adopt to improve their chances of getting coverage by the mainstream media. These are 'checking the performance of news media', 'learning the game', 'building networks', 'talking back to news media' and 'activities that work outside the news'. Equal Education monitors coverage of their activities by the news media to see how their activities are reported upon. Karabo Monatisi, Equal Education's Junior Media Officer, said that in the monitoring that the social movement has been doing so far they found that there were:

> ...only two cases where we were misquoted, when we sent out a press statement and there was this journalist that mixed up two press statements and then quoting from another organisation's statement and said that EE said this whereas we did not say that. But they called us again to say that they are apologising for their errors and they also issued out a public apology in the newspaper. (Karabo Monatisi)

The statement above is in line with Dreher's (2010:89) intervention of 'checking the performance of the news', where issue groups monitor the news media for 'irresponsible reporting' and to commend the news media for fair and balanced reporting. Equal Education also monitors the performance of the news media for cases where they have been misquoted and in order to check how their activities are reported upon. Yoliswa Dwane, the Head of Policy, Communications & Research (PCR) at Equal Education, explains:

> I trust that they would do their job. There are cases that you can see in the way that they report that there is a 'laziness'. But I don't think there is an intention to harm or malice on the part of the journalist. I definitely trust that they are doing their job and they are doing it to the best of their abilities. Sometimes you are able to see who is good and who is not. You try to avoid the weak journalist. The only thing I have seen is the laziness from journalists, not all of them. I have seen some good ones as well. The lazy ones will just copy and paste your press statement. They don't bother calling the department and verifying whatever you said and that's what I call laziness and shoddy reporting. (Yoliswa Dwane)

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[2] See Chapter 1 Section 2.10.2 for details on these interventions.

The 'irresponsible reporting' that Dreher (2010) argues issue organisations check the news media for seems be represented in the above comment by what Dwane refers to as 'laziness' on the part of journalists. This laziness seems to be a failure on the part of journalists to offer the preferred 'response' (Dreher, 2010) to press releases or statements issued by Equal Education. Dwane explains that some of the journalists' 'response' is to "just copy and paste your press statement" instead of "calling the department and verifying whatever you said", which is the preferred 'response' (Dreher, 2012).

For Equal Education a good coverage of the issues seems to be one that contains the social movement's preferred response. Dwane explains:

> A brilliant journalist will have their own angle and that is what is missing in some articles, where they just take the whole article and the whole thing is just you. They have not done any work on the press statement. It's not good. They should take one paragraph or one statement or read the statement and follow up. This is what they are supposed to do. The journalist should do more than just read your statement and just poke the statement a little bit and push you as well. (Yoliswa Dwane)

Dwane's comment seems to suggest that kind of 'response' (Dreher, 2012) that the organisation prefers and is not getting is for journalists to "take one paragraph or one statement or read the statement and follow up". What they get, as Dwane points out, are journalists who "just read your statement and just poke the statement a little bit and push you as well". Her comment also seems to suggest that the social movement is not just interested in being given space to publish ('voice') but instead they require listening journalists who will respond by the kind of 'question-posing' (Bickford, 1996) that allows these journalists to get more information from Equal Education, beyond what is in the press statements. This 'irresponsible reporting' (Dreher, 2010) takes many forms based on what some journalists perceive Equal Education to be. Dwane explains:

> Because we are an activist organisation and somehow people claim that we are troublemakers, sometimes I get the feeling that the journalists want to sensationalise everything. They will push you or try to get you to say that you are definitely going to do something. They ask you a random question and what they want from you is to say you will take this matter further or you will go to court. Sometimes you don't want to say that and it is not appropriate. You can truly see from the questions when someone is pushing you…. (Yoliswa Dwane)

The statement by Dwane above seems to be in line with Couldry's (2010) argument about news media institutions not being so good at reporting on new forms of political cooperation and political acts that could arguably be considered as ordinary democratic acts. Victoria John, a

journalist from the Mail & Guardian who has reported on EE's activities, explains why some journalists would push the social movement to commit to the possibility of engaging on certain activities:

> I was a bit surprised to hear that there were some journalists out there who try to get Equal Education to commit to some activities, I suppose for the sake of a stronger story. I assume that journalist would ask Equal Education: "does it mean you going to court or something like that". I understand why journalists would want to say that because it would be a nice story to say that Equal Education would probably be going to court over this matter. I have never done that and it's quite sad to hear that other journalists have. (Victoria John)

The articles gathered from the Cape Times newspaper, especially articles about the opening of libraries, show that Equal Education is given a chance to dictate the specific practical 'response' (Dreher, 2012) it requires from readers. The social movement is given space at the end of these stories to publish a paragraph asking readers to donate books or join the movement to celebrate the opening of a library, like in the following paragraph from three articles about the opening of libraries:

> If you have any books to donate which are in good condition and suitable for these collections, please drop them off at The Bookery at 20 Roeland Street, Cape Town, or call the co-ordinator, Themba Tshabalala, at 021 461 4189 for more information. (*Cape Times*, 28 February 2011)

The last paragraph in these stories is also used by the social movement as a space to point readers to its website, where they can find more information about its activities, or acknowledge readers who responded to its call like in the following statements.

> Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who popped in to Equal Education's Bookery last weekend and covered 1080 of the books earmarked for Thembelihle High School. (*Cape Times*, 18 May 2011)

> For more information about the upcoming march, visit www.equaleducation.org.za and to donate books call The Bookery at 021 461 4189 or email Conyngham at rich@equaleducation.org.za. (*Cape Times*, 23 April 2011)

This pattern of giving space to an organisation to call on readers to take part on its campaigns or activities and to thank them for responding to its call is unusual for a mainstream newspaper. It shows that the newspaper seems to be going outside of the boundaries of journalism into advocacy for Equal Education's cause. This is something that is more common in community and/or alternative newspapers.

In addition, Equal Education also seems to be experienced in 'learning the game' (2010:90). This involves learning media skills and news conversation to improve an organisation's chances of

getting mainstream media coverage. EE uses press releases or statements to get the media to pay attention to their activities. Karabo Monatisi, Equal Education's Junior Media Officer, explains:

> …when we send out the press statement the media houses want to get some recognition to say that I was the first one to write about the press statement that Equal Education sent out so some of the journalist they just edit the press statement and publish it. (Karabo Monatsi)

From the articles that I looked at as background information to the thesis it is clear from the large number of articles about Equal Education's activities that the social movement is used as a 'resource' (Dreher, 2012) on basic education related issues. The *Cape Argus* and *Cape Argues* published 40 articles on EE's activities in the 2011 year. The *Cape Argus* published 16 of these articles, whilst the *Cape Times* published 24 articles. The social movement has also received coverage from national newspapers, like the *Mail & Guardian*, *City Press*, *Sunday Times* and *The Star* newspapers. Dwane explains:

> We get a lot of media coverage and I am wondering if that has to do with the type of cases that we take but it also has to do with the support that we get for each campaign. You will not only have a media campaign on its own but you have an actual campaign, you can march, you can go to parliament and a dialogue continues even without a media campaign triggering a discussion around a specific time and a campaign. (Yoliswa Dwane)

Dwane's statement above seems to suggest the adoption of what Dreher's (2010) intervention of 'talking back' to the news media. The difference in application of 'talking back' from Dreher's (2010) one is that EE's form of 'talking back' is not primarily aimed at the media but it is aimed at the general public and contains multiple activities. "You have an actual campaign, you can march, you can go to parliament and a dialogue continues even without a media campaign" as part of what seems to be 'talking back' to the public rather than just the media. This is also not a once off event, unlike in Dreher's conception, it may continue for months and even years in issues that involve court cases. An example of these kinds of activities would be Equal Education's Minimum Norms and Standards for schools Campaign which has been on-going since 2011. Victoria John, a journalist who has reported on EE's activities explains:

> I think they (Equal Education) are more in tune to what the media wants. They know that we like facts and figures so they include that in their press releases. They know that we like to go to the Department (of Basic Education) and say on this date of this year you promised this. So they will give us that information and say that in 2012 the Minister promised that she would build these many schools, which means that we can now go to the Minister and say "but in 2012 you said you would build these many schools and you haven't". So they give us that type of information which is very useful. They are also very creative in their campaigns, so they have great signs and their presence on the streets and outside parliament and their

march is very colourful and it's very loud and full of singing and dancing, which makes for great photos and good descriptions in our stories. (Victoria John)

Equal Education also gets a lot of space to publish commentary pieces in a number of mainstream newspapers. These are commentary pieces that are often longer than 750 words. In particular the social movement seems to get a lot of space to publish commentary pieces and op-eds in one of the local papers, the *Cape Times*.

These are commentary articles or op-eds that were written by Equal Education's staff members. The newspapers that publish these commentary pieces seem to be engaging in the practices of 'hearing dissent', which is one of O'Donnell's (2009) listening practices. This is an act by these newspapers to give publication space to issue groups to publish their ideas and views in the pages that carry the so-called 'major-stories'. Dwane explains:

> When things are a little bit quiet, you follow up with op-eds. The body of those op-eds will mainly be about experiences. We illustrate the impact of whatever we asking for, whether we calling for certain resources to be given or directed towards under-performing schools or maybe you want a set of rules to be put (in place) for under-performing schools or school infrastructure, you don't mainly focus on or call for the regulation to be put in place but you go and get different experiences. You go to school and find some of the letter that the learners wrote and they are around the same circumstance and you take those quotes and put them within your op-eds. (Yoliswa Dwane)

This act of including learners' quotes in op-eds by Equal Education's staff members can be considered an attempt at 'representative thinking' (Bickford, 1996). In representing learners the quotes help, as Dwane explains, to "illustrate the impact of whatever we asking for". They use 'representative thinking' to strengthen the arguments that they are making and to make it more relatable. Here, 'representative thinking' is used to evoke an emotional response as they get to understand the problems and issues that learners encounter in the South African Basic Education system.

Although Equal Education gets enormous coverage of its activities and its staff members are given a space to publish opinion pieces, learners' voices are left out in most of the coverage by the media despite these learners being the fundamental participants in EE's activities. There seems to be a lack of 'recognition' (Dreher, 2012) of learners' roles in EE's activities, which (according to Dreher, 2009) can only be remedied by giving respect and esteem to voices with certain identities (who in this case happen to be learners).

The involvement of learners extends to campaigns as well. Equal Education's campaigns are planned by the social movement and learners themselves rather than by the social movement's staff members alone. These campaigns also involve and revolve around learners which give campaigns a face that the public can identify with. Dwane explains:

> Whenever you have a campaign strategy, not only a media campaign strategy, for us how it becomes stronger and relevant is when there are people behind the campaign in the sense that this is an issue that talks about human beings that is relevant to people's situations. (Yoliswa Dwane)

O'Donnell (2009) has identified three journalism-related listening practices[3]. These practices are 'purposeful listening spaces', 'hearing dissent' and 'intercultural dialogue with strangers'. Dwane's comment above seems to suggest that these campaigns are used as 'purposeful listening spaces'. These are spaces where the media can listen to voices that will not usually make it into the mainstream media and that represent 'alternative' views. The space differs from the one that O'Donnell's (2009) describes because it is created by an issue organisation (Equal Education) rather than by the media. Equal Education creates these campaigns to also get learners to speak for themselves. Dwane explains:

> Even with us when we get called this is the way we get actual students to talk about their own experiences because it can be easy for me to quote and craft the meaning of what is going on and even re-tell the story over and over again but it's much more powerful when the person who is experiencing the injustice is actually talking out. That's the power that we give to young people not only for them to get their representatives to talk on their behalf but also to involve them in their campaign, where they talk about what is going on in their schools, their experience, how it impacts their lives and how it impact their future. You get their point of view and you get to hear the story from those who are experiencing the problem. So for us in many of our campaigns we get young people to tell the story of their own schools. (Yoliswa Dwane)

The comment above can be seen as a suggestion that EE trades 'representative thinking' (Bickford, 1996) for learners representing themselves. This allows for learners to represent themselves as unique and being affect by schooling-related problems in a unique manner, which also puts a face on the campaign. Although 'representative thinking' may be easy for EE's staff members, their campaigns are stronger when they get the learner themselves to "talk about what is going on in their schools, their experience, how it impacts their lives and how it impacts their future". These learners are given 'authority' (Dreher, 2012) and used by EE as a 'resource' (Dreher, 2012) on issues that relate to their schooling and education. In instances where learners'

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[3] See Chapter 2 Section 2.10 for details of these practices.

concerns come in the form of letters EE communicates these letters to the rest of the organisation before involving the media. Dwane explains:

> We put the whole letter up (on EE's website) so that people can start discussing that issue. Some people can tell us what this kid should do. We just put the letter out without thinking about a media or communication strategy around it that is looking externally. It is only for our members to know that this is what is happening and also those kinds of cases are actually an example of what kids should do in different circumstances. (Yoliswa Dwane)

Publishing these letters on the social movement's website which is also accessible to everyone may be seen as a form of 'talking back to news media' (Dreher 2010:92). This kind of talking back does not happen through an event, as in Dreher's examples, but it occurs through the social movement's website and is meant for "members to know that this is what is happening" rather getting the media to report differently about a certain issue. It is orientated towards telling a story and getting members of the movement familiar with the case in question before it is communicated with the media in a form of a campaign. Equal Education is conscious not to involve the media in these early stages of dealing with an issue. The reason for not including the media from the onset is for the movement not to be seen as running to the media each time it deals with an issue. Dwane explains:

> You don't want to create an impression as an organisation that the only thing that you are interested in is to punish government and you are not willing to negotiate. The only time that you take things to the next level is when you have given people a chance and you have negotiated and spoken to people. You don't want to ruin all potential relationships with government. The first step is to try and approach government. (Yoliswa Dwane)

This comment seems to suggest that the movement consciously gets the media involved when other processes have failed because, as Dwane explains, "it is not only a matter of publicity but it is a matter of how you hold teachers as well as principals, who are not doing their jobs, accountable". The media is involved when the dialogue between the organisation and government has failed to materialise. In cases like this one the role of the news media seems to be to contribute to the struggle for visibility and to being heard by the ruling group and the general public (Couldry, 2010).

Due to Equal Education being what seems to be a good 'resource' for journalists, the social movement is used as a resource for commentary even in matters that are outside the scope of its activities. These are usually subject matters that they have never dealt with and have no intention to deal with in the near future. Dwane explains:

…a lot of time they ask about politics and in some cases they will ask you about random issues. They know that you have not dealt with, for example higher education in detail or social grants, but because they are running out of time and they need someone to say something and they thought you are EE and they think 'let me get them to say something'. (Yoliswa Dwane)

In the 2011 calendar year, Equal Education received more coverage of its activities from the Cape Argus and the Cape Times, which are both Cape Town-based regional newspapers, than any other newspaper in South Africa. Dwane explains:

> *Cape Argus*, I don't know what is going on in that paper and quite frankly they have a good political reporter, Ilse Fredricks. She is quite a good political reporter but the funny thing is that in all of the stories they have covered about EE we only get a strip, something like less than 100 words somewhere in the corner of the paper, or in the middle of the paper and it is something very small. (Yoliswa Dwane)

The comment above seems to suggest that Equal Education gets limited hearing from the *Cape Argus*. Although Dwane believes that the *Cape Argus* gives EE limited space to voice out their activities, my analysis of the articles that were published by this newspaper in 2011 paint a slightly different picture. The *Cape Argus* published 11 news articles and 1 commentary article on EE's activities during this period. These articles were published on pages 3 to 6. Their length ranges from 500 to 1200 words. The social movement gets the bulk of its coverage from the *Cape Times*. Dwane explains:

> The *Cape Times* is like the best paper. They have got a very progressive editor. She is quite a good person and they have even adopted some of our campaigns. Not all campaigns but there is a campaign that we've got where we are asking people to donate books. Not only in terms of writing articles, but they have their own library project. So they have covered some of our campaigns, especially in the beginning. How we got exposure here regionally was through the Cape Times. They are the first regional paper that actually covered us. (Yoliswa Dwane)

Dwane's comment above seems to suggest that the *Cape Times* has taken a decision not only to be a listening newspaper when it comes to Equal Education's activities but the newspaper has also adopted some campaigns. The newspaper seems to have taken an active position in the fight for a better education in South Africa. In addition to adopting Equal Education's 'A Library in Every School' campaign, the *Cape Times* has also published 24 articles on the social movement's activities in 2011. Of these articles, 6 were written by EE staff members and were over 1000 words in length. Their role, in this regard, seems to not only be that of facilitating the politics of education through "the amplification of voices needed to take local struggles to the national or global arena" (Wasserman, 2013:79) but also of contributing to (Equal Education's) struggle for visibility and to be heard (Couldry, 2010). Dwane explains:

> …you have a number of papers that will cover your issue. For each every issue you have to think about who is important here and who the target group is and who your audience is. When you want to speak to government officials or government the *Mail & Guardian* is the paper because that is the main paper that they are worried about or they will take note of. If something goes into the *Mail & Guardian* they will notice it. (Yoliswa Dwane)

The comment above seems to suggest that EE uses the media as a 'resource' (Dreher, 2012) in getting their messages to specific audiences. For Equal Education, the Mail & Guardian newspaper not only enables EE to get heard by government officials who the social movement might not necessarily be able to get them to listen. EE's use of the media coverage they receive also depends on what the type of audiences that the social movement is trying to communicate with. Dwane explains:

> …it depends on each and every issue because sometimes you think it is a national campaign and want to spread it across. Instead of going to everyone, you narrow down the number of papers. Maybe you say you want these top ten papers to cover this issue and you call the journalists. Throughout the years we have compiled a list of media contacts. In some cases when they want to follow up a story they give you their contact numbers and you keep that number in your media list and it becomes easier when want to call. (Yoliswa Dwane)

The comment above seems to also point out Equal Education's capability in 'building networks' (Dreher, 2010:91) with journalists who report on education issues in South Africa. The social movement taps into these networks when it wants to communicate with the different stakeholders. Monatisi explains:

> …we also have a list of the journalists that are working in parliament. So, when we have something like a comment regarding something that has been said in parliament we know who to call. (Karabo Monatisi)

What EE staff members and learners think of the media seems to suggest that the media is effective in listening to Equal Education though not so successful in listening to the learners themselves. The analysis in this section has shown that Dreher's (2009) interventions appear strongly when EE staff members talk about their strategies to get media coverage. O'Donnell's (2009) journalism-related practices seem to be used by EE instead and not by journalists, which is contrary to what he found in his study. Those journalists who report on Equal Education's activities and follow these up with EE staff members and learners are perceived as taking the role of 'listening' journalists (Wasserman, 2013:79). They are political listeners who facilitate politics by taking local voices to the national and global arenas. Although tools such as media statements or press releases are used to attract the attention of the media, they don't seem to

work in terms of directing media to learners except in the case of the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper.

4.4.3. Journalists' response to EE's and learners' ideas about the role of the media

The *Mail & Guardian* is another newspaper that gives Equal Education authority and space to publish its thoughts and ideas. Victoria John is an education journalist for this newspaper. She has reported extensively of on education issues and has also written a lot of reflexive articles on her reporting with learners. John argues that the fact that some principals don't want members of the media interviewing learners in their schools does not mean that those learners should not be interviewed and given a voice in media reports about their activities. She explains:

> …they (principals) can't stop me from speaking to a learner outside the school grounds. What I have always told the learners I spoke to is that: if you ever get into trouble with the principal or anyone else then we'll write a story about that too. The principal mustn't think that he can intimidate you or violate you because we would expose him for that. (Victoria John)

> …they make up 30% of the population and they are citizens of this country too. They have a voice that needs to be represented. We cannot just have parents making decisions for them. We need to know what they think and what they feel, more often than not their suggestions on how to deal with problems that they deal with, like domestic abuse or problems at school is very good because they are the ones that are experiencing these problems so we need to listen to these children. We need to get their opinions into the media. (Victoria John)

John's coverage of Equal Education's activities with learners shows evidence of her thinking about the importance of giving learners a voice in stories about their activities. She ensures that learners' voices are included in stories that about the learners themselves rather than having other people speak on their behalf. An article headlined *E Cape pupils: Teachers hit us until our hands bleed* illustrates how John reports on learners' issues. Not only does she tell the story from the perspective of learners but she also uses learners' voices as a narrative device in telling the story. For example:

> Palesa Manyokole, a grade 11 pupil at Moshesh Senior Secondary School, and her mother, Madimo Mouthloali, have filed an application in the Bisho High Court asking it to declare that the conditions at the school violate pupils' constitutional right to adequate schooling.

> They are joined by non-governmental organisation Equal Education in their application and are supported by nine other pupils, who also filed affidavits. Moshesh Senior is in rural Queen's Mercy Village near Matatiele, outside Kokstad. It has about 310 pupils and 12 teachers.

"Many grade 10 and 11 pupils … have likely failed the end-of-year exams because we did not have sufficient teachers for all of our subjects for several months in the 2012 academic year," Manyokole said in her founding affidavit.

Some teachers "come to school intoxicated", and "often teachers do not arrive at all", she said.

Telile Manyokole, a grade 11 pupil, said in her supporting affidavit that, on occasion, "pupils have had to fetch teachers from their homes and urge them to come to school to teach".

This inclusion of learners' voices continues as the story unfolds.

Because there are not enough textbooks, some pupils are forced to share them. "When we have homework, I either make two sets of answers, one for him [a pupil with whom she shares books] and one for me, or I let him copy my homework in the morning," Palesa Manyokole said.

A Grade 10 pupil, Dillo Pharoe, said in his supporting affidavit "teachers hit us with sticks and dusters… until our hands bleed".

Grade 12 pupils are told to stay in the school's "derelict" hostel to avoid wasting time travelling the long distances to and from their homes, but the hostel has no teachers or any supervision and the school does not supply the pupils with bedding, cooking facilities or ablution facilities. Manyokole said some of the doors could not be locked and there was no perimeter fence, making pupils "easily accessible to criminal elements from the school or surrounding areas".

Some windows are broken and part of the roof is badly damaged. There is no electricity, so at night the pupils study by candlelight.

A matric pupil, Reatile Leoatle, said in her supporting affidavit that she had to bath in a basin in front of other girls in the hostel and at night she "used a basin to go to the toilet ... [S]ometimes a boy would come to the girls' hostel at night and have sex with his girlfriend whilst we were in there."

John's attitude towards learners is based on her 'recognition' of the 'uniqueness' of every individual learner and the way they are affected by issues. This is also evident in perhaps her most iconic article in terms of giving learners a voice, where she interviewed young people about what they think of media freedom. She interviewed learners between the ages of 11 and 13. John also said that there were measures that Equal Education could put in place to ensure that learners' voices are included in media reports about the social movement's activities with these learners. John explains:

I think if they included learners' names and numbers in the bottom of the press releases it would make it easier for journalists to include learners' voices into the stories. So if they could establish and train one learner from each school about how to speak to the media, that would be great. Also if they could get photos of whatever it was they were campaigning for, high quality photos. We are always looking for photos and we can't always be on the scene, so it would be nice to have those photos. (Victoria John)

Both the journalists who were interviewed as part of this study said that they relied on communication efforts by Equal Education to be aware of the social movement's activities. The movement is proactive in trying to get the media to cover its activities with learners. Michelle Jones and Victoria John explain:

> Either they would send out an email, a media statement or a press release. Sometimes some of the staff members contact me directly. (Michelle Jones)

> I get their press releases and I follow them on Twitter and Facebook. But I can say confidently that most of my biggest stories about Equal Education's activities were because one of the leaders contacted me privately before and said "we are thinking of doing this or have you seen that we are going to do that or have you seen that there is a problem here in the Department (of Basic Education) or we think that you should do a story on this". I'd like to think that I have a good relationship with Equal Education, I speak to them quite a lot, I email them, I WhatsApp them just to check on what they are doing or what they think about stuff. I like to get their perspectives on things. (Victoria John)

The social movement's efforts to get members of the media to recognise its activities seem to work in terms of getting members of the media to pay attention to its cause. The fact that Equal Education has a lot of ways (platforms) that people who are interested in its activities can access information on means that there are more ways to get information on its activities. Despite this abundance of platforms to access information about the social movement's activities, the process in which it engages on with learners is seldom reported on by the media. Michelle Jones, *Cape Times* journalist, explains:

> …I have done a lot of stories on Equal Education and their workings. I don't know if that issue of the work that they do with their learners would be of any interest to our readers. (Michelle Jones)

The comment above seems to be in line with Dreher (2010) argument that what the media hear is dependent on media practitioners' assumption of what the readers want to read. In this case the process through which Equal Education and learners embark on to decide the issues that they will tackle are seen as something that the readers will not be interested in. The outcomes of that process, campaigns, are seen as news that the readers will want to read about. Not all journalists who report on Equal Education's activities approach the processes this way. John explains:

> I have done a story on that actually, after the first settlement agreement where the Minister (of Basic Education) agreed to pass a draft of the Minimum Norms and Standards. That was end of last year, in September, October or November. I wrote a nice piece about how they decided to embark on this Norms and Standards thing. In that story I spoke about how the organisation chooses the issues it is going to campaign for and how the issues come from learners themselves and learners sit together and speak to the facilitators and how that moves to other bodies within the organisation and then the leaders make decisions on that. (Victoria John)

I think it is (important to report on this process) because South Africa needs to know that these are not a group of highly educated, privileged white people who are making all these decisions. The campaigns are coming from the learners themselves. The learners make most of the decisions themselves and it is their experience, it is them who are being activists and they are just guided by the leaders at Equal Education. (Victoria John)

The comments that John makes in the two paragraphs above seem to suggest that although 'representative thinking' (Bickford, 1996) by Equal Education staff members is important, it is still equally important for South African citizens to know and understand where the ideas and thoughts that are being represented come from. Reporting on learners' processes with EE could also be seen as an attempt to respect and give esteem to voices of learners. It also seems to be an attempt to acknowledge the 'authority' (Dreher, 2012) those learners have and their contribution to the process. John's comments also suggest that she understands how Equal Education works as a democratic project; as one way in which learners can participate in issues of basic education.

The two journalists that I interviewed for this study believe that they have a role to play in improving the state of education in South Africa. John explains:

I expose problems and I raise awareness on them in the hope that South Africa will become involved and active and offer their help to fix these problems and also in the hope that the public will be loud and voice their concerns, which would increase pressure on the Minister to take action where she should to improve the system. (Victoria John)

John's comment is in line with Wasserman's (2013) argument about the role that a 'listening' should play in society. He argues that 'listening' journalists and media should facilitate politics through "the amplification of voices needed to take local struggles to the national and global arena" (Wasserman, 2013:79), although John seems to only be interested in the local arena. John also contributes, through her work, to the struggle for visibility and to being heard (Couldry, 2010). The journalist's role does not only end with reporting but she also has to ensure that whatever claims that EE and learners make get a 'response' (Dreher, 2012). John explains:

I think it is absolutely crucial that South Africa hears what the Department of Basic Education has to say about these problems and right now they are not getting any answers, which is very unfair to our citizens. (Victoria John)

The journalism that is practised by the two, within this context of listening, is different and seems to be indicative of the approaches that the two newspapers take when it comes to reporting on issues pertaining to EE and its activities. The *Mail & Guardian's* approach, as exemplified by John's reports, seems to be that of reporting on citizens' participation processes, giving every

participant a voice and presenting those views to government in attempt to hold it accountable to its citizens. The newspaper is aware of EE's processes with learners. The *Mail & Guardian* reportage contains evidence of acknowledging learners' 'authority' and 'recognition' (Dreher, 2010) of learners not only as participants but also as active citizens who are making claims and demands on issues relating to basic education. It becomes the journalist's duty within this approach to ensure that these citizens get a 'response' from government. The newspaper's role in reporting on basic education issues is also that of encouraging citizens to exercise their citizenship and demand their rights. This approach makes a significant contribution to the democratic project.

The *Cape Time*s, on the other hand, seems to have a different approach. Its approach seems to be that of giving EE 'recognition', 'voice' (Couldry, 2010) and 'authority' (Dreher, 2010) by allowing the social movement space to publish its thoughts and ideas and by reporting on its activities. This newspaper's role seems to be that of publishing information about EE's activities and keeping the public informed when it comes to issues relating to basic education. This approach could be described as 'giving voice' by its airing of important issues.

In conclusion, the most effective 'political listening' that takes place in the contexts that were discussed above seems to be amongst learners and between learners and their facilitators (EE staff members). The behaviour and attitudes of participants in these contexts are exemplary of the attitudes and behaviour ideal for daily politics to be more inclusive. All participants get a chance to participate in these situations. They all pay attention to each other and respect one another even though they might not agree with what others are saying. These situations are useful in pointing out what 'political listening' would look like in real life face-to-face interactions. They are also useful in showing the full extent of the usefulness of the theory. The interaction between EE and the media involves the least effective 'political listening' because other factors come into play when it comes to newspapers. These are factors such as news values; pupils have less authority than EE staff members and government officials. There is also a greater emphasis by journalists on holding government accountable rather than engaging in the work of creating outspoken, responsible, citizens. That is where the emphasis of their focus lies.

Chapter 5 - Summary, conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to investigate whether the relationship between Equal Education and learners could be considered 'political listening'. Furthermore, it also sought to consider what Equal Education, learners and journalists think the role of the media is and should be in the struggle for better education. Three conclusions can be made. Firstly, the relationship between learners and Equal Education can be considered 'political listening'. There is a complex back-and-forth dialogue between EE staff members and learners about the issues and problems that end up being publicised through campaigns and interviews with journalists. These are issues from learners themselves. Secondly, the role that the media play in the social movement's struggle for equality in basic education has been discussed and analysed. Equal Education staff members who interact with journalists and learners have acknowledged that the media plays a significant role in publicising their struggle to national and international arenas. The media is also used to mediate communication from EE to the Department of Basic Education. Journalists who report on Equal Education's activities that were interviewed not only see their role as one of only making EE's and learners' activities known but they also see the responsibility of holding the Department of Basic Education accountable to citizens as falling within their scope of responsibility. The kind of journalism that is practised by the two journalists is indicative of the different kinds of approaches newspapers adopt when it comes to reporting on Equal Education and its activities. The *Cape Times*' approach, as seen in the reporting of Michelle Jones seems to be that of giving EE a voice by providing a platform to publish its activities and ideas. The *Mail & Guardian*'s approach, as evident in the reporting of Victoria John, on the other hand, seems to be that of facilitating the democratic project by including multiple voices of citizens on issues of citizen participation and by holding government accountable to its citizens. Learners in this reportage are constituted as unique, capable and claims-making citizens.

Thirdly, learners who are members of Equal Education interact with each other in a democratic manner that makes exercising citizenship possible. They all acknowledge that they have a view which must be heard, they respect each other and they criticise an opinion, not a person, and

offer suggestions for further discussion. It is in this context where Bickford's (1996) theory of political listening can be seen in practice. These learners pay attention to each other and respect one another even when they hold adversarial opinions. The fact that they might have conflicting views on an issue makes their deliberation even more sophisticated and productive. It is because of these learners' involvement with Equal Education and the way it operates that these learners actively exercise their citizenship when it comes to issues of education.

5.1. The theory and its applicability

This theory and methodology for 'political listening' is incipient but suggestive. I've tried to actually apply the categories the Australian researchers have suggested in order to further the methodological uses of the theory. I have defined these categories and mapped them onto my data when I did my analysis. The typology that I have developed will be useful in the further development of the theory and its applicability to different situations or contexts.

With a bit of adaptation this theory helped me describe in some detail the nature of the interactions between EE and learners and between EE, learners and the two newspapers. Prior uses of this theory have been mainly in contexts of face-to-face interaction. By adapting and applying it to mediated interaction the usefulness of the theory has been extended. Since this theory is in the terrain of normative theory we have to assume it has been developed to be useful and applicable but its applicability is hindered by the fact that it was developed with situations of face-to-face interaction in mind. A focus on developing this theory for mediated communication contexts will open up this theory to be used in other kinds of mediated communication contexts. An example of such mediated communications where 'political listening' might be useful would be online communications, which is a new and growing field with the potential to enhance citizen participation. In this context political listening would be useful in terms of shedding light on how citizens interact or should interact with each other about political issues in online platforms.

5.2. Lessons from Equal Education's success

Dreher's (2010:89-94) intervention strategies to get media coverage; which are "checking the performance of news media", "learning the game", "building networks", "talking back to news media" and "activities that work outside the news"; are useful in assessing EE's success in terms of getting the media to pay attention to its activities. The social movement regularly monitors the news media for mistakes and to see the kinds of reports that are generated on its activities. In terms of "learning the game" (Dreher, 2010:90), EE staff members produce press releases and op-eds that contain lots of quotes from learners and include pictures. This makes it difficult for journalists and reporters to ignore the social movement and its agenda. EE has also built networks with journalists and reporters that cover its activities. The social movement's staff members often contact specific reporters about some of their activities in order to get in-depth coverage. Although the social movement's website can be viewed as a platform that makes "talking back to news media" (Dreher, 2010:92) possible, EE primarily uses this platform to inform its members of upcoming activities. It is also a space where journalists can pick-up potential stories about the social movement's latest activities. EE also has a number of activities that resemble Dreher's (2010:94) "activities that work outside the news". Although these activities are not a response to the news coverage that EE receives, they are important processes that lay a foundation for the activities the media reports on. These processes offer a window for the public to learn about how EE works and its complex processes. This research has shown that EE could also play a more proactive role in getting the media to pay attention to learners' voices and their roles in the social movement's activities. It might be beneficial for the social movement to include contact details of learners that are quoted in the press releases and op-eds to make it more possible for journalists to contact these learners and include their voices in the reportage.

Furthermore, there are three lessons that I have learned from studying how Equal Education operates. First, the social movement decides on the issues that it focuses on in conjunction with learners. This is especially important because social movements, by definition, represent certain groups of people. What EE has is a unique system and one that could be useful for other social movements to adopt. It is not just about speaking on behalf of learners but it is, as Yoliswa Dwane explains, about giving power "to young people not only for them to get their

representatives to talk on their behalf but also to involve them in their campaigns, where they talk about what is going on in their schools, their experience, how it impacts their lives and how it impacts their future". This involvement of learners in every step of the process is also empowering to learners because they know that their views and opinions are important are recognised as such. Furthermore, since the movement's leadership is made up of middle class (and mostly white) individuals who have never experienced what these learners experience in their schools, they meet with learners regularly to ensure that "they represent exactly what the learners want", as Victoria John (2013) explained in an interview.

Secondly, Equal Education seems to be very successful in terms of getting the media to pay attention to its activities with learners. The movement produces regular press releases, which are distributed to news media organisations. EE also has an office, equipped with telephones and computers with internet access. This makes it convenient for journalists to get in touch with EE's staff members. The social movement has also been successful in forming relationships with journalists that report on its activities with learners. Members of the movement call these journalists whenever something comes up to give them insights to their latest stories. The staff members who deal with the media also write commentary articles or op-eds for the media which are published in newspapers, and increase EE's media footprint. The reportage that has been produced by the two reporters shows different approaches to the social movement and its activities. The *Cape Times'* approach is that of giving EE a voice via a publishing platform and the newspaper's role seems to be limited to that. The *Mail & Guardian*'s approach, on the other hand, is that of engaging with the social movement as a listener. Its role is not just that of giving EE a voice but it is also about facilitating listening between EE staff and learners, and using the information from the two parties to hold government accountable and inform the nation at the same time thereby insisting that government 'listen' to mostly unheard citizens.

Thirdly, EE and its learners have been successful in terms of holding the Department of Basic Education accountable to learners and to making it deliver on some of its educational promises. The movement's role in learners' efforts to force the government to make basic education more equal is to support learners in these struggles. The kind of support that EE gives these learners includes mobilisation of other learners and legal support in terms of court cases that these learners initiate against their teachers, principals or the Minister or the Department of Basic

Education. The movement also helps organise events where members of government in charge of basic education come to answer learners' concerns and questions. This platform that EE has created and continues to create becomes a training ground that feeds into citizenship because it teaches listening, speaking out, strategies of dealing with people in power and making claims and demands. These are useful skills for democratic participation, and since they are not taught in schools EE's activities become an important resource for the development of an active citizenry.

EE's success offers a number of 'principles' that other social movements can adopt to support 'political listening' within these contexts of citizen participation and democratic participation. One, social movements could create formalised programmes or platforms for continuous engagement amongst ordinary members, between ordinary members and leaders and between the social movement as a whole (ordinary members and leaders) and its external audience. Two, social movements should attach equal value or treat all the voices of its members equally irrespective of their positions within the movement. This helps assure every member that they are in a democratic environment and that their thoughts and ideas are just as important as any other member's. This extends to allowing every member to talk about their experience of the movement and their views about an issue of interest to external audience, including the media. Finally and most importantly, social movements could adopt a bottom-up approach in designing their programme of activities and in charting the direction it should take over an issue of interest to the movement. It is necessary to get all members involved in deciding what the movement's role should be and what should be done about a certain issue rather than leaving it in the hands of those who are entrusted with leadership positions. Adhering to these three 'principles' will help foster a 'political listening' relationship within a social movement, which becomes an important vehicle for the empowerment of members of the public to become active citizens. It is this potential of social movements, to become vehicles through which ordinary citizens who are unable normally to exercise their citizenship as individuals can participate in democratic processes, which makes them an important feature of the South African political sphere.

In conclusion, this research project has attempted to detail how Equal Education operates as a democratic project in the struggle for equality in basic education in a national political context in which real, active citizenship is not fostered. It has used Bickford's (1996) theory of 'political listening' and other studies that relate and cite it to make sense of the interaction between Equal

Education and learners. The study has attempted to develop a typology of listening that will be useful in the advancement of listening research and in researching citizen participation within a democracy.

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Appendix 1- Interview Questions

1.1. Questions to learners

About learners and Equal Education

1. What different ways do you communicate with EE?
2. When you tell Equal Education or youth group facilitator about an issue or problem what kind of reaction do you get? Can you think of an example when this happened?
3. a) Do the people from Equal Education see your issues in similar way to you? Explain and give examples? (Recognition)

   b) Your facilitator might come from a different background/schooling system from you. Do you think someone who hasn't experienced the same problems and issues as you can really understand them? (Openness/backgrounding of the self)
4. Does Equal Education take you seriously and treat you as though you have things to say? (Authority)

About learners and the media

1. Which media do you use?
2. What do you use it for?
3. What role do the media play in your struggle to get better education?
4. Are there things you think the media don't do but should do to improve education in South Africa?
5. Can you think of a situation where you were interviewed by the media or asked to explain something? Explain what the story was about? (learners being used a resource)
6. Have you or do you know any learner from youth groups who has been interviewed by the media? (Resource)

7. From what you see in the media, do you (learners not the education crisis) think the media take you seriously and treat as though you have things to say? Explain and give examples. (Authority)

1.2. Questions to youth group facilitators

About youth group facilitators and learners

1. What different ways do you communicate with learners?
2. How do learners express their issues or problems to you? Can you think of an example when this happened?
3. What happens when learners raise specific issues during youth groups? How are these communicated to other people in Equal Education?
4. a) Do you see learners' issues in the same ways they see these issues? Explain and give examples? (Recognition)

   b) Do you come from the same background/schooling system as these learners? Do you think someone who hasn't experienced the same problems and issues as these learners can really understand them? (Openness/backgrounding of the self).
5. Do you think that learners are mature enough and responsible enough to engage with these issues? (Authority)
6. How much of what learners tell you do you take?

1.3. Questions to Equal Education staff members who deal with media queries

About Equal Education and media

1. Can you think of a situation where the media professionals ask you for comment on issues that are outside your scope? (Resource)

2. What is your relationship with the media? Do you trust them?

3. What do you think of the media coverage of your activities with learners? Explain

4. Do you feel you are given a voice and heard through the mainstream media and in particular the Cape Argus and Cape Times? Explain

5. Does it matter to you? Why?

6. Where do you feel heard? What other avenues of communication are important in this struggle?

7. How do you frame the issues?

8. How do you decide what you are going to say to the media? Where does the information come from?

1.4. Questions to journalists

About Equal Education and the role of the media

1. What (if anything) in the summary that I sent you was information you were not aware of? What do you think of any of the things in the summary I sent you?

2. How do you become aware of EE's activities?

3. What kinds of activities or issues to do with basic education do you typically cover?

4. Have you ever pitched to do a story on the process (as described in the summary I sent you) that EE and learners embark on to your editor? Can you explain why or why not?

5. What do you think your role is in improving education in South Africa or what do you think your role is in dealing with the education crisis in South Africa?

6. When you are working on a story about EE do you ever go to schools to interview learners? Explain?

7. Have you interviewed learners in any context about the state of education in South Africa? If so, what is your perception of these learners and their concerns? If not, why not?

8. What is your perception of EE?

9. What, if anything, do you think learners and EE could do to increase or improve coverage of education issues?

10. What sources they typically go to for stories about education issues?

11. What some of the advantages and disadvantages of using EE members as sources are?

12. How does EE compare with other social movements in terms of their relationship with the media?

13. If you think media coverage of education in South Africa could be better, what would make it possible for you as a journalist to report on education issues more thoroughly?

14. Is there anything else you want to add?

Appendix 2 – Youth group reading

2.1. Bisho High Campaign for Clean Toilets

In July a group of bright young learners from Bisho High met during a rainy week in Bisho. The group was part of the Buffalo City Branch of Equal Education and along with equalizers from the nearby Breidbach Senior Secondary they discussed the problems they faced every day.

As each learner related their own daily struggle it became abundantly clear that this group, like thousands of others around the country, were facing overcrowded classrooms, filthy toilets, bullying and corporal punishment on a daily basis. One girl spoke of her fear of going to the toilets at school. She chose rather to stay at home or try to fight off the demands of nature for the day. Others showed the group the daily bruises recently delivered by their disgruntled teachers.

This discussion shifted from the problems faced to the reasons those problems existed. Everything from poor management to vandalism was spoken about but what worried the learners the most was the small numbers that chose to face their struggles head on. Zama Sigwili, who is doing her matric this year, argued that in order for the movement to grow the group must win their first campaign, building momentum and bringing about lasting change. With this in mind the equalizers set their minds on sanitation and the campaign for clean toilets began.

With the energy of the meeting fuelling the group, they went about researching the extent of the problems. They conducted surveys, questionnaires and took pictures. The problem faced was not pretty; for every toilet that worked there were three that didn't. Sanitary pads, soiled socks and notepad paper were found blocking the loos while faeces, urine and graffiti masked the walls. The learners brought their own soap, and toilet paper because the school provided none. The situation was clearly serious and needed the attention of everyone.

After approaching the principal, vice-principal, teachers and members of the SGB present their findings, the learners found a sympathetic ear. The vice-principal, who claimed to be unaware of the problem as the staff had their facilities, took it upon himself to monitor and ensure that the toilets were clean and maintained. For two weeks the learners monitored the toilets and for two weeks they remained spotless. Chuffed with the fact they have initiated visible change in the school the group met once again.

The meeting was cheerful and everyone was pleased with the results of their work. They acknowledged the role of the vice-principal and believe they have enough momentum to keep pushing and achieve real, long lasting change to the schools toilets. The bathrooms still has no soap or toilet paper and the learners are expected to bring their own. The reason for this is that

the school cannot afford these items, knowing that many of them will be wasted or stolen by the learners. It was also pointed out that the school policies said nothing about sanitation and the health and safety implications unhygienic toilets. The group adjourned for the final time this year but agreed that with the New Year they would fight for lasting solutions to sanitation at their schools with discipline and policy as their main objectives. There are no quick solutions but the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

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