EDUCATION POLICY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:
the experience of
South African School Principals

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into how school principals make sense of and promote social justice in their schools in South Africa. Underpinned by the ontological view that knowledge of the world comes from many perspectives, and set within the interpretive, constructionist paradigms, this qualitative study explores seven principals' attempts to promote social justice. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with principals and staff members from schools in both the public and independent sectors. The findings reveal the principals' interpretation of social justice. They also identify those frameworks of leadership which when applied by principals, appear to support social justice better. The thesis argues that principals' efforts to promote social justice are constrained by government policies and further compounded by the lack of capacity, in terms of individuals' ability and understanding, at a National or Provincial level. It is also argued that the community within which the school is positioned significantly influences the principals' attempts to promote social justice. It was also evident that the principals have interpreted and reinterpreted social and cultural justice in light of the context within which their school is positioned. The conclusion is that despite principals' attempts to promote social justice, both the school context and external political and economic factors significantly constrain their success. Hence education in South Africa continues to struggle to deliver social justice to the majority of learners. This research contributes to the limited literature on leadership in South Africa and provides a voice for school leaders to identify the reality they face, rather than expressing the rhetoric of the government.

Key Words: social justice; cultural justice; associational justice; principals; leadership.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction: National and Local Contexts

Introduction

This thesis explores how school principals in South Africa interpret government policy on social justice and the actions they take at school level to implement social justice. The Nationalist government, in power from 1948 to 1994, implemented a programme of apartheid – a legal system of separating the races politically and socially – which subjugated the non white population. Following the democratic elections of 1994 the importance of promoting social justice in South Africa post-apartheid was established in the Constitution (1996), this was followed by a range of policies to promote social justice, which were in total contrast to the policies of the previous Nationalist government. The role of education in delivering the Constitution's intentions was set out in the White Paper on Education (Department of Education, 1995), and in subsequent White Papers and policy documents, discussed below. Bell and Stevenson's (2006) four-part model of policy creation and implementation provided an appropriate theoretical framework for the current study, supporting an exploration from policy formation through to implementation in individual institutions. A range of literature has explored the inequalities in education caused by apartheid and the inequalities that still remain (Shields, 2009; Christie, 2010; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). However there has been little research providing a voice for principals, who are attempting to make sense of policy and take action to promote social justice in their schools (Vally *et al.,* 2010).

This research seeks to provide insight into how one group of principals promote social justice within the national and local context, by exploring what principals do, why they do it and how their actions are influenced by the context within which they work. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the concepts addressed in the thesis, followed by a discussion of the national context in South Africa. The local context of the research, the organisational structure of education in South Africa, and the funding structure for the public sector and the specific location of the research follow. The chapter then explores the position of the researcher in relation to the research, concluding with the rationale for the research, the aims and research questions.

Social justice is a complex concept, which is explored in detail in chapter 2. It may be interpreted in a range of ways. It can be seen in terms of the distribution of wealth and tangible goods, acknowledging that the promotion of social justice requires recognition of equitable provision for the most needy (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999). However Young (1990) and Gewirtz (2002) raise the need to consider the relations within an institution or organisation and through these consider social justice in terms of the distribution of power. Fraser (1995) and Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) raise the importance of the cultural aspect of social justice, which emerges from an exploration of the relational aspect of social justice. Cultural justice explores the extent to which all cultures in society are valued and recognised. As with other interpretations of social justice, cultural justice in this thesis is seen to be an aspect of social justice. However, cultural justice is especially relevant for this research in post-apartheid South Africa. How social justice is promoted, who receives what, and who decides are questions that emerge and underpin this thesis (Rawls, 1999; Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

In this research into principals' approach to social justice it is relevant to consider their role as leaders. Leadership, a complex and even contested concept (Coles & Southworth, 2005) is therefore also discussed in chapter 2. The different frameworks of leadership which support the promotion of social justice are identified and discussed, including transformational leadership (Leithwood *et al.,* 1999), transformative leadership (Shields, 2009), moral and servant leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992; 2001; Greenleaf, 1997) and the African philosophy of Ubuntu (Mbigi, 2000; Mogadime *et al.*, 2010).

The policy process is also an important aspect of the research as the principals work within the national context of education, which is set out in policy, as well as the local context. Policy process is therefore likewise explored in detail in chapter 2. As a continuous process it is complex, involving compromise, dispute and struggle as the different values being represented seek to gain dominance (Bell & Stevenson, 2006); the contexts in which Principals work shape their ability or desire to promote the policy (Wong, 2002; Bell & Stevenson 2006). This includes not only the national context, but also, importantly, the specific local context in which the school is positioned which

may have a significant affect on the principals' actions. Thus Principals do not operate in a vacuum. They interpret and implement policy made at the national level and mediated and administered at a local level.

National context

Education during apartheid was, for the vast majority of the population, only deemed necessary to prepare them for manual or service employment (Christie, 1986). Therefore education for the black population was limited to preparing them for certain forms of labour. According to the former South African Nationalist Minister of Native Affairs, Verwoerd: 'There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour' (Christie, 1986: 12). The inequalities built into this system of education left a legacy of unequal funding, provision and training of teaching staff (Shields, 2009; Fleisch & Christie, 2004; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Furthermore the breakdown of teaching and learning that took place during the political and social struggles in South Africa between 1970 and 1990 changed the culture of learning in township schools, impacting on attendance, punctuality and attitudes to learning for both learners and educators (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

A range of policy documents in South Africa set out the intentions of government regarding education's role in promoting social justice. Prior to the democratic elections of 1994 the White Paper *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) (Ministry of the office of the President,1994) was prepared under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, by the African National Congress (ANC) in conjunction with Alliance partners, other mass organisations and wider society. This document set the political agenda for the ANC following apartheid, where income distribution was seen to have been racially distorted, resulting in inequality and racial segregation. The RDP set out what was seen as the achievable and sustainable changes required to unify a divided society, provide democracy and create conditions to support economic growth, thus the programme had at its core the delivery of social justice (Sayed, 2002). The importance of education in South Africa's move to a socially just, democratic society was highlighted, and education and training were identified as a crucial aspect of developing human resources.

The Constitution (1996) was the first step taken by government to place the provision of social justice at the centre of change in South Africa post-1994. It gives clear prominence to human rights, identifying the intention to establish 'a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights' (The Constitution Chapter 2, 1996). It is recognised as the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa, enshrining the rights of all people in the country, affirming the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, and identifying the right of every individual in South Africa to basic education with equal access to educational institutions.

The intentions of the RDP (1994) and the Constitution (1996) concerning education were set out in a number of white papers and policy documents. The *White Paper on Education and Training* (Department of Education,1995) identified the changes that needed to take place to provide a system of education making it clear that education and training were vital for families and for the health and prosperity of the national economy:

> Education and training are central activities of our society. They are of vital interest for every family and to the health and prosperity of our national economy. The government's policy for education and training is therefore a matter of national importance second to none.

(Department of Education, 1995: 1)

The document set out the need to move from the three structures of education to a system serving all people and meeting the priorities and values of social justice set out in the RDP (1994). Schools were identified as directly responsible for managing teaching and learning and providing open access to individuals; government resources were deployed to provide equity, with a special emphasis on redressing educational inequalities (Department of Education, 1995).

The *South African Schools Act* (SASA) (Department of Education, 1996) and White Paper *Education and Training* (Department of Education,1995), formalised in the *Education White Paper 2* (Department of Education,1996b), identified two major developments which were needed in education to promote

social justice: raising standards and promoting local democracy (Bush & Heystek, 2006). School leaders and educators were expected to deliver democracy both through the formal structures of the school and through informal education, where attitudes would need to be changed (Bray, 1996). Parents were responsible for sending their children aged 7 to 15 years to school. To enhance the quality of education and raise standards, schools were encouraged to raise additional funds including setting school fees. Schools were required to admit learners living close to the school without discrimination by race or inability to pay school fees. To promote social justice through democratic practices the Act identified that the management of the school was the responsibility of the principal, with the governance of the school sitting with a governing body which should include educators, other staff, parents, members of the community and learners, with parents in the majority (Department of Education, 1996; Bush & Heystek, 2006). Democracy was also to be promoted through a Representative Learners' Council in every school, comprising students of grade 8 and above. Government funding of public schools was intended to redress the past inequalities of educational provision (Mestry & Naidoo, 2009).

The National Education Policy Act and the amendments passed in 1997 and 1999 (Department of Education, 1996c; 1997; 1999) set out a policy advancing and protecting the fundamental rights of all, covering issues relating to unfair discrimination and the provision of basic education for all, including adults. This Act and the later amendments made it clear that education was to contribute to the personal development of each learner, to the moral social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation, and also to promote democracy (Barry, 2006). In 1998 legislation was passed detailing the admission policy for public schools, which met the criteria of open access (Department of Education, 1998), and giving the governing body responsibility for admissions to the school.

In the same year the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding* (NNSSF) Policy was published (Department of Education, 1998a). This policy reaffirmed the responsibility of public schools for promoting social justice through improvements in the quality of education, achieved by raising additional

resources, including school fees, whilst setting out criteria for parents to apply for fee exemption. However both the NNSSF (Department of Education, 1998a) and a later amendment to the Act recognised that school fees advantage public schools in middle class areas and disadvantage schools in poor communities, which are unable to raise the same levels of funding, leading to 'large classes, deplorable physical conditions, and absence of learning resources' (Department of Education, 1998a: Pt 47; 2006; Vally *et al.,* 2010).

The movement for the promotion of social justice in South Africa was not limited to education. The Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) was drafted for the same purpose. The aim of the Act was to promote equal opportunity and treatment in employment, eliminating the discrimination and unfair practices seen during apartheid. It implemented affirmative action measures to redress disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups: black people - a generic term for Africans, coloureds and Indians - women and the disabled. Affirmative action was designed to ensure that suitably qualified people in these groups were equally represented in all occupations. In the public schools this policy ultimately led to appointments for all Government-funded posts being made by the Provincial Department of Education, a policy which is discussed in chapter 5.

The demise of apartheid saw principals move from an authoritarian and centralised state-run education system, where they were regarded as managers, to one where they were expected to act autonomously and to be leaders, supporting the government's delivery of change (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Christie, 2010). This changing emphasis on leadership was reflected in the White Paper *Changing Management to Management of Change* (Department of Education, 1996a) which identified that the principal's role as the management of the school and the promotion of the constitutional principles of democracy and equality (Christie, 2010). This shift of focus was seen by government as necessary to enable principals to meet the needs of stakeholders, raise the role of education and help the country achieve the economic intentions set out in the RDP (Bush & Heystek, 2006; Sayed, 2002). The White Paper recognised that this would not be an easy task, as public education post-apartheid was fragmented (Department of Education 1996a).

The draft policy framework *Education Management and Leadership Development* (Department of Education, 2004) was the first government document to refer to leadership as well as management in relation to the role of principals. In 2006 a draft document reversed the terms to leadership and management, with principals identified as leading professionals crucial to meeting the transformational goals of South African education (Department of Education, 2006; Christie, 2010).

Despite a range of legislation covering public education there remain vast differences between independent, formerly all-white schools and township schools, notably in the quality of the environment (Bush, 2007; Moloi & Bush, 2006), the quality of resources (Christie, 2010; Fleisch & Christie 2004) and the quality of teaching (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Thurlow, *et al.*, 2003). In many ex-Model C schools (previously white schools) principals are faced with increasing cohorts of students from the black and coloured communities while the staff remain predominantly white. In township schools the staff often have limited qualifications and struggle to meet the expectations of the curriculum (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The difference in provision is evidenced in government data which confirms that South Africa has failed to raise the performance of historically disadvantaged learners. The results of these groups remain low whilst learners from ex-Model C and Independent schools achieve high academic standards at matriculation (the final secondary state examination) and move on to forms of higher education (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

In conclusion, it can be seen that a range of policies, not all of which specifically referred to social justice, set the national framework for the promotion of social justice in education. Policy, however, is mediated and administered at local level where the local context influences the decisions made and actions taken.

Local context

The specific context of this research is the education system in South Africa, both public and independent. The Ministry of Education - renamed the Ministry of Basic Education in 2009 - is responsible for education nationally, including the curriculum, management support, learner support and operations (Department of Basic Education, 2010). The oversight of implementation and the administrative responsibility lie with the nine provinces of South Africa which

have their own education departments, each with a number of district offices, which provide the link between the Department of Education, the educational institutions and the public. It is recommended that each district should have responsibility for no more than 300 public schools, with the expectation that there should be no more than 10 Circuits (or sub-divisions) in each district. The role of the circuit is to support the principals, management teams and governors, monitoring effective management and administration; establishing lines of communication and preparing relevant strategic plans to meet the goals of the Provincial Department of Education.

At a school level South Africa, following apartheid, is acknowledged to have one of the most diverse education systems in the world (Bush, 2007). There are three main types of school: two types of public school, (ex-Model C and township schools) and independent schools. Section 29 of the Constitution (1996) states that everyone has the right to establish independent educational institutions, which must be registered with the Ministry of Education, maintain standards at least equal to those in the public schools and must not discriminate on the basis of race. The independent sector is overseen and accredited by government through the Quality Assurance of Assessment Unit, which is one branch of 'Umalusi', the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training.

In the early 1990s white public schools were given the choice of adopting one of three models, on the basis of a parental vote. A Model C school 'received state funding only for its staff and was allowed to determine its own admission policies' including admitting black students (Hofmeyr, 2000). After 1994 these schools became known as ex-Model C schools. Township schools fall into two categorises. Urban schools are based in the suburbs of large townships, established under apartheid to be 'within easy transport distance of the city' but at an 'adequate distance from white areas' to serve industrial sites and the white community (Williams, 2000: 167). These schools are now mostly provided with the basic facilities of water, electricity and sanitation. Rural township schools, in townships further away from previously white-only communities, do not always have access to all, or any, of the basic facilities and may have limited buildings (Bush, 2007; Shields, 2009; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

Funding for public schools is determined by the quintile system which places them in one of 5 bands. The quintile band of a school is determined by the level of poverty of the community in the geographic area surrounding the school, national census data, household data on income, the unemployment rate and the literacy rate in the community, with the most disadvantaged schools in quintile 1 receiving approximately seven times more than other schools (HSRC, 2009). However in 2009 the HSRC and the Treasury (Chamane, 2009) reported that the criteria applied to identify the quintile band for each school has not worked effectively. As a result the system is seen to identify schools at the extremes of quintiles 1 and 5, but schools which are seriously disadvantaged are assigned to the middle quintiles whereas their needs may be the same as those in quintile 1 (Idasa, 2008). In addition public schools are allowed to charge schools fees; inability to pay does not, in theory, prevent the admission of a learner (Department of Education, 1996). In 2009 schools in quintiles 1 and 2 were identified as no-fee schools, as a result of the inability of most parents to pay any school fee set (Department of Education, 2009).

The schools participating in the study in this thesis are ex-Model C and township schools, both rural and urban, and schools in the independent sector. They are situated in one circuit in a province in South Africa, described further in chapter 3. Documentation from the Ministry and Provincial Department of Education refers to headteachers as principals, teachers as educators and students as learners. In addition the terms white, black, and coloured were commonly used by the entire sample, to describe different racial groups. These terms are therefore used throughout this thesis. The background and experience of the researcher also provides insight into the context of the study, as it clarifies the position of the researcher within the research.

The researcher

Providing a brief biography of the researcher's experiences enables the reader to understand the theoretical approach and reflexive consideration taken within the research process and the thrust of the research (Scott & Usher, 1999). The researcher has had a career in education of some 40 years, working in a number of schools in the London area, holding a range of management roles from the second year of teaching including Head of Department, Head of

Faculty, Deputy Head and ultimately Headteacher in a school serving families with wide-ranging socio-economic issues, including high unemployment. Following headship the researcher spent 11 years working as an independent management consultant and National Challenge Adviser with a number of schools facing challenging circumstances. Since 2001 the researcher has also worked in South Africa with an Aids charity, focusing on supporting schools in the local township, and working with independent and ex-Model C schools. This led to a growing recognition of the challenges facing schools in South Africa as they attempt to promote social justice.

The researcher's life experience has led to her ontological position, discussed further in chapter 3, that values, beliefs and interpretations cannot be separate from the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus knowledge comes from many perspectives, each providing insight into the whole. Meaning is negotiated and understanding and knowledge come from attempts to interpret the world from experiences, by both the researcher and others (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Thus participants' perceptions of their experiences lead them to construe the world in ways that may be similar, but not necessarily the same as others, with concepts of reality, varying from one person to another (Bassey, 1999). Knowledge emerges from conceptual construction, not seeking an objective reality but rather a shared meaning, 'a form of inter subjectivity' (Walsham, 2006: 320), as the interviewer and interviewees actively engage in constructing meaning about social justice and its promotion in the school (Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Silverman, 2001). This was made possible as both participants and researcher shared a common language of education and headship (Steier, 1991). This approach has led to the use of interpretive and constructionist paradigms, discussed in chapter 3, recognising that research is not value or bias free and involves the researcher reflectively in the research (Scott & Usher, 1999; Scott & Morrison, 2006).

Rationale for the research, aims and research questions

Overcoming the racial divisions and injustices of apartheid is central to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), which placed the provision of social justice at the core of change in the country, with education identified as a means by which this would be delivered (Department of Education, 1996a). The

researcher's work in South Africa has led to a desire to explore and gain a greater understanding of how principals make sense of government policy relating to social justice and what influences the actions they take to promote the concept. Although research in South Africa has resulted in a growing body of literature about educational leadership (see chapter 2), little research has been undertaken on the principals' perspective of the actions they take, or are able to take. There is little evidence, therefore, on the way principals attempt to make sense of government intentions regarding social justice in terms of distributional (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999), relational (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002) and cultural aspects of the concept (Fraser, 1995; Crib & Gewirtz, 2003). This lack of evidence prompted Vally *et al.,* (2010) to acknowledge the need for qualitative data, providing a deeper, richer understanding of the way principals work in schools to enhance an understanding of what principals actually do.

The current research study seeks to understand the social context of social justice faced by Principals and the processes in place which influence, and in turn are influenced by, this; the purpose is not to test hypotheses (Rowlands, 2005). The goal is the interpretive process that constitutes reality as the research analyses the participant's account, providing an explanation of how social justice is being addressed in schools and the reason why (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The intention is to explore the meaning of events and the ways in which social justice is promoted in schools from the participants' perspective, and also to identify the meanings that participants assign to such events, rather than produce generalisations (Morrison, 2002; Rowlands, 2005).

The aim of the research is:

> To explore how educational leaders in schools in South Africa make sense of government policy relating to social justice and also to identify the actions they take to implement that policy.

This aim has been explored in the thesis through the following research questions:

- What are the expectations placed on schools by government policies to provide social justice?

- How do school leaders understand the concept of social justice, and make sense of the political agenda of social justice, in schools in the independent and public sectors?
- What are the contextual issues that shape the action they take?
- In what ways do principals take specific action to promote social justice?
- What is the impact of these actions?

The research questions were addressed through a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews with seven principles and 17 members of staff between April 2009 and October 2010, which provided a wealth of data.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the current research, its aims, the research questions and the value of the study in terms of understanding the reality of how principals make sense of social justice in schools today, rather than the rhetoric of government and Provincial authorities. The intention is to provide new knowledge, identifying examples of where the promotion of social justice is successful, which could be replicated. The contextual situations within which principals work, which shapes the actions they take, have been outlined and will be developed further in chapter 5. The researcher's background and ontological position, and the impact on her involvement in the research have been raised.

In the following chapter a range of literature is explored, relating to social justice, leadership and policy, and enhancing an understanding of the concepts and developing the aims and research questions. Chapter 3 addresses the research methodology applied in the thesis and chapters 4, 5 and 6 report the findings of the research, including the principals' understanding of the concept of social justice, the impact of government intentions, the actions principals take which they identify as promoting social justice, and the issues which challenge their ability to promote social justice. The thesis culminates, in chapter 7, which draws conclusions from the findings of the study, highlighting further areas for research identified in the thesis and establishing what can be learned about schools might move forward as the principals attempt to promote social justice. The concepts explored in chapter 2 which follows include the purpose of

education, the formation of policy and the opportunities for interpretation by those implementing the policy, and the styles of leadership which support the promotion of social justice and which may be applied by principals in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review: education policy, social justice and school leadership

Introduction

A review of the literature relevant to how school principals in one Province in South Africa interpret and promote social justice, embodied in education policy, is of necessity wide ranging. It requires an examination of a number of interrelated concepts, exploring how these can be understood from a South African perspective. The limited nature of research on the principals of South African schools necessitates the use of literature from the western world to supplement that on South Africa (Moloi & Bush, 2006; Christie, 2010). The importance of social justice was established in the Constitution (1996) setting out the right of all South Africans to a common citizenship where there is equality between all races, men and women in a sovereign and democratic constitutional state, where all are guaranteed a right of basic education and equal access to educational institutions. Government policy and White Papers, explored in chapter 1, addressed the first question: What are the expectations placed on schools by government policies to provide social justice? It made clear that schools were expected to reflect the democratic norms and values underlying the constitution (Department of Education, 1995).

The initial section of this chapter explores the policy process in order to provide a framework to explore government policy relating to social justice, and how it can be interpreted by individual Principals, shaping the action they ultimately take. This is followed by a discussion of the purposes of education implicit in the Constitution, democracy and economic development. An examination of social justice provides insight into the different interpretations of social justice which may guide the actions of the Principals in the research. The chapter concludes with an examination of the different styles of leadership which would support the promotion of social justice. The discussion of these concepts enables the recognition of how the principals interpret social justice and the range of factors which shape their actions as they seek to promote it. The review of literature begins with an exploration of the complex relationship between policy relating to social justice and its promotion within schools.

How policy emerges

Policy is acknowledged as an ongoing process (Ball, 2008; Bell & Stevenson, 2006) both during its formation and later, as it is implemented. Policy can be seen as the formal expression of a government's values and how they expect these to be translated into action (Ball, 2006). Policies are about power in that they are produced by the ruling group; they are also about the individuals or groups within the government who have the power to determine what values will underpin it. For Ball (2006) policy can be explored in two ways, the first of which is policy discourse, which produces the frameworks within which the policy is talked about. Here the issue to understand is who can speak and with what authority, which individuals and/or groups are included or excluded from the discourse, although in modern society it would be impossible to ignore all contradictory discourse. Secondly, policy can be explored as text, which is set in the frameworks produced by policy discourse and which will constrain opportunities for action. Before a specific policy is produced it will go through a contested process where those with differing values and access to power will attempt to shape the policy to meet their values and interests. This process involves not only politicians but also external organisations and power groups representing specific interests (Bell & Stevenson, 2006), resulting in compromise. The resulting policy will provide the circumstances in which limits are set on the options available for action, and may include specific outcomes to be achieved without the expected action being specified, leaving the policy open to interpretation (Ball, 2006). Thus, policy is interpreted and reinterpreted in relation to specific groups and individuals, impacted upon by their individual context, history, experiences, aims and values which may be explicit or implicit (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

Bell and Stevenson's (2006) hierarchical framework has two sections, each of which is divided into two levels. The first section of the framework is 'policy formation', the first level is 'socio-political environment', from which the policy originates; here contested discourse eventually leads to the dominant views and values shaping the policy. The next level 'strategic direction', defines the policy and establishes success criteria relating to the policy. The second section of the framework, 'policy implementation' within institutions is also divided into two

levels, initially 'organizational principles', where the criterion on which the policy will be implemented are set. This is followed by 'operational practices and procedures' which, based on the 'organizational principles' are the 'detailed organizational arrangements that are necessary to implement the policy…' (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 13), see table 1 below.

Table 1: Bell and Stevenson's Policy into Practice Model
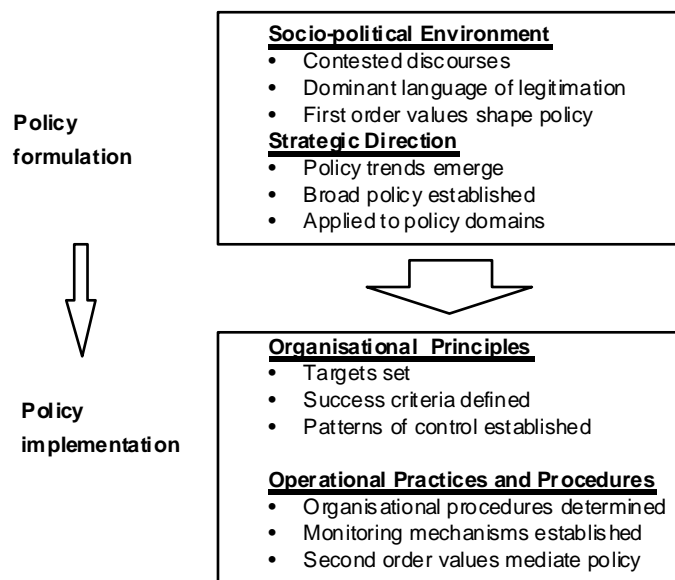
Though Bell and Stevenson recognise the need to consider policy as both product and process and acknowledge that the economic, social and political context will influence the process, the framework focuses on the fact that 'those with competing values and differential access to power seek to form and shape policy in their own interests' (Bell & Stevenson, 2006: 160). Thus as the policy moves from policy formation to policy implementation, they acknowledge that unintended consequences of the policy may occur.

However, the framework fails to identify the significance, throughout the policy process, of the external contextual issues, firstly, if they are not understood or recognised during policy formation. Secondly during the two levels of implementation, where the context of the institution may skew the institutions intended implementation of policy, leading to a fracture between the two levels, revealed in the analysis of the current research.

In South Africa post-1994 the divided structure, outlined in chapter 1, leads to the question of whether, at a national level, all aspects of the 'strategic direction' were covered. At the national or provincial level, the question is whether there is the ability to engage in some way in the 'operational practices' stage, where the detailed organisational arrangements to enable the policy to be implemented are put in place. Bisschoff and Mathye (2009) argue that when policy is not implemented in South Africa the government often moves on to the next challenge. This was seen in recent attempts to introduce a self-evaluation process to schools, which failed in part because the Department of Education was unable to provide the necessary support. When the policy was seen to be failing, rather than provide support for the original legislation further legislation was introduced (Bisschoff & Mathye, 2009).

When examining the policy process within the individual institution, power is again a key issue. The need is to identify who is involved in making the decisions regarding implementation and who will be the predominant decision maker and identify any group excluded from the process. For school leaders the development and implementation of policy within the institution is in itself complex and leaders need to be aware of the context of their own institution, the power issues present and the values held by others. However it could be argued that the context of the individual school has a greater influence on the entire policy process than Bell and Stevenson (2006) would suggest. Exploring the process enables the identification of the issues influencing that process, and how these factors are managed by the leader (Ball, 2006). However, even when decisions are made within an institution and policy and practice documents are produced, the implementation by individuals on a day to day basis, reflecting their own values, can lead to further interpretation. Thus the policy process continues on to the operational practices and procedures (Bell & Stevenson, 2006), where further adaptations or even non-implementation by individuals or by the whole institution, are possible (Wong, 2002). This continuous process of policy, open to the interpretation of institutions and individuals who are expected to implement that policy, is central to the current study, given that it seeks to understand how and why South African government policies relating to social justice are interpreted and promoted in different

schools. The exploration of how and why decisions are taken might differ from institution to institution.

If governments and educational leaders are to understand the reality of the impact of policy there is a need to understand at an institutional level how policy is developed, the role that leaders and others play in this and the influence of external factors (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). It is important for school leaders to have an understanding of the role they play in this process as they develop and promote policy to support and meet their expectation or vision. This understanding is particularly important for those in South Africa, who face wide-ranging change to bring democracy and social justice to the country. Thus the key players in the delivery of policy relating to social justice in schools are the school leaders who are responsible for promoting the government's policies in the school. It is therefore necessary to explore how and why they act in the way they do, the values that impact on their actions and the contexts within which they work (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

This brief examination of policy and the recognition that it is a process, both before it is produced as a document and through its implementation, supports the need to explore the approach taken by principals as they strive to make sense of and promote social justice, a key concept underpinning the change from apartheid to democratic government. As such the concept also underpins the delivery of democratic schools which provide opportunities for individuals to develop, and become part of a democratic society. For some this means schools where individual needs are balanced with a concern for the welfare of others. Social justice, rather than the provision of workers for the economy is, post-apartheid, the dominant focus for educational policy (Beane, 1998; Apple, 2006; Beckmann & Cooper, 2004). Social justice in South Africa, however, can only be understood within the overall context of the purpose of education.

The purpose of education

An analysis of the literature reveals a diversity of opinion on the purpose of education. This proves to be a contested concept which can be seen to have changed with time, place, political systems and leaders (Ball, 2008; Apple, 1995; Tomlinson, 2005). At its most basic education can be seen to be a

means of allowing one generation to pass on to the next generation what has been learnt through experience. In this sense it passes on knowledge, beliefs, customs, values, rites and ceremonies that shape society and culture. At the same time it supports the identification of new knowledge and changes to culture. To fulfil its purpose, therefore, any system of education must address two functions: that of preserving and that of providing change (Pass, 1997).

The Constitution (1996) declared the government's intention to provide a just and humane society, whilst at the same time providing the conditions necessary for economic growth and development; unifying a divided society without providing a threat to the white population; and responding to the desire of the people to provide and extend democracy in society (Sayed, 2002).   Education was to have a crucial role in supporting the changes necessary to meet these intentions and thereby enable the government to deliver the economic, democratic expectations and social justice needs of the country (Department of Education, 1995). The first purpose of education to be explored briefly is that of meeting the economic needs of the country, a key aim for post-1994 South Africa (Sayed, 2002).

Economic purpose of education

South Africa's recent history means that it faces many challenges regarding the education and training of a large proportion of the population. During apartheid, education for the vast majority of the population was only deemed necessary to prepare them for manual or service employment (Christie, 1986) as was described in chapter 1. One of the key intentions of the post-apartheid government was to provide the conditions necessary for economic growth and development; education was therefore required to prepare learners to meet the needs of modern employment. This focus is acknowledged by the World Bank's *Education for the Knowledge Economy Programme* (World Bank, 1986) which aimed to help developing countries create a highly skilled and flexible population, able to complete in global markets (Ball, 2008). Likewise the World Bank *Policy Research Working Paper* focused on the role of education in promoting economic well being (Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007). However it was recognised that providing the highly skilled population required would not be an easy task because the post-apartheid education system was fragmented, with

inequality of provision across the public sector (Department of Education, 1996a). In addition, the role of school principals changed radically: during apartheid principals were managers who delivered the government's education policies, whereas post 1994 they were expected to provide leadership to deliver the changes required (Bush & Heystek, 2006).

To improve standards of education the government introduced a number of changes to the school curriculum including, in 2005, a move to an outcomes-based education which was regarded as the curriculum model required to meet South Africa's needs (Department of Education, 2000) and which supplement the structural changes to the public sector outlined in chapter 1. However it was not initially recognised that this curriculum model was unsuited to the uneven educational provision in public schools post apartheid (Christie, 2010; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). These difficulties were only formally acknowledged in 2012, with a change to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2012)

As already indicated, South Africa has failed to raise the performance of historically disadvantaged learners compared with learners from Independent schools and ex-Model C schools (Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2009–2011). In part this is a result of the breakdown of teaching and learning that took place during the struggles in South Africa from 1970–1990 (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Teachers do not always arrive at school on time or meet the expectations of delivery or assessment of the national curriculum (Moloi & Bush, 2006; Christie, 2010). Further, in rural township schools a significant number of staff are often underqualified (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Thurlow *et al.*, 2003). In addition a significant percentage of schools in the rural townships still have no electricity; limited or no piped water; and limited or no library books (Fleisch & Christie, 2004). Many township schools still face a shortage of text books and other basic learning materials.

As well as its role in preparing the workforce, education was also identified as a means of developing democracy by implementing democratic structures, engaging parents and learners in education and through this both improving education and promoting social justice.

Democratic purpose of education

Democratic schooling can be seen to be committed to providing an education that builds on student and community needs, culture and history (Apple & Beane, 1999). By providing opportunities for individuals to develop, and preparing them to be part of a democratic society, education may help create a society where individual needs are balanced with a concern for the welfare of others, with justice and caring for all. Proponents of this view regard social justice, rather than the provision of workers for the economy, as the dominant aim of educational policy (Beane, 1998; Apple, 2006; Beckmann & Cooper, 2004). It is one where

> The role of education in promoting a caring, cohesive, democratic society, built on notions of 'citizenship' where 'critical participation and dissent' are viewed as desirable.

(Bottery, 2000: 79)

In South Africa, the *Education White Paper 2* (Department of Education, 1996b) and the SASA (Department of Education,1996) made clear that schools were expected to reflect the democratic norms and values underlying the Constitution, with the promotion of democracy being one of the major developments needed in education (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Leaders and educators were expected to deliver democracy through the formal structures of the school and also through informal education, where attitudes would need to be changed (Bray, 1996). Governance of the school was invested in the school's governing body, which comprised educators, other staff, parents, members of the community and students, with parents in the majority (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Learners were given a voice with the introduction of elected learner bodies (Department of Education, 1996). Many township schools, especially rural ones, however have a limited ability to provide an effective school governing body structure and educate to promote democracy due to the inequality of provision across public schools in South Africa discussed above.

The Constitution (1996) specified that education play a part in developing democracy in order to establish a country based on social justice; thus it can be

argued that, for the government, the ultimate purpose of education is that of social justice.

Social justice as a purpose of education

The importance of social justice as a purpose of education in South Africa, as established in the Constitution (1996), has already been explored. Although the education White Papers and policy documents that followed the Constitution (1996) do not refer specifically to social justice they do provide insight into the government's intentions, focusing as they do on redressing the inequalities and injustices created in the country during apartheid. Social justice is a complex concept, open to a variety of interpretations (Gewirtz, 2002). It emerges from the philosophical theories of justice explored by Plato and Aristotle, with the more recent understanding of the concept emerging from early industrialisation in western Europe (Barry, 2005). The earliest definitions tend to be restricted to the morality of the distribution of benefits among members of society, therefore the initial focus is on income, wealth and the distribution of positions in society (Young, 1990). This distributive aspect of the concept of social justice is both relevant and important to the current research due to the inequalities which were built into the Nationalist government's system of education: the history of unequal funding, provision and training of teaching staff still have an impact today (Shields, 2009; Fleisch & Christie, 2004; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

Miller (1970) perceived that social justice concerned the distribution of a range of benefits including wealth, material goods and prestige in society in relation to wages, profits, allocation of housing, health and benefits; he excluded however reference to the distribution of power. He argued that social justice is complex with different conflicting meanings of justice. He identified three principles representing different aspects of social justice which need to be recognised and considered, 'to each according to his rights; his deserts; his needs' (Miller, 1970). These were all seen to be equally important, however each aspect remains open to interpretation. He also acknowledged that different societies with different social structures would result in different understandings of social justice (Miller, 1970). Rawls (1999) similarly focused on the distributional aspects of social justice, providing a standard that could be applied to assess

the distributive aspects of the basic structure of society. He identified two principles of social justice with similarities to those of Miller (1970) firstly that:

> each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others. Secondly, social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged consistent with the just savings principle and b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

(Rawls,1999:53)

For both writers social justice is focused on the distribution of goods, with priority to be given to those who are most disadvantaged or with the greatest need. This interpretation of social justice can be seen to be an issue for education in South Africa, where the government's introduction of school fees enabled the wealthier, mainly white communities to maintain the inequality of provision or even widen existing inequalities (Christie, 2010).

Young (1990) explored a further dimension of social justice, recognising the importance of distribution as an aspect of social justice, by placing equal importance on decision-making, social position and power, which may vary in different organisations. Here, social justice is not just about the distribution of resources but also the way this is undertaken, including all the institutional rules, relations and practices which may be involved in the process (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002). This is a crucially important aspect of social justice as it is often the social structure and institutional context that will play an important part in determining the patterns of distribution within any specific organisation (Young, 1990).

South Africa's move from nationalist to democratic government in 1994 saw this aspect of social justice utilised, as power moved into the hands of a democratically elected government and into the schools covered earlier in the chapter. In addition principals were released from the authoritarian and centralised state-run system and were, as noted above, expected to become leaders, supporting the government in delivering change (Christie, 2010). There has been limited research into principals and how they lead in South Africa. Consequently how they run their schools and to what degree they

attempt to promote social justice through the distribution of, power, relations and decision making are to a large extent unknown. It is these aspects that the current research intends to explore.

There is a complex context of social relations within an institution's structures, within which the process of education takes place. This context dictates the rules and processes of decision-making within the institution, and therefore the power structure. However, how individuals interpret government policy and how they implement this in the school emerges from negotiation as to what they see is relevant, and is important (Young, 1990). It may thus be possible to have equality of distribution, yet a wide variation of opportunity within individual institutions. To understand fully the promotion of social justice in schools it is necessary to explore decision-making procedures in schools, the rules and relations that are subject to collective action, and the social division of labour and culture (Young, 1990). Society contains and supports certain universal values which are necessary for social justice to be promoted and accessible for all:

> *firstly* developing and exercising one's capacities and expressing one's experience, *secondly* participating in determining one's action and the conditions of one's actions.

(Young, 1990: 37)

More recently Gewirtz (2002) has argued that in addition to the distributive element of social justice the relational aspects must be considered, including an examination of the concepts of power, opportunity and self respect. This will enable theorising on issues of power, on how individuals (micro), or how the government (macro), treat others. As she maintains it is about 'the form of social cooperation … within which the distribution of social and economic goods, rights and responsibilities takes place' (Gewirtz, 2002: 140). This expanded concept of relational justice includes social relations, the informal and formal rules governing how people treat each other at all levels, macro and micro. It is about the rules and practices of society and the way people treat each other that provide enabling opportunities (Gewirtz, 2002). Therefore an exploration of how the relational aspects can be observed within the school can illuminate the focus of and promotion of social justice in individual institutions.

A further interpretation of social justice, closely related to relational aspects, is associational justice, since the absence of associations among groups and individuals prevents them from participating fully in decisions affecting the conditions in which they live and work (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). Thus to identify the scope of social justice within an institution it is important to identify who is involved in the decision-making process and who is excluded.

In the context of this research, excluded groups or individuals are especially significant if they represent cultural groups who were excluded from the democratic process during apartheid. For Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) cultural justice was the extent to which all cultures in society are valued and recognised. The importance of cultural justice is explored further in the work of Fraser (1995) who argues that cultural domination now supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice in today's world.

Fraser (1995) sees that redistribution and recognition are entwined and even reinforce one another, whilst at the same time result in to conflict when trying to address injustice. Acts relating to recognition are seen to raise awareness of a specific group, affirming their value and thus promoting the group's difference, whereas acts relating to redistribution may call for the abolition of certain agreements or understandings of specific groups, with the intention of making them one with the whole. The relationships and conflict present within the concepts of redistribution and recognition can come together by addressing them in terms of affirmation, whereby injustice is addressed through social arrangements or by transformation involving the restructuring of the underlying framework of society. Thus affirmative action will promote group differentiation whereas transformative action will destabilise or blur group differences. The importance of this to the research is to raise the issue that to be effective actions regarding redistribution or recognition need to be either affirmative or transformational, or they will work against each other (Fraser, 1995).

The work of Vally *et al.,* (2010) reveals the lower levels of educational provision in township schools and identifies the link between poverty and poor education, highlighting the relevance of applying Fraser's (1995) framework to South Africa. Thus reforms directed at the education system alone will not be

adequate: what is required is a broader and structural approach to social reform and redistribution. In a similar vein Shields (2009) raises the need for education to focus not only on culture or class when considering the needs of children living in poverty, but to address the issues of racism that underpin the situation in South Africa.

There are therefore many interpretations of social justice. These interpretations are not necessarily exclusive; while they all relate to context there will be a tension between the different interpretations which needs to be recognised and examined (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). Social justice is not a static concept, it needs to be continually checked and adjusted in any state or organisation requiring negotiation because there is a need to assess the needs of the individual and needs of the community, trying to achieve the best for both (Griffiths, 1998).   The current research explores principals' understanding and promotion of these different interpretations of social justice. This may be distributional in terms of wealth and tangible goods (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999) and the distribution of social position and power (Young, 1990). It also applies however to the relational interpretation of social justice which reveals the social structure and how people treat each other within the school (Gewirtz, 2002), and through this explores the importance of associational justice, identifying if and why any groups or individuals are excluded from the distribution of power (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). In addition, the work of Fraser (1995) highlights the importance of cultural justice as an interpretation of social justice, especially in a country where the government so recently ruled through a reliance on cultural domination. This understanding of social justice demonstrates that the concept is not only about the distribution of resources, but also the distribution of responsibility for promoting or developing social justice, which is diffuse and lies not only with government but with all in society (Fraser, 1995).

Thus school principals in South Africa are addressing a complex concept as they seek to promote social justice in their schools to meet government policy. How they interpret the concept is therefore an important aspect of the research, as this will shape their approach to the actions taken in the school to promote social justice. As leaders in their schools the style of leadership they employ not only reflects their beliefs and values but will influence their approach to

social justice. Therefore the different frameworks of leadership which may be seen in South Africa and which support the promotion of social justice must be examined.

School leadership

Principals, as leaders and managers post-1994, are responsible for promoting social justice in their schools to meet the intentions of government. However, since there has been limited work undertaken on school leadership as a concept in South Africa it is necessary to look at western literature as well as that from South Africa. Leadership is recognised as a multi-dimensional concept with no single agreed definition (Bush, 2003: Davies, 2005). For some it is a contested concept, with little agreement about its meaning (Coles & Southworth, 2005). It has been argued that leadership theories are too rational to meet the 'messy world' where schooling actually takes place (Sergiovanni, 2001).   There is debate as to whether one style of leadership can meet all situations, or if school leaders need to be able to apply a range of leadership styles, depending on the situation at the school both internally and externally (Crawford, 2003: Gronn, 2003: Goddard, 2003). Thus, leadership can be seen as multifaceted with the values, goals and beliefs of the principal, in the context of South Africa, giving purpose and meaning to policies and procedures within the impact of national and provincial pressures (Goddard, 2003). Leadership is also recognised as a contextualised activity, which is affected by a range of issues including the type of school, geographical location, and local circumstances (Bottery, 2004).

Each conceptual framework has something to offer when analysing educational institutions, both in terms of behaviour and events (Bush, 2003). The different interpretations of leadership and its contested nature are particularly relevant in South Africa which has a legacy of apartheid with authoritarian and, for many, dehumanising education policies (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The resulting diversity of educational provision in South Africa reinforces the need to interpret and possibly amend the understanding of leadership in the light of local values and realities, especially in rural areas where these are still strong (Bisschoff, 2009; Moorosi, 2010), accepting there is no one model of an effective leadership style. South Africa's diverse education system (Bush, 2007),

explored in chapter 1, highlights the importance of recognising context when discussing leadership in schools in a 19-year-old country finding its way in providing a democratic system of education. The assumption that one single style of leadership would be found in South Africa is inappropriate, if not foolish. In recognition of the complexity of leadership, therefore, the frameworks explored in this thesis are those seen as most relevant to promoting social justice.

A number of aspects of leadership can be identified which are relevant to this research, the first of which is the beliefs and values of the leader. Changing the context within a school requires a leader with a clear goal, linked with a focus on changing the culture and working conditions within the school and creating a supportive community, where new beliefs and behaviours can be developed and nurtured.   For Fullan (2003) this approach is the beginning of a new moral imperative of school leadership, where the leader is leading a:

> deep cultural change that mobilizes the passion and commitment of the teachers, parents and others to improve the learning of all students.

(Fullan, 2003: 41)

The moral purpose of the leader attempting to drive change is extremely important and will underpin all the actions taken, so it can be argued that the moral commitment of the leader underpins their approach to social justice. This was raised in Lyman and Villani's (2004) study of successful schools in situations where failure would normally be expected. Here, leadership in the successful schools was seen to be functioning at the highest level of moral commitment. The need for a style of leadership able to transform education in South Africa is set out by Shields (2009) and is explicit, if not implicit, if the government intention to promote social justice and develop democracy through education is to be fulfilled. The *Task Team Report* (Department of Education, 1996a) confirmed the need to shift the role of the principal from the routine administration model used during apartheid to one which provides the visionary leadership and strategic management necessary to meet the needs of all stakeholders (Bush & Heystek, 2006).

Though the moral aspect of leadership is of primary importance when exploring the promotion of social justice other dimensions of leadership contribute to the way social justice is promoted in school. The second aspect of leadership is lead learning: creating and sustaining conditions to maximise learning, both academic and social, leading to the enhancement of academic and social achievement for young people and providing opportunities, especially for black Africans disadvantaged under apartheid. The third significant aspect for leadership is direction setting and the ability to engage others, motivating them to follow a new concept for principals in South Africa who, as explored in chapter 1 were, under apartheid, expected to follow what was set down by the government (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Christie, 2010).

The final significant aspect of leadership is that of enabling change. Highlighted in the work of Lyman and Villani (2004), this identifies the need for the beliefs and attitudes of some educators to change to a belief that the students can learn and be successful. The work of Hafer (2000: 78), in the American context, sees educationalists as 'unaware prisoners of an outmoded paradigm – which defines the behaviour of everyone, especially the educator'. Such a paradigm includes the belief of educators that the students who are unsuccessful (black and Hispanic) are at fault; their inability, their poverty and their background are the problem. This belief that the less successful learners are responsible for their own failure deflects attention from the quality of education provided. The relevance of this for South Africa becomes apparent as many schools are faced with changing cohorts of students coming from the black and coloured communities, whilst the educators remain predominantly white. In township schools the educators often have limited qualifications and struggle to meet the expectations of the curriculum (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). The different aspects of leadership outlined above reveal leaders who set a direction for the school, engage staff; hold values and a moral commitment to education; and can change the perception of staff regarding the ability of students. They are leaders who create the conditions to support learning, raising hope through setting high standards and, ultimately, raising achievement.

This exploration of leadership closely links to the analytical framework provided by Bush (2003) which identifies three common dimensions to apply when

examining different models of leadership. The first, influence, is the leaders' ability to motivate others to become involved or take action; this is not just the role of the formal leader in a school, but involves informal leadership (Lingard, *et al.*, 2003). In the rural township schools in South Africa this may even be the local Chief (Bisschoff, 2009) and in township schools generally different members of staff may be seen as key influences in the school. The second dimension, values, refers to the leader's personal and professional values and morals which underpin any action and are communicated to others; values are highlighted in the work of Lyman and Villani (2004). They refer to the crucial place of the values and vision of the leaders in South Africa to drive change, especially those related to educators' attitudes to disadvantaged students' underachievement. The final dimension, vision, is the ability to see a way forward for the school's development. This can be identified as the ability of leaders to take a long term view within a historic frame, conceptualising the issues within and planning a way forward (Frick & Spears, 1996). These three dimensions of effective leadership were also identified as dimensions of leadership in South Africa by Ngcobo and Tikly (2010). Within the current research, Bush's (2003) three dimensions support the identification of the participating principals' style of leadership in relation to their approach to social justice within their individual schools. However it is also important to recognise that leadership to promote social justice is extremely complex and principals, within their individual schools, will be faced with 'right versus right' dilemmas, where there are costs whichever action is taken (Stevenson, 2007)

Leadership in many schools in South Africa is challenging. The years of apartheid have left their mark on education: not only the lack of facilities, the attitude of the black population to education and the quality of leadership and management in many public schools, especially those in historically black areas (Moloi & Bush, 2006) as discussed previously. Withdrawing labour –striking,- was one of the few weapons available to black Africans during apartheid, and this action was used by both educators and learners alike. For educators this was mainly directed by the powerful South African Democratic Teachers Union, formed during the latter years of apartheid to challenge the conditions in many schools (Bush & Anderson, 2003; Krause & Powell, 2002). Badat (1995) saw that the use of the withdrawal of labour, had led to a breakdown in the culture of

learning, which was also identified in Bush's (2003) research. Union relations with the new government post-1994 did not improve when the government attempted to rationalise the pupil-teacher ratios between schools (Christie, 2010). The challenges to school leaders are compounded by the fact that communities, especially those in rural areas, are often illiterate (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010) and may not see the relevance of schools, as they need their children to work with them on the land. These attitudes impact on the learners who also see little reason for education when unemployment in rural areas is rampant.

This examination of the concept of leadership identified a number of aspects relevant to understanding leadership in South Africa when exploring leadership frameworks in literature. Limited literature focusing on specifically African or South African frameworks of leadership and the cultural background of the principals in the research led initially to the exploration of a number of western frameworks seen as supportive of the promotion of social justice. The first framework explored is that of transactional leadership, a framework of leadership which resonates with the management of schools during apartheid, and one which was therefore experienced by the principals in the study.

Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership was initially seen as the core component of effective leadership (Burns, 1978; House, 1971; Bass *et al.*, 2003). Transactional leaders engage in a transaction with their employees, explaining what is required of them and rewarding them if they fulfil their tasks. They provide rewards for effort, watching for any deviation from the expected standards and taking corrective action if this happens, such as negative feedback, reproof or disciplinary action (Bass, 1990; 2000). This leadership style is about the intrinsic motivators of pay and/or promotion (Bass *et al.,* 2003), and requires employees to accept the expectations of the leader to complete their work to the standard set in exchange for rewards or to avoid discipline (Podsakoff *et al.,* 1982; Barbuto, 2005). The framework therefore focuses on the self interest of employees (Bass, 1990). Transactional leadership could in many ways be seen as the framework of leadership applied In South African education during apartheid, where control was held centrally by the government, with principals required to meet the intentions of government without exemption. This

autocratic style was then applied in schools where principals established a transaction with their employees regarding the specific tasks required, rewarding them by pay and continued employment.

However this style of leadership may result in mediocrity as it focuses on monitoring for failure to meet a set standard, not on improvement, with the leader only intervening if that standard is not met (Bass, 1990; Bass *et al.*, 2003). Thus subordinates are encouraged to strive for perfection in their job rather than encouraging or fostering growth of the individual worker or the post they hold (Barbuto, 2005). They are not expected to think innovatively and may be monitored on the basis of predetermined criteria. Poor transactional leaders may be less likely to anticipate problems and to intervene before problems come to the fore, whereas more effective transactional leaders take appropriate action in a timely manner (Aarons, 2006).   The framework can be seen as:

> Leadership in which relationships with teachers are based upon an exchange for some valued resource. To the teacher, interaction between administrators and teachers is usually episodic, short-lived and limited to the exchange transaction.

(Miller & Miller, 2001: 182)

This transactional framework of leadership did not enable or encourage the development of individuals or encourage change and for Bass (1985) this led to the development of transformational leadership. The transactional and transformational frameworks were seen by Bryman (1992) as separate dimensions, therefore a leader could focus on rewarding the individual for their performance whilst addressing the focus of transformational leadership. In transformational leadership, the focus of the leader is to ensure that individuals support the organisational objectives, developing them as a means of ensuring that the organisational objectives are met (Stone *et al.,* 2003). Thus transformational leadership relates to achieving change, making it relevant, in this case, to South Africa's need to deliver change post-1994 (Sayed, 2002) and is therefore an important framework to explore.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership resonates with the need for change post-1994 in South Africa and the promotion of social justice, for in this model leadership is based on an exchange of values which binds leaders and followers together. At its optimum it raises leaders and followers to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). The focus of the leader is to meet the vision and objectives of the institution, which is achieved by providing an environment and climate of trust where the vision can be shared, thus building the staff's commitment to the vision and goal, empowering them to be able to achieve the goal (Stone *et al.,* 2003). The leader is a respected role model, taking and sharing risks with followers and encouraging creativity (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Leithwood *et al.,* (1999) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) identify eight dimensions of transformational leadership falling into three categories: direction setting, seeing and identifying a way forward, establishing the schools goals including high expectations; secondly, motivating and developing staff, enabling them to achieve the way forward through providing support and modelling best practice; and finally redesigning the organisation of the school creating a productive school culture and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. At its most effective the use of transformational leadership can motivate staff to do more than they intended or even thought possible (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It is assumed however that leaders and educators have shared values and common interests and can engage all stakeholders in achieving educational objectives with a genuine harmony between the aims of leaders and followers. For schools in South Africa moving from a directed, centrally-controlled education system organised according to racial groups to a united, democratically-organised education system, this framework provides insight into how leaders approach change within their school:

> Transformational leadership … has the potential to change the very culture of the organisation, helping shape and develop it as environmental requirements change.

<div align="right">(Smith & Bell, 2011: 58)</div>

However the framework has been criticized, in that it focuses primarily on the process used by the leaders to influence the school outcomes rather than identifying a direction. It has also been observed that it can be used to impose the leader's values, rather than sharing values (Bush, 2003). This criticism is addressed by Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) who reaffirm that the three categories of leadership practice vary according to context and need, and are about sharing not imposing values. This framework does not need a charismatic leader. It assumes distribution of practice and function, focusing on building capacity of staff, creating opportunities for collaborative work and acknowledging interdependent relationships of leadership and management activities. It works to create roles for stakeholders, parents and the community (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and is open to be widely distributed within the institution, therefore it is not necessarily a style of one-person leadership.

A second criticism, (Lingard *et al*, 2003), is that there is no specific reference to morality and values and therefore these are not integral to leadership (Burns, 1978). However Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), argue that transformational leadership becomes moral as it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader and led, thus having a transforming effect on both.

As one aspect of transformational leadership is that it can be widely distributed, the perspective of distributed leadership also requires exploration. For Harris (2005) distributed leadership is a perspective that focuses on how the practice of leadership is distributed among formal and informal leaders. It can be seen in a number of ways, operating informally as colleagues come together to face an issue or problem (Goddard, 2003) and is seen primarily as a way of analysing leadership activity rather than describing practice.

Harris (2005) suggests that distributed and transformational leadership can work together: 'evidence suggests that transformational leadership practice when widely distributed or shared enhances, influences and consequently contributes to the process of implementation' (Harris, 2005: 167). For Fullan (2003) fostering leadership at many levels is one of the principal's main roles, thus highly effective principals distribute leadership throughout the school. Distributed leadership therefore engages others in leadership, incorporating the

activities of the range of individuals who work at mobilising and guiding other teachers, the core of distributed leadership (Harris, 2005). The work of Ngcobo (2009) in South Africa identified that successful schools had distributed leadership across a wide range of stakeholders, including learners. This relationship between transformational and distributed leadership can be seen as transformational leaders motivate and inspire, stimulating and encouraging staff to seek out new ways forward whilst recognising and addressing individual need (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Thus as transformational leadership raises aspirations; it can also raise the moral dimension, supporting the promotion of social justice. However the focus will remain on achieving the goals of the institution which, depending on the leader's beliefs and values, may or may not have the promotion of social justice as a priority. In contrast, the next leadership framework emerges from the leader's deeply held beliefs and understanding of issues of justice and democracy, resulting in the desire to see structural change (Shields, 2009). This transformative leadership also has links to the conceptual framework of social justice explored by Fraser (1995) where promoting social and cultural justice is seen to require a restructuring of the underlying framework of society.

Transformative leadership

This framework was identified by Shields (2009) as a means of overcoming current approaches to change that are limited in their ability to create equity in education. She perceived its value in situations and countries where, though discrimination is officially ended, it is still experienced by students. The current situation in South Africa, where wide ranging differences in educational provision in the public sector are related to race, reveal it as a relevant framework to explore. Transformative leadership emerges from the leader's deeply held recognition and understanding of the issues of justice and democracy; these are vocalised by leaders who highlight issues of racism that may be limiting real change. In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid under the Nationalist Government and the extensive changes required in education post-1994, means that this is framework is relevant to the exploration of principals' promotion of social justice. The relevance of this framework to the research is clear: in South Africa education, especially in the townships, is facing a vast

range of issues relating to social justice, especially in terms of distribution and culture as explored above.

Transformative leadership differs from transformational leadership in that it is more powerful or dynamic. It begins from the point of justice and democracy, openly critiquing inequitable practice seen in the school and the wider context. The intention to reshape or change the knowledge and belief structures held by individuals and to identify and restructure the structural and social frameworks that generate inequity and disadvantage, including the use of power. The focus of transformative leadership is to promote social justice, challenging the inappropriate use of power and privilege; emphasising not only individual achievement, but also the public good and through this achieving change.

The transformative leader explores all the barriers which face learners, both within the community of the school and the wider community, critiques policies or actions that can be identified as perpetuating inequalities, and pushes for change and the removal of these barriers. Such an approach requires moral courage as the very style means opposing the status quo, challenging issues rather than ignoring them, and standing up for what is right. In South Africa today, education in the township is facing a vast range of issues relating to social justice, especially in terms of resources, as outlined previously, and the diversity of educational provision (Bush, 2007). This transformative leadership framework may be applied by those principals in the study who have a high commitment to the promotion of social justice. Transformative leadership can also be seen to relate to the work of Fraser (1995) in terms of social justice and the need to look at all issues requiring consideration when attempting to implement change.

Transformational and transformative leadership can be seen to have similarities with the concept of the servant leader (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Farling *et al.*, 1999). While these are both people-orientated leadership styles, the key difference lies in the focus of the leader, which is service to the followers, valuing the people who make up the organisation, not the organisation as an entity; the focus for the transformational and transformative leader, however, is achieving organisational objectives (Stone *et al.,* 2003). Moral and servant

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leadership are therefore the final two western frameworks discussed; both focus on the high moral commitment of leaders, where 'the driver needs to be a moral purpose' (Fullan, 2003: 3) and therefore support the promotion of social justice and democracy in schools.

Moral and Servant leadership

At the core of this style of leadership are the values, beliefs and ethics of the leader, making them seek what is morally right, recognising that everyone should be given equality of treatment and opportunity (Bush, 2003; Leo & Barton, 2006). Thus the focus of these frameworks is to stress the importance of the values, beliefs and ethics of the leader, whose actions will be seen as morally correct; this links with a key intention for education in South Africa post-1994: promoting social justice. In practice this requires leaders to consider the full range of values, not just one specific set of values, ensuring that these are articulated to all members of the institution, and through this build an organisation which works to shared values (Sergiovanni, 1992) and to a common purpose (Sergiovanni, 2001). Such moral leadership also means that all members of the organisation, adult or child, will be treated with the same principles of equality, dignity and fair play (Sergiovanni, 1992). Critical to the success of moral leadership is the development of trust in the leader, achieved through four dimensions of respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity (Fullan, 2003).

However this framework has critics. There is seen to be a danger that the norms created within the institution may inhibit individual initiatives that may appear outside the norm (Sergiovanni, 2001a). Bottery (2004) points out that the leader will have to meet community and national values, which may lead to tension, or that strong community values may exclude as well as include, therefore limiting the next generation's understanding of others from different backgrounds, and inhibiting a national or global community. This critique does not wholly recognise that moral leadership relates to the values, beliefs and ethics held by the leaders and how these underpin their actions and decisions made. This style of leadership focuses on the moral purpose of education and on the way leaders behave when working within the moral domain (Bush, 2003), part of this being their desire to run an effective or successful school for

the sake of all members. Sergiovanni (2001a) identifies that a good school will reflect the values of the community and the school, through the connections made and that these common values and purpose drive the school forward. For Fullan (2003) the moral purpose of the highest order is providing a system where all students learn, where the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers.

The second related framework is that of servant leadership which, with moral leadership, focuses on the leader's principles, values and beliefs (Farling *et al.,* 1999). However servant leaders are unique in that they are people who see themselves principally as servants and as such seek to serve or meet the needs of others (Stone *et al.,* 2003), their choice is to serve others (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). A central role for servant leaders is to provide strategic vision for the institution (Russell & Stone, 2002), a sense of direction and purpose taking a long term view of a situation, conceptualising the issues and planning a way forward, as they have 'a sense of the unknowable' able to 'foresee the unforeseeable' (Greenleaf, 1997: 22). Servant leaders develop trust, they are relationship builders, able to network with a range of people to engage them in the vision, the way forward (Sergiovanni, 1992). This is an important aspect of this style of leadership and results from individuals' confidence in the leader's values and competence (Greenleaf, 1997). Through this the servant leader inspires and motivates others, sharing their ideas and understanding, persuading, engaging and encouraging others to participate in the purpose that the leader has set out (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Bringing these two frameworks together for this research identifies a style of leadership seeking to do what is morally right and setting out to share these values with others, so that all involved work together towards a common end, recognising that everyone must be given equality of treatment as well as opportunities both of which are integral to social justice Thus this style of leadership, stemming from the moral values of the leader, sees the promotion of social justice and democracy as central to their institution. This leader builds relationships with people and organisations, persuading people to engage in their vision. To achieve this, the leader gains the trust of others, which includes

gaining the respect of others who believe that as leaders they are competent, that they have personal regard for others and that as leaders they behave with integrity. Part of this trust comes from the leader's ability to look to the long term, conceptualise situations and issues, and plan to meet them. The central position of the leader's moral stance, their values and beliefs in these western frameworks links them to the African philosophy of Ubuntu; this can also be explored as a framework of leadership which would support the promotion of social justice. As an African framework it is essential to explore Ubuntu and its relevance to leadership and the promotion of social justice in South Africa today.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a traditional African philosophy, providing an understanding of humans in relation to the world, addressing the essence of what it is to be human and expressing a common link between all human beings (Tutu, 2007). Ubuntu is not racial; while it is an African concept it is at the same time universal, expressed across the world, and is therefore about all human kind not just Africans (Mbigi, 1997; Msengana, 2006). The literal translation of Ubuntu is 'I am because we are – I can only be a person through others' (Mbigi, 2000: 6). The definition of the concept can be seen in two parts: firstly the person, who is friendly, gentle, generous, caring and compassionate, someone who will not take advantage of anyone. Secondly Ubuntu is expressed through their actions, the concerns they show to others, their oneness with others, since 'The person is a person through other people' (Tutu, 2007: 3). The emphasis is placed on being a good person, a concept shared with other cultures and religions around the world (Mbigi, 1997; Bush, 2007) with the key values identified as 'group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity' (Mbigi and Maree, 1995: 2) the fact that the individual has meaning through the community (Du Toit, 2005). For others, however, it is the collective consciousness of the people of Africa which can be seen through their behaviour, expressions and spiritual beliefs (Khoza, 1994). From this philosophy it is possible to identify the style of leadership that would be applied by principals adhering to Ubuntu within their institution.

Three principles of Ubuntu underpin the leadership style which can be employed by principals in South Africa: spirituality - an acknowledgement that their gift or ability come from God, interdependence - an acknowledgement of the importance of the community to the school and school to community; and unity - the unity of all within the school. These beliefs, values and moral stance of the principals applying Ubuntu are seen to emerge from the spirituality of the leader, focusing on the needs of others in the school and wider community and their desire to lead a school which is successful for all (Mogadime *et al.*, 2010). The role of the leader is to focus on the social aspects of the organisation, creating concern for all the people in the workplace, educators and learners (Mbigi, 2000). To achieve this leaders facilitate the creation of a caring organisation, with a climate underpinned by love, engaging and developing the skills of individuals to be able to meet the expectations and needs of the school.

The principles of interdependency and unity are expressed by leaders in a number of ways. Leadership is co-operative and supportive, with the solidarity of the group being respected and the values of co-operation, empathy, communication and team work employed (Msila, 2008). Therefore the principal establishes working teams of staff encouraging them to listen to others empathetically, respecting structures in place and valuing cohesion (Broodryk, 2006). Thus Ubuntu provides an inclusive approach to management, with different educators taking roles of responsibility in the school, involving them at all levels. Team leadership is developed based on mutual respect with all treated equally. The intention is to:

> introduce leadership based on solidarity, respect and democracy and all these happen to be aspects that are part of Ubuntu philosophy.

> (Msila, 2008: 76)

Through this approach to leadership the vision for the school is shared with all (Msila, 2008). Research undertaken by Collins-Warfield (2008) at a school where Ubuntu was applied by leadership revealed a school with a special atmosphere:

where teachers feel a strong sense of community, many students succeed in their studies and all members of the school receive attention and care

(Msila, 2008: 97)

Ubuntu can therefore be seen to address the three dimensions of leadership (Bush, 2003), with a leader providing vision for the school, with clear values and a school culture supporting the motivation of the educators to engage and develop their individual skills. However applying this framework of leadership, or any other, in a number of township schools is not easy as the historic situation has left educators and schools suspicious of leaders trying to involve them in the school when previously their views were never sought, resulting in:

teachers who have not been prepared to be change agents will not be able to embrace values such as *ubuntu*

(Msila, 2008: 77)

A range of different courses have been developed for school leaders in South Africa to support principals making the transition from managers to leaders, following the governments' draft document *The South African Standard for Principalship: Leading and Managing South African Schools in the 21st Century.* (Department of Education, 2005). One of these, introduced by the Department of Education in 2007, was the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) School Leadership Course which introduced Lekgotla as a leadership model (Department of Education, 2007). Thus, to understand how leadership models are emerging in South Africa a brief exploration of Lekgotla follows.

Lekgotla

In this model the leader is expected to adopt an approach that:

inspires trust in the decision-making process *and* operates on the basis of a natural belief in humanity, who gives without expecting anything and listens without prejudice, creating a climate of trust. Trust is the basis of inspiration, motivation and creativity.

(De Liefde, 2003: 72)

Thus Lekgotla has many similarities to Ubuntu with the leader expected to apply a style that will inspire trust in the decision making process. The leader will listen without prejudice, give without expecting anything and focus on creating an atmosphere of trust which will inspire and motivate trust (Bush, 2007). The focus appears to be the ability of the leaders, through their values and moral commitment, to influence the staff; however the aspect of vision in leadership is less apparent, limiting the leader to one who will engage the educator to follow rather than provide a clear direction. However the promotion of social justice would depend on the values and moral commitment of the leader and their ability to engage others. This style of leadership appears to have been identified to provide principals following the ACE course with a leadership model to explore. The focus of the model is closely related to Ubuntu in terms of its focus on the individual and creating a climate of trust.

Conclusion

This chapter has covered a range of literature which has informed the questions and area of investigation identified in this study. The literature has explored the concepts and themes which shape the way South African principals approach and promote the government's intentions relating to social justice, the policy process and styles of leadership supporting the promotion of social justice. It has considered a number of debates, connections and tensions between the concepts and themes explored, in the ways school leaders may approach social justice, and also the contextual issues present in South Africa which may affect schools in the study. The review has also exposed the limited amount of research available using the voices of principals to explore how they make sense of policy, the action they take and the factors which support or challenge their ability to achieve what is intended. This revealed a need to increase current knowledge by providing insight into the reality of the promotion of social justice in South Africa.

The review of literature relating to social justice illuminated the complexity of the concept as it explored the various aspects of social justice that might be applied by the principals: the distribution of tangible resources (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999) and power (Young, 1990), the importance of relations and associations and the recognition of cultural justice (Gewirtz, 2002; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003;

Fraser, 1995) which are especially relevant in South Africa. This wide ranging interpretation of social justice will be applied in the research and informs the need to question the individual principals' understanding of social justice in order to be able to understand the actions they took. The review of policy highlighted the ability of principals to take an active part in the process of policy implementation and the need to identify whether the lack of specific reference to social justice, or the lack of guidance and outcomes in the White Papers and policy documents covered in chapter 1, would make interpretation easier. Thus it informed the question of the intentions of government and how principals are able to make sense of what is set down, ultimately applying what they see as relevant (Wong, 2002). The review also provided the policy process framework of Bell and Stevenson (2006) applied to illuminate the factors involved in understanding how and why principals make sense of and promote social justice.

This study intends to illuminate the understanding and action of school principals, and the discussion of leadership frameworks supportive of the promotion of social justice informed the question of how leaders might act when promoting social justice, and the style of leadership which might be seen. Transactional leadership, focusing on individuals completing the task, using intrinsic motivators to achieve this (Bass *et al.,* 2003) provides little support for the promotion of social justice. However transformational leadership which focuses on ensuring organisational objectives are met (Stone *et al.,* 2003), can raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations (Leithwood & Janzi, 2005). In seeking to develop and motivate staff and sharing their vision principals promote social justice through power sharing and providing learners with equal opportunities if they do not clash with the objective.

Transformative leadership emerges from the leaders beliefs regarding justice and democracy (Shields, 2009). The focus is to promote social justice and the leader seeks to bring about change both in the school's organisation and curriculum, and local community as needed. Closely aligned is moral and servant leadership which emerges from the values, beliefs and ethics of the leader. All members of the school, adult or child, will be treated with the same principles of equality (Sergiovanni, 1992), therefore, it focuses on promoting

social justice. However the limited literature on leadership frameworks in South Africa resulted in only one African framework with relevance to South Africa, Ubuntu, being explored. Ubuntu's key values include compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity (Mbigi and Maree, 1995). The moral stance of the principal emerges from their spirituality, focusing on the needs of others in the school and wider community (Mogadime *et al.*, 2010). Thus social justice is promoted as they create a caring organisation, engaging and developing the skills of individuals to be able to meet the expectations and needs of the school and the community. Finally a brief examination of Lekgotla provided one example of a leadership model introduced in a course on leadership established by the Department of Education (2007).

A common thread running through the literature is that of the relevance and importance of context. This aspect is especially important in South Africa, which faces a complex situation and is still experiencing wide variation in education as the country moves on from apartheid. The review of literature therefore informed the research questions as it emphasised the importance of contextual issues for the research because of the wide variation between the participating schools in terms of geographic position, facilities, parent body, educators and learners.

Though there is now a growing body of literature about leadership in South Africa, it is acknowledged that there is a need for qualitative data to provide a deeper, richer understanding to enhance knowledge and theory (Vally *et al.,* 2010). However little research has been undertaken to seek the voice of principals in relation to the actions they take, or are able to take, to promote social justice. Revealing how individual principals interpret and promote social justice is therefore an important area for research, seeking new knowledge that will illuminate what is happening in individual institutions and providing insight into how best the expectations of government can be met.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

The aim of the current research study is to explore how educational leaders in schools in South Africa make sense of government policy relating to social justice and also to identify the actions they take to implement that policy.

A series of research questions to be explored arose from the review of the relevant literature detailed in chapter 2. Five specific questions were identified which would allow the overall research aim to be fulfilled:

- What are the expectations placed on schools by government policies to provide social justice?
- How do school leaders understand the concept of social justice, and make sense of the political agenda of social justice, in schools in the independent and public sectors?
- What are the contextual issues that shape the action they take?
- In what ways do principals take specific action to promote social justice?
- What is the impact of these actions?

In order to gather data to answer these questions a qualitative approach was adopted. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews in six secondary schools and one primary school (schools A – G), supported by reference to documentary evidence. The research was carried out in one province in South Africa.

This chapter begins with an exploration of the philosophical position of the researcher with reference to the epistemological and ontological stance taken, leading to an examination of the frameworks applied and the impact of this on the methodology chosen. The chapter then considers the research design including the methods undertaken to gather data and the selection of participants; this is followed by a review of the pilot studies which were undertaken prior to the main body of data gathering. The understanding gained during the pilot studies in relation to the instruments and the process led to

changes in the research design which are detailed later in the chapter. This is followed by a review of the processes employed to analyse the data, the reliability and validity of the research and the ethical issues which arose.

Philosophical stance

The philosophical stance taken towards research is crucial as it underpins every decision made. To identify the approach to be taken in the research three paradigms were considered. The positivist paradigm assumes that the world is objective and exists independently from the research, with logical rules to explain the independence of the world and its social practices which are used to distinguish between, and judge, different knowledge claims (Kolakowski, 1993; Usher, 1997), with objectivity being essential (Scott & Morrison, 2006). In the positivist paradigm the researcher is detached from the research and focuses on what can be observed, excluding feelings (Morrison, 2002). Knowledge is gained through the collection of facts using controlled experiments, surveys and statistics. This paradigm seeks objective research with exact measures to minimise bias, with the research identifying the way things are done (Scott & Usher, 1999; Neuman, 2000). The resulting knowledge is in the form of generalisations referring to empirical regularities, not causal relations (Scott & Usher, 1999; Morrison, 2002). Thus a positivist approach to the research would not see the researcher as part of the research, with knowledge to be discovered; only that which was observed would be considered to be knowledge (Kolakowski, 1993; Usher, 1997). The individual human's interpretation and feelings regarding the case, the basis of the research undertaken, could not be investigated.

The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, sees research as grounded in people's experience. Reality is understood to be a construct of how people understand reality differently, and is subjective (Morrison, 2002; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Here the researcher is part of the research topic, impacting both on the participants and on the research (Morrison, 2002; Scott & Usher, 1999). The goal is the interpretive process that constitutes reality, as the researcher turns the participants' accounts into an explanation of social phenomena (Scott & Morrison, 2006). The core task is to explore the meaning of events and the phenomena from the participants' perspective, rather than

provide generalisations (Morrison, 2002). It seeks internal validity resulting from coherent, accurate descriptions of situations based on a consistent and detailed study (Ward Schofield, 2000; Gomm *et al.*, 2000).

The third paradigm, constructionism, sees what is known, and that which can be known, as located within the researcher's own constructing process as the research is conducted (Steier, 1991). Constructionist research concerns itself with a process of acquiring knowledge which is embedded in a reflexive loop, including the inquirer who immediately becomes an active observer (Steier, 1991). Knowledge emerges from conceptual construction, so cannot represent an independent, objective reality (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). It comes from the interviewer and interviewee, actively engaged in constructing meaning (Silverman, 2001). This is a social process, where language is of key importance, thus both participant and researcher share a common language used to explore and understand the phenomenon through this constructing meaning. The voice of the researcher, therefore, will not necessarily be the sole voice ultimately heard in the analysis (Steier, 1991; Gergen & Gergen, 1991).

The current research study is based on the position that ways of knowing will be embedded within the social and political arrangements of the situation, requiring the sources of power, their positioning, use and effects to be identified. Thus the research reported in this thesis can be seen as embedded in the interpretive philosophical paradigm with the recognition that the research is not value-or bias-free (Scott & Usher 1999; Morrison, 2002; Scott & Morrison, 2006). This research is also takes a constructionist stance as it acknowledges that research cannot be undertaken without the researcher's reflexive involvement. Thus, the researcher's voice is not necessarily the sole voice ultimately heard as the shared language of school leaders led to the construction of knowledge (Steier, 1991; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). This study was carried out within a bounded context, including the seven schools involved and the number of staff participants, as well as the need to hold a tight focus on answering the questions identified. So an interpretive, constructionist approach was taken meeting the researcher's stance of how knowledge emerges from the research in terms of the different perceptions brought to the research by the participants

and the constructionist, reflective, approach taken where shared language of school leaders led to the construction of knowledge.

From the stance taken on the nature of reality emerges the epistemological framework applied: the way individuals know, our personal knowledge, its nature, its scope, and how the reality to be described is known (Pole & Lampard, 2002; Scott & Morrison, 2006). From the ontological stance this research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experience of how they promote social justice within their institutions. This was achieved by exploring government intentions, the actions principals take to promote social justice, the barriers they face and the impact of their action. Thus the principal's voice is used to provide an understanding of the ways in which schools seek to make sense of social justice. This approach leads to the implementation of qualitative research, an umbrella term referring to a number of research strategies which are rich in description and concerned with seeking an understanding of behaviour (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Briggs & Coleman, 2007), seeking to discover 'what is going on here' (Scott & Morrison, 2006). This research is based on the position that meaning is negotiated and knowledge established through attempts to interpret the world from experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Scott & Morrison, 2006). The ontological view is that knowledge of the world comes from many perspectives, both of the researcher and of the participants, each providing insight into the whole which is to be studied. This research recognises that peoples' perceptions of their experiences lead them to construe the world in ways that may be similar, but are not necessarily the same. Thus concepts of reality may vary from one person to another, as everything is set in historical contexts and cultural settings, and therefore part of an evolving network of social beliefs, practices and traditions (Bassey, 1999; Scott & Usher, 1999). This approach underpins the research design, and is employed to provide the data to answer the questions which this thesis seeks to address.

Research design

The application of an interpretive / constructionist framework places the researcher within, rather than separate from the research topic because the data has come from interaction with the participants (Morrison, 2002). The

knowledge sought in this study emerged when all the parties involved in the research interacted, as meanings about the topic were negotiated (Cryer, 2001; Scott & Morrison, 2006; Scott & Usher, 1999). To achieve this, qualitative research was undertaken. The qualitative nature of the research, and the aims and questions to be explored, led to the selection of the most appropriate strategy for data collection to secure the outcomes (Denscombe, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Boeije, 2010).

The intention in this study is to undertake an empirical enquiry, observing the characteristics of individual units, probing deeply and analysing data intensively (Cohen & Manion, 1989); thus a large amount of data is required, to study in depth (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Using an interpretive approach, it looks at the logical relationship between categories, examining naturally-occurring situations without the control of variables and it is localised in a specific time and space (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Importantly, this interpretive approach meets the specific intention of the research, to give a voice to the participants. It also recognises contextual issues as an important element in shaping understanding (Bassey, 2007). As Lincoln and Guba (1985: 189) point out, 'phenomena of a study… take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves'. The research also gathers data that will form the basis of a critical enquiry, informing understanding of the phenomena, judgements and decisions to improve action (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data gathering

In order to answer the research questions a number of different strategies were identified to collect the necessary data (Bassey, 1999). An examination of a range of government documentation was necessary to confirm the stance of the government on the delivery of social justice, and the role of education in achieving this. In addition this documentation provided an understanding of the specific intentions of government regarding social justice, as faced by the principals. The second, and equally important source of data necessary to answer the research questions, was interviews carried out with a number of principals and staff in the sample. These data sources were essential to understanding how and why principals made sense of and implemented the intentions of government, and are examined in greater detail below.

Documentary analysis

The use of documentary evidence provided the data required to identify the government's intentions of how, post-1994, education would support the promotion of social justice and also to provide contextual information about the position and intention of government regarding social justice at the time they were published, thus illuminating the context within which the principals worked (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Prior, 2004). Government policy documents were not only readily available and accessible via libraries and government websites (Denscombe, 1998; Pole & Lampard, 2002; Atkinson & Coffey, 2004), but also have the advantage of permanence, in that they are available for others to reference (Denscombe, 1998).

However it was recognised that the use of documents required careful consideration, as they were a product of their context (Pole & Lampard, 2002) and need to be understood in the historical and cultural context of the processes of negotiation and power positioning that took place prior to publication (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Atkinson & Coffey, 2004). As such it was recognised that they are the public face of the intentions of government, and represent an interpretation of events by those who produced them, rather than an unbiased picture of reality. These policy documents represented, therefore, to a greater or lesser degree, social constructions (Denscombe, 1998; Pole & Lampard, 2002). Documents are also set within a specific cultural and historical context, so there was also a need for familiarisation with the language used. Further the decision to use documentation as a source of data for this research also required a clear understanding of the evidence sought to answer the research questions, to ensure a tight focus was maintained to avoid amassing unnecessary data (Pole & Lampard, 2002).

The documents referred to in the research, including legislation, white papers and notices to amend or add to the policy, were explored in chapter 1. They included material from the RDP (Ministry of the office of the President, 1994), prepared by the ANC prior to the 1994 election, followed by the *SASA Act 84* (Department of Education,1996); the *National Education Policy* Act 27 published in 1996; a range of government documents and policies relating to

social justice and education from 1994, up to Notice No 47 in Government Gazette, (Department of Education 2011). They were identified from an initial exploration of the South African government website; further documents were referred to by the principals during the interviews and later conversations. The key words education, social justice and democracy were applied in the analysis to enable a focus to be maintained on the aims of the research topic and to answer the first question (Fitzgerald, 2007; Pole & Lampard, 2002). The historical and cultural context of documents, coupled with the understanding that documents would be interpreted by all who read them, clarified the need to explore how the principals interpreted the policy in force as they sought to make sense of social justice (Denscombe, 1998; Prior, 2004; Pole & Lampard, 2002). It was recognised that documentation alone would not provide all the data required, and that interviews would also be needed to address the research questions.

Interviews

Interviews can be seen as purposeful conversations, providing an opportunity to gain an in-depth insight into the ideas and views of the individual being interviewed (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This may appear easy to undertake, but in reality is more complex, as the ability to talk and listen does not secure a good interview (Denscombe, 1998; Ribbins, 2007). Interviews were identified as an appropriate instrument for collecting data to answer the research questions regarding the principals' perceptions of their actions, providing an authentic insight into people's experiences. Structured interviews; involving a tight control over the format of the questions and answers, were considered, but would limit the opportunity for a dialogue to develop between interviewer and interviewee and, therefore, would not meet the required outcomes (Pole & Lampard, 2002; Scott & Morrison, 2006). The use of semi-structured interviews; providing flexibility regarding the ordering of the questions and an opportunity for interviewees to develop ideas (Denscombe, 1998), was also considered. Since this interpretive, constructionist research seeks to understand the how and why of what has taken place the participants' views and perceptions of the topic are essential, and it was considered that semi-structured interviews could provide the requisite data (Yin, 1994; Bassey, 1999).

The use of semi-structured interviews facilitated the collection of comparable data from the participants and provided the opportunity, through the use of open questions, for interviewees to respond as they considered relevant and appropriate (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Ribbins, 2007; Silverman, 2001; Pole & Morrison, 2003). The interview schedule emerged from the aim of the research and the literature review. The questions were refined further following the pilot study, to ensure the data gathered addressed the research questions; this process is discussed below in the section on the pilot study. This style of interview involved the interviewee to some degree in negotiating the place, context and agenda of the interview (Scott & Usher, 1999; Yin, 1994). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview gave a level of flexibility regarding the order in which questions could be covered, allowing the interviewees to raise issues they deemed important which were not included in the schedule (Silverman, 2001). The interviews provided opportunities to support the construction of meaning between interviewer and interviewee with the use of open questions and prompts, and enabled the emerging meaning to be confirmed (Scott & Usher, 1999; Yin, 1994). This form of interview also enabled the gathering of data which provided an authentic insight into the principals' experiences and understanding of social justice, thus addressing the research questions (Silverman, 2001; Pole & Morrison, 2003). Moreover, using semi-structured interviews with school staff provided a means of cross-checking the data provided by the principals (Bush, 2002). The interviews also provided an opportunity for the principals and educators to consider their work from a different perspective, an aspect which was commented on by several of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews require careful planning to overcome a number of disadvantages. The initial step was limiting the agenda to the general topic, to ensure that participants were unable to prepare for the areas to be covered. Once in the interview it was important to minimise researcher bias by ensuring that the interviewee was not unduly influence by gender, race, class or any other power relationship that might be conveyed by the venue, tone of voice, body language and facial expression used by the interviewer (Scott & Usher, 1999; Bassey, 1999; Pole & Morrison, 2003). To ensure interviewees felt able to express their views and were not prompted to provide answers they thought

were required, attempts were made to build a connection or rapport during the interview, by showing interest whilst avoiding reactions to the views expressed (Silverman, 2001; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Ribbins, 2007; Denscombe, 1998). There was also an awareness that semi-structured interviews could produce a large amount of data, some of which might be irrelevant, and that transcription would be time-consuming (Pole & Morrison, 2003). If, therefore, the interviewee began to move to unrelated topics they were guided back through the use of questions to clarify the point they were making. However this form of interview still produced a substantial volume of data.

The interviews were held in private, with most interviews held in the individual's, or a colleague's office. The principals' interviews covered a range of issues, including their understanding of the concept of social justice, how important the concept was for the school and the actions taken to address social justice, (see Appendices B and C). The schedule of interviews with the staff also covered the individual's understanding of social justice and then explored what they believed was happening in the school to promote social justice, (see Appendix D). Interviews were recorded, with the interviewee's agreement. Only in one case did a senior member of staff decline to be recorded; in that situation detailed notes were taken and transcribed as soon as possible following the interview. The use of semi-structured interviews supported the data gathering process, providing opportunities for the interviewer and interviewee to explore the relevance of social justice in education, and the way interviewees approached leadership. Through this, insight into the practice and leadership style experienced in the school emerged. A number of different methods were used to identify a group of principals and staff who would be able to provide the data required to answer the questions raised in this research study.

Sample

The choice of a small sample from an identified group of principals supported the gathering of data on the phenomenon from individuals' perspectives, recognising the time needed to develop the understanding of how individuals establish meaning (Scott & Usher, 1999). The sample, comprising the principal of each of seven schools and up to three staff from each school is small, but wide enough to represent the three types of school found in South Africa:

independent, ex-Model C public schools and township schools, making the size of the sample manageable, whilst enabling a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

In order to establish an appropriate sample non-probability sampling rather than probability sampling was applied, as the sample was small and therefore could not be chosen to be representative of the overall population (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Pole & Lampard, 2002). This enabled the detailing of as many of the specifics possible that contextualise the unique flavour of the schools' delivery of social justice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The sample came from principals in a specific area known to the researcher, meeting the criteria of a purposive sample in that the schools were easily accessible due to prior involvement with the researcher (Denscombe, 1998; Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Pole & Lampard, 2002). The sample was selected to be representative of the population in the area where the research was undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Fogelman & Comber, 2007), at the same time providing participants that were able to meet the needs of the study by providing the evidence (Boeije, 2010).

Purposive sampling was essential for the research as the knowledge sought required a level of openness resulting from trust. To gain the depth of insight sought, principals needed time to build this level of trust before speaking openly. The issue of trust was recognised as important; in post-apartheid South Africa the public schools, seen as a means of delivering social justice by the state, were continually facing change. The social and political contexts of township schools was especially challenging as they faced wide ranging difficulties, including a lack or resources and socio-economic problems in the community which they served.   Establishing trust in this context was extremely important and more challenging for the secondary township schools that would be unknown to the researcher.

Thus, following the initial identification of four schools, a further two township schools were identified, applying snowball sampling, as they were identified by a vice-principal from one of the initial group of schools (Denscombe, 1998). This meant that a level of trust had been developed with the vice-principal making the recommendation. The final group of schools in the study included

the pilot school, due to circumstances explored in the Research Process section below. In order to preserve the anonymity required by ethical considerations, the information provided on the schools is limited and pseudonyms have been used for both the schools and the principals (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Participating schools

School	Type of school	Number of students	School pseudonym	Principal's pseudonym
A	Independent	562	Addison	Adrian
B	Independent	482	Berkeley	Bridget
C	Ex-Model C	995	Cardogan	Charles
D	Ex-Model C	1000	Darnell	Deborah
E	Township Rural	435	Ekwueme	Edward
F	Township Urban	1248	Fumnanya	Fergus
G	Township Rural	1073	Gatru	Gareth

Table 3: Details of the participating schools

School	Total staff	Full time teachers	Part time teachers	Teaching posts funded by school fees	Non-teaching posts funded by school fees	Average class size	School fees (Rand & Sterling)	Exemptions
Addison	183	59	0	123	60	23	59,800 £4784.00	
Berkeley	149	31	10	31	66	23	51,940 £4155.00	
Cardogan	73	57	0	26	14	26	14,000 £1120.00	17%
Darnell	87	60	0	30	25	30	18,500 £1480.00	10%
Ekwueme	25	23	0	0	0	40	120 £9.60	70%
Fumnanya	53	45	0	0	0	50	450 £36.00	60%
Gatru	26	23	0	0	0	47	50 £4.00	90.5%

It is not claimed that the findings of this research study are generalizable, rather it is argued that the research has some transferrable application for other principals who may recognise that the findings relate to their situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Though generalizations are not intended in the purest form, the use of more than one institution supports the provision in some form of 'general conclusions' (Gomm *et al.*, 2000), 'fuzzy predictions' (Bassey, 1999) or 'naturalistic generalizations' emerging from the fact that everyone gains their understanding of human affairs mainly through personal experience:

> knowledge is a form of generalization too, not scientific induction but naturalistic generalization, arrived at by recognizing the similarities of objects and issues in and out of context and by sensing the natural covariations of happenings.

(Stake, 2000: 22)

The core intention of the research is to explore the meaning of social justice and its implementation from the participants perspective, typicality is not sought (Morrison, 2002). However the schools identified were typical of the different types of school found in one Circuit in one District in one Province in South Africa. The typicality of the schools in the sample was verified by a range of data, which firstly confirmed that the schools represented the different types of school found in South Africa. The data was also used to confirm that each school was typical of its kind within the District in which the schools are positioned by the number of learners, staff employed and funding received through the Quintile system (EMIS, 2009 and 2010) and, for independent schools, through the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (UMALUSI). Further data on the matriculation results of the schools in the District and Circuit confirmed that the schools had achieved results similar to others in the same sectors (District Report, 2010; EMIS, 2009 and 2010).

Once the sample was identified meetings were arranged with the principals to establish the focus of the research, explain the process to be followed, explore the desired outcomes and agree access to the institution. The meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss ethical issues, important for both the schools and the individual participants, and to confirm the provision of a transcript of the

interview for the interviewee to check and comment on regarding accuracy. As the principals were the gatekeepers to the institutions this process strengthened the goodwill already established with these schools, but most importantly it established acceptance of the research and access to the schools (Pole & Lampard, 2002). In four of the meetings the selection of other staff for interview took place.

Educators were identified using stratified sampling, chosen to enable one senior educator and two heads of department to be selected from each school (Denscombe, 1998; Pole & Lampard, 2002). This method was used in all but one of the schools, where the principal selected a senior educator and one head of department. Smaller staff numbers in the township schools meant that only one educator held a senior position, and from the heads of department only one was sampled. As the township schools had approximately half the number of the educators of the ex-Model C schools, the percentage of educators interviewed from the two types of school was broadly similar; two educators' and interview data from each school still remained for triangulation. Once the research design was completed a pilot of the instruments and processes was implemented.

Pilot study

The interview schedule was piloted in order to ensure that the schedule would provide the intended data and to indicate the length of time needed to complete the interview (Pole & Lampard, 2002). Two pilots were conducted, one in England and one in South Africa. The pilot in England took place in March 2009 and that in South Africa in early April 2009. The former was limited to one headteacher, the focus being on the ability of the interview instrument to provide the data necessary to meet the proposed outcomes. This was achieved by undertaking an analysis of the interview to confirm that appropriate data was gathered. The South African pilot was conducted with the principal and staff of a township school. Given that some of the terminology used and the structure of language are unique to South Africa, especially in township schools, this pilot concentrated on the use of appropriate language.

The piloting identified weaknesses in the initial instruments, leading to changes in the questions asked and the terminology used to make them more personal, and to replace teacher with educator and student with learner (see Appendices A and B). For the township schools it also led to a change in the order of the interview, as the principals found it difficult to address the abstract concept of social justice, but were able to move from exploring specific actions undertaken to explaining their understanding of the concept (see Appendix C). For the other educators in each school the pilot led to the use of planned prompts, individualised by schools, relating to issues raised during the principals' interviews (see Appendix D). The sampling in the pilot also raised the issue of smaller educator numbers in township schools, which led to only one head of department being interviewed. The pilot also supported the development of the overall process and confidence of the researcher when seeking access to a school. The process of piloting, which led to the refinement of the instruments, was an important step prior to the implementation of the research process to gather the data required to answer the research questions.

Research process

The research data was collected over a two-year period from April 2009 to July 2011. The initial sample of principals came from ex-Model C and independent schools known to the researcher, with the township principals identified later (discussed in the section on sampling). Meetings with the initial group of principals were arranged in March 2009 by email and in April 2009, in South Africa, by telephone. Discussion covered the focus of the research, the process to be followed, the desired outcomes and the involvement of other educators within the school. At the end of the meetings a draft letter covering the matters discussed, and requesting confirmation that they and their school would participate in the study, was left with the principals for formal agreement (Appendix E). Although three principals signed the letters, one did not see the necessity for a signed document of consent and stated that participation was confirmed. It was decided to accept this as emails had been received previously confirming this school's wish to participate, and it was felt important not to be seen in any way to question the trust that had been developed (Singer, 1978). A letter was also prepared for the individual staff members identified, covering the information that had been discussed with the principals

and requesting both their agreement to participate in the study and permission to interview them (Appendix F). At the end of the initial meeting the organisational and ethical agreements were in place, and a date and time for the principal's interview was proposed, to be confirmed by telephone. It was also agreed that some of the interviews would take place later in the year during future visits by the researcher to South Africa. During the telephone conversations the principals all confirmed that the staff had agreed to participate in the study.

At this point a vice-principal at one of the schools not in the sample was contacted to discuss the identification of township schools which might be willing to participate in the research. Two schools were suggested, one from a rural township and one from a semi-urban area. Introductions were made to both principals, who agreed to meet with the researcher. The meetings covered the same issues and took the same format as those with the original principals. Both township school principals indicated that they would be willing to participate but wanted three days to consider further. After this time both confirmed that they would participate and it was agreed that they would be contacted again in July 2009 to arrange the interviews.

To provide the data to answer the research questions three separate interview schedules were developed. Two were developed to meet the needs of the different principals explored in the section on the pilot study (Appendices B and C) and one for the staff to be interviewed (Appendix D). The interviews with the principals lasted between 1½ and 2 hours and took place in their offices, at times and dates set by them. Subsequently, arrangements were made to interview the staff in the sample, at a convenient time for them, during the following week. Interviews with staff were arranged several days after the principal's interview to allow for a reflexive review of issues covered and to identify possible prompts for interviews with educators. Grouping the interviews together facilitated the establishment of links between the principals' responses and the data provided by the other staff interviewed. Prior to the start of the individual staff interviews a discussion took place with the interviewee and interviewer, reviewing the focus of the planned research, the process followed and a range of ethical issues including confidentiality, anonymity and the

provision of a transcript for the interviewee to check and comment on regarding accuracy. All the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw without the knowledge of the principal, but in all cases they again confirmed that they wished to continue. The interviews, which lasted about 50 minutes, took place either in their office or in an office made available for the meeting.

Where possible, transcripts were sent to the interviewees' personal email addresses. Those without emails were provided with hard copies to review and identify anything recorded incorrectly. Only two members of staff from different schools failed to respond in any way to the transcript. In both cases the transcript was re-sent and a response requested. This was followed by a further email requesting a response indicating whether the transcript reflected their views. No response was received and it was assumed that the participants accepted the accuracy of the transcription. In three cases alterations were made to the language used, to produce answers in complete sentences. The provision of transcripts for the participants met the philosophical stance underpinning the research, that meaning is negotiated. It was therefore important for the participants to feel confident that what was recorded was accurate.

The interviews with staff took place over an extended period in April 2009, August 2009, October 2009, April 2010, and October 2010.   The delay in the timings of a number of the interviews was agreed by the relevant schools. Every effort was made to complete the interviews for one school during a single visit, though the requirements of the schools did not always make this possible. In August 2009, following the interview with one township principal, a message was received via a member of staff that it would not be possible to interview the other members of staff. No reason was given, other than a suggestion that some of the questions appeared threatening. To ensure that there was sufficient representation of township schools it was decided to include the pilot school. This was possible because all the protocols applied with the schools in the study had been followed with this school. The pilot school was visited to confirm agreement to the inclusion of the school in the main study. During the October 2009 visit to South Africa it became clear that the original township school did want to continue with the research and that the previous message

had been incorrect. Since the pilot school had at this stage agreed to participate, it was decided to include both schools. This increased the number of participating schools to seven. Retaining the data enriched the analysis and to some degree limited the impact of the reduction in the number of staff interviewed from township schools. Once the data gathering was completed and it was confirmed that transcriptions were accurate, the next step was to undertake the analysis of the data.

Analysis of data

To answer the research questions it was essential to gather sufficient data, as too little would render the study unreliable (Bassey, 1999). The research had the potential to create a great deal of data which would require meticulous and systematic analysis to address the questions raised in the research. One of the critical tasks was therefore to reduce and organise data so that it was manageable (Bassey, 1999; Silverman, 2001). Data organisation and reduction began with the identification of the number of schools and staff participating, using the pilot to ensure that the data required was collected (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The process continued with the coding of data, identifying specific categories, initially understanding of social justice and the different action taken, followed by axial coding which supported a greater focus on relationships and patterns emerging (Scott & Morrison, 2006; Scott & Usher, 1999; Dey, 1993). This led to axial coding for principals and educators, according to the different types of schools in the research, and the principals' perceptions of how and why the actions were taken. This supported the examination of whether different interpretations of the evidence were viable. Initially, during the analysis, the focus was on recognising the understanding of the concept of social justice held by the different principals and how this impacted on their actions. As the analysis continued the different approaches taken by the principals to leading their schools emerged, which enabled a further analysis into leadership to take place.

The transcription of the interviews proved to be a lengthy process as in most cases interviews with the principals took two hours, with educators' interviews taking between 50 minutes and an hour. The length of the interviews was a positive aspect as it resulted from the fact that interviewees engaged in the

interviews, identified that social justice was not something that they had considered in this way and therefore found interesting. The transcription was undertaken by the researcher. A diary was kept to record the researcher's thoughts arising from transcription, which also supported a reflexive approach to be taken during the analysis process. The analysis applied; the classification and coding of the data, enabled patterns to emerge, identifying relationships between the classifications. Exploring the relationships emerging in the study enabled the identification of whether these could be formed into theoretical constructs (Scott & Usher, 1999).

Fundamental to the analysis was the sifting and selecting of information into data groups leading to the assignment of codes relating to the specific data which could contribute towards answering the individual research questions. The coding enabled data to be broken down and examined in detail in order to provide a description of the phenomenon and to establish an understanding of that phenomenon. A more holistic picture could therefore be obtained from the research evidence, uncovering, naming and developing concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Open coding was applied to the different types of data, specific data and data items which emerged from different groupings and analytical statements. This allowed cross referencing between levels and types of data, supporting identification of the relationships between occurrences, and answering the 'why'; 'how come' questions (Yin, 1994). This also made it possible to refer back from an analytical statement to a specific data item which would corroborate the statement (Bassey, 1999). The computer programme Nvivo.8 was used to assist in the management and analysis of the volume of data. Its ability to create new categories, both within and outside the tree structure, greatly supported the early analysis and the construction and exploration of links between the data and emergent ideas (Richards & Richards, 1998). In addition, the dating of the entry of all material and the subsequent adaptation of material supported the completion of an audit trail, a detailed log of all work undertaken. In the later stages manual categorisation was applied to explore and interrogate the interviews on paper.

To ensure that the analysis was authentic and valid it was important to use all relevant evidence, not just selected items, to consider alternative interpretations

of the evidence, providing sufficient evidence and time for the analysis to address the main issues of the research whilst bringing the prior knowledge of the researcher into the study (Yin, 1994). The use of the participants' voices in the analysis and the recognition of the different interpretations of action supported the credibility of the theory emerging and ensured that the theory was internally credible, with the story and theory emerging grounded in the data (Scott & Usher, 1999).

This approach to the analysis enabled generalizations to emerge to illuminate the current situation regarding schools' ability to promote social justice and the issues that both support and militate against progress. In the first instance generalisations can be seen to take place in the drawing of general conclusions (Gomm *et al.*, 2000) or 'naturalistic generalization'. This emerges from the fact that, everyone gains their understanding of human affairs mainly through personal experience (Stake, 2000). Thus individual readers of the research will undertake 'naturalistic generalization' as they identify similarities within or to other cases. For Lincoln and Guba, (1985) such research will support the identification of a 'working hypothesis' about an individual case, based on its detailed description. Though generalizations are not intended in the purest form, the use of more than one institution supports the provision of some form of working hypothesis which, when compared with other working hypothesis, may allow for 'naturalistic generalizations' or 'fuzzy definitions' (Bassey, 1999) in revealing a theoretical structure.

Trustworthiness

It has been seen that this research study is both interpretive and constructionist. It may also be described as inductive, in that it is seeking a coherent, deeper understanding of the phenomenon from interaction with participants, based on a consistent and detailed study of the situation (Ward Schofield, 2000). It is underpinned by the epistemological stance that knowledge is gained through experience. The use of qualitative research is open to criticism regarding reliability and validity (Silverman, 2001), the inability to replicate results (Ward Schofield, 2000) and the suggestion that qualitative research is no more than the creative ability of the researcher to tell a story, based on data, in a style similar to a novel (Pole & Lampard, 2002). In addressing these criticisms this

research seeks to provide an account of the phenomenon applying the terminology of the naturalistic paradigm. Thus the research seeks to be seen as 'credible' rather than valid and 'dependable' rather than reliable (Pole & Lampard, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Fitzgerald, 2007). The authenticity of the research is enhanced by the use of participants' own accounts, in which the voice of the researcher is subordinate to that of the participants.

External validity, the application of the theory revealed to other cases across place and time, is not the priority in the research. It is the internal validity, the accuracy, authenticity or credibility of the description made that is being sought (Fitzgerald, 2007; Bassey, 1999; Scott & Morrison, 2006). The credibility, plausibility, authenticity and the overall honesty of the research are key factors. Thus the research reported in this thesis seeks to meet a naturalistic epistemology, with its credibility established by providing the reader with confidence in the truth contained, and the degree to which the findings are determined by the subjects and not by bias or the interests of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve this level of confidence a number of steps were taken, initially by acknowledging the background of the researcher and the philosophical stance taken (Fitzgerald, 2007; Bush, 2002) and the relationship between the researcher and the research, to reveal the context in which the data was collected (Pole & Lampard, 2002). To ensure that the research questions were addressed those participants able to provide the data were identified (Denscombe, 1998). During the research steps were implemented to reduce the possible impact of bias by returning transcripts of interviews for confirmation or amendment. Further, the cross checking of the views of the principals with those of other staff in their schools enabled a level of triangulation (Bush, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The final means of establishing the credibility of the findings is the production of a thesis which includes perceptions held by individuals who did not meet the consensus view (Denscombe, 1998), and which is sufficiently detailed to allow the reader to have confidence in the findings (Bassey, 1999).

This research study does not seek reliability in the sense of consistency of results which are sought when work is replicated. Rather it seeks dependability, which within the naturalistic paradigm is broader, including factors of stability as

well as design induced change rather than reliability in the sense of providing consistency of results when the work is replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 299). The research must be seen as authentic, trustworthy, resulting from the application of acceptable processes to ensure the research so the results are consistent with the data (Cohen *et al.,* 2000). The dependability of the research requires that it can be repeated elsewhere in similar circumstances and produce similar results (Bush, 2002; Bassey, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; Scott & Morrison, 2006). To achieve such dependability the study must provide clear evidence of the process undertaken through all the stages of the research, confirming its accuracy and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process began with the verification of the typicality of the participating schools, recorded in the section on sampling. In addition further steps were taken to address accuracy, from piloting the instruments to enhancing their quality, using semi-structured interviews to facilitate the collection of common data for comparison, and interviewing staff as well as the principal in each school for further comparison (Bush, 2002). Details of the context, aims and processes undertaken for others to follow were also provided (Denscombe, 1998). In addition recorded interviews and transcriptions were used to provide detailed and accessible evidence (Perakyla, 2004) and to maintain a clear record throughout the research regarding the data gathered and the processes followed (Bassey, 1999). Thus the study reported in this thesis seeks to provide the reader with evidence to confirm its credibility and dependability.

Ethical issues

The context within which this research was conducted was South Africa, and the nature and extent of the challenge facing individuals who spoke out meant that the ethical process applied in this research was of particular importance. The principles identified in the BERA (2011) ethical guidelines underpinned the research reported in this thesis, providing a starting point for the consideration of ethical issues arising throughout the research process (Busher, 2002; Rees, 1991). The guidelines state that research needs to be conducted with ethical respect for: the person; knowledge; democratic values; quality of the research and the need to retain academic freedom. The steps taken to achieve these in this research are covered in this section. As Neuman observes, an ethical research process can be expressed as a set of prohibitions:

The law and codes of ethics recognize some clear prohibitions: Never cause unnecessary or irreversible harm to subjects; secure prior voluntary consent when possible; and never unnecessarily humiliate, degrade, or release harmful information about specific individuals that was collected for research purposes.

(Neuman 2000: 92)

The approach taken in the current study was also informed by moral views held within the social moral frameworks of society (Busher, 2002; Rees, 1991), for:

ultimately it is the researcher who has to decide how to carry out research as ethically as possible to minimise the intrusion to other peoples' working and social lives

(Busher, 2002:87)

Undertaking an interpretive research study in South Africa, which in many respects can be seen as a developing country, raised a number of specific ethical issues. The racism experienced by the black and coloured population is not directly referred to as a significant factor in shaping the actions of the interviewees, but the differences between the cultures in education is still apparent and is a sensitive issue for those in schools. To ensure the research was conducted ethically the first step was to gain informed consent from the participants, ensuring that they were fully informed of anything that might influence their participation (Neuman, 2000; Boeije, 2010), including the research topic, the intended audience, the level of anonymity planned, ensuring they were agreeing to their participation without any coercion or manipulation before giving their consent and completing a written consent (Kent, 2000; Busher & James, 2007). Knowledge of the original group of principals simplified this process, but more time was taken with the two secondary township principals in order to establish the level of trust needed to conduct the research. The reluctance of principals to sign a consent form, albeit making it clear that they were willing to be interviewed, was accepted to avoid damaging the trust established.

The initial approach to gain consent from educators in the schools was made by the principals. This was necessary because the principals were the gatekeepers of the schools and their consent for the interviews to take place

was recognised as an important step in gaining educators' acceptance. In addition, it was recognised that gaining the involvement of educators could be challenging in terms of the possible issues raised by the topic and the fact that the researcher was an unknown foreigner. There was, therefore, a need for the researcher to take steps to ensure that the staff did not feel coerced into participating (Busher & James, 2007). The danger of coercion was avoided by allowing additional time, prior to the start of the interviews, to explain the purpose and context of the research, confirming the details of the thesis, the anonymity of participants and the provision of a transcript of interviews to review for accuracy before use. It was also made clear that participants could withdraw without this decision being communicated to their principal. Although all the staff consented to being interviewed, there was a reluctance to sign an agreement, especially by the township educators. In these cases written consent was not deemed essential, as the impact of a lack of a written consent was minimal (Stringer, 1978).

The need for anonymity, for both for individuals and their schools, was extremely important as the information sought could be seen to question the government's and the Provincial Department of Education's ability to support the promotion of social justice; this is still post-1994, a sensitive issue as outlined in chapter 2 above.   Furthermore the context of several of the schools in the sample meant that if data could be linked to specific individuals they could face reprisals. The data provided by some participants meant that reprisals could be either internal to the school, because of comments about the leadership or external, from the local educational Circuit or District officers whose capacity had been questioned. It was recognised therefore that without guarantees of anonymity access to the schools and individuals might be denied. The concern for the need of anonymity for the participants ultimately led to the decision not to identify the Province in which the research took place, as it was representative of other Provinces in South Africa. Additionally pseudonyms were used for the schools and the principals interviewed (see Tables 2 and 3 above). The participants were also given the opportunity to validate their contribution, providing them with involvement in the final process of the study (Scott & Morrison, 2006) through reviewing the transcript of their interviews. The possibility that this could lead to major changes being made as the

participant reflected on their interview was recognised, but it was seen to be necessary to give the participants the opportunity to raise any particular issues to be addressed and to validate their contribution (Neuman, 2000). In the event, only three of the participants made changes to their transcript.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored in detail the approach taken to the research reported in this thesis. The philosophical stance of the researcher led to the paradigms applied, the aims and questions of the research reflected the ontological / epistemological approach to seeking knowledge and the qualitative methodology was chosen to seek the answers to the questions which emerged from the review of literature. The chapter explored the research design implemented from the methods of data gathering through sampling used to identify participants, the pilot study, the research process and the analysis. Finally, the chapter covers the steps taken to ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings, and the ethical issues which were addressed throughout the entire process.

The data gathering entailed a review of government policies and amendments, providing the context of government expectations. It also revealed the limited reference to social justice specifically, or how this should be seen in action. The data gathered through semi-structured interviews provided a voice for the principals as they explored how they made sense of the guidance provided by government. The data provided by the principals was confirmed and triangulated through the use of semi-structured interviews with educators in the schools, thus supporting the credibility and dependability of the research. The analysis of the data provided a range of information that could be used to answer the questions raised in the research. These findings are reported in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 4: Understanding social justice, school culture and decision-making

Introduction

The comparative analysis of the data collected from the seven schools in the study is presented in the following three chapters. This first chapter explores the principals' understanding of social justice, how they make sense of the government's policy relating to the concept and how their beliefs are translated in the school. The second chapter covers the importance of the context in which the principals work and its influence on their ability to provide social justice. Finally, chapter 6 explores the actions taken by the principals as they seek to promote social justice, revealing the effect of the context of the school and the beliefs and values of the principals on the actions taken and the tensions which arise. Educators' interviews are used to provide a comparison of the perceptions of the principals with those of the staff in the individual schools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which revealed differences of perception as to the value of the actions taken. The findings are presented in this order as the principals' beliefs underpin how they interpret state legislation as the policy process moves from formation to implementation initially with the formation of organisational principles.

The data analysed in this chapter address the second research question for the study: How do school leaders understand the concept of social justice, and make sense of the political agenda of social justice, in schools in the independent and public sectors? The importance of exploring this aspect of education, as highlighted in chapter 2, is that the values, goals and beliefs of the principals give meaning to policies and procedures within the impact of National and Provincial pressures (Goddard, 2003). The relationship between the principals' beliefs and the intentions of policy, therefore, ultimately provides insight into the actions taken in each institution. Thus the principals' understanding of social justice and how it influences their actions within the school can be explored (Sayer, 1992), and referenced to the different ways social justice is interpreted, as explored through the literature in chapter 2. These include the distributional nature of social justice, focused on tangible

benefits with the greatest benefit going to the least advantaged (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999). For Young (1990) social justice also relates to social position and power in institutions, the way decisions are made and by whom, as well as the distribution of resources. Bringing these together Gewirtz (2002) identified social justice in terms of its distributional and relational aspects including concepts of power, opportunity and self respect, with the work of Gewirtz (2002) and Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) identifying cultural justice and the extent to which all cultures are recognised and valued. Finally the work of Fraser (1995) focused on social justice in terms of the impact of cultural dominance in social justice and the fact that redistribution and recognition are entwined and even reinforce one another.

The chapter continues by exploring the impact of the policies' intentions on the principals' interpretation of social justice, in order to provide insight into the ongoing process of policy, its interpretation by those applying policy, the targets and success criteria set and the patterns of control put in place by the state (Ball, 2006; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Prior, 2004). The concluding section examines how the principals' interpretations of social justice are expressed through the culture of the school, with special reference to decision-making, including the issue of power in terms of how they engage with, or treat others (Gewirtz, 2002). Staff interviews were used to confirm or disprove the principals' statements, supporting the authenticity of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Principals' understanding of the concept of social justice

Initially all the principals and staff interviewed appeared to share a common agreement on the meaning of the concept of social justice. They all stated that social justice related to distribution, equality of opportunity and fairness in society for all. The principals and staff interviewed used the terms when explaining the meaning of social justice; the township principals added that they were providing social justice to meet the expectations of the government, as set down in the Constitution (1996).

> *Social justice to us means that there should be fairness to all people, communities, (Gareth)*

> *To me it would mean things being done the right way. Following the constitution of the government to the letter.* (Fergus)

The principals used the term fairness as a means of expressing the need to provide social justice by treating all racial groups in the same way; an important issue following their experiences of apartheid. Though they used the term equal opportunities Adrian raised the issue that providing social justice did not mean that everyone would be equal:

> *It is about providing equal opportunities – not necessarily expecting all to be equal. It is about fairness.* (Adrian)

As the principal of an independent school he acknowledged that not everyone could attain equality in the sense of attending such a school; similarly the principals of all types of schools indicated that equality of opportunity did not necessarily mean equality of outcome.

There was common agreement that the limited funding for the schools with the greatest need, the township schools, was resulting in inequality of educational provision in the public sector, thus confirming their understanding that, in order to achieve social justice. it was necessary to provide greater benefits to the least advantaged. This proved to be an important aspect of principals' understanding of social justice in South Africa, as well as a recurrent theme in the data:

> *in terms of social justice there are under resourced schools that deserve to get more resources.* (Charles)

It was acknowledged that the lack of resources for certain schools was maintaining the inequalities in the public school system, since the equitable distribution of resources was not being achieved (Christie, 2010). Thus, according to the principals and staff interviewed, social justice could not be achieved:

> *I think people are more socially aware than they used to be, but we are certainly not a just society yet.* (Head of Department, Addison)

Principals from the sectors of education that had been privileged under apartheid, - independent and ex-Model C schools - acknowledged that delivering equality of opportunity was a significant means of providing social

justice in education. This was important because of South Africa's history of inequality, leaving debts to pay:

> *It's a key driver. Just because of our history … there should be a consciousness around that there are debts to pay, that there are goals to reach around social justice.* (Bridget)

For all principals, regardless of the type of school, the understanding of social justice was underpinned by the focus of the Constitution (1996) on providing equity in all aspects of life, regardless of race. Though the principals recognised that the distribution of national resources meant that equality of opportunity was not being delivered in education, they identified that within their school they sought to treat individuals equally, regardless of race:

> *We try to treat everyone in exactly the same way.* (Charles)

This comment reflected the principals' focus on challenging any form of racism within the school, rather than any specific actions taken to recognise different cultures within the school, or meet the needs of individual learners. The different approach taken to this by individual is explored in chapter 6.

The independent school principals, however, each had a different approach to the delivery of social justice within the school. For one, the focus was internalised and translated into rules and regulations, protecting individuals within the school:

> *I think what we've got to do is put structures, rules and regulation in place that ensures the rights of those individuals.* (Adrian)

For the other independent school principal, Bridget, the focus was to ensure that the learners recognised the inequalities in society. She believed social justice required her to understand how people are treating each other within the school and the country.   For her, the concept centred on how people treat each other and provide enabling opportunities, reflecting relational justice (Gewirtz, 2002). Bridget's approach also reflects a moral (Sergiovanni, 1992) or transformative (Shields, 2009) style of leadership.   This approach also raised cultural justice within the school, as she sought to recognise the different cultures within the school and to make learners aware of the inequalities in society:

I think something that we try and do at school here is to make them aware of inequalities … the obstacles are still there (Bridget)

Though initially the principals' responses to the meaning of social justice focused on the distributive aspect, several also identified the importance of relational and cultural justice. These aspects of the concept emerged from principals referring to the need to promote equality of opportunity in terms of access to the school for both learners and educators:

I want more black teachers … our white (students), as much as our black (students) need the role models, … so that they don't just see the stereotype of a black teacher who is not up to scratch. (Bridget)

Although I believe that social justice is that anybody who wishes to can come … I am not sure that we actually achieve that. (Deborah)

However, the principals also alluded to the fact that equality of opportunity was not being achieved. The issues surrounding this became more apparent as the specific actions of the principals were explored. They recognised that the admission of non-white learners or educators was, for the most part, dependant on decisions made by those holding power within the institution – that is, themselves. They saw that decision-making related to the distribution of social position and, therefore, social justice (Young, 1990). Bridget's comment, reflecting her desire to see a change in the employment of educators, sits within the transformative framework of leadership (Shields, 2009). Charles regarded decision-making as a means of promoting social justice within the school through the distribution of power, although he acknowledged that power would not always be shared:

Decision-making is relatively democratic but it depends on the kind of decision actually being made. (Charles)

When describing their decision-making structures, covered later in this chapter, the principals acknowledged that decisions would be made at different levels within the school. Thus matters of school finance would be addressed by the governing body rather than the whole staff. However, all the principals confirmed that though they ultimately took responsibility for a decision, those decisions were made at different meetings in the school's meeting structure depending on the issue being discussed, and seldom at a whole staff meeting.

The analysis of the understanding of social justice expressed by the principals in the research revealed that all used the terms, equality of opportunity or fairness in relation to how they treated the different racial groups present in their school. Initially their understanding of the concept focused on the state's distribution of resources for schools. The principals recognised the historic need to address the inequality of apartheid by providing additional support for those most disadvantaged. Thus they saw social justice in terms of distribution as explored by Miller (1970) and Rawls (1999), with the greatest benefit provided for the least advantaged. They also recognised that they promoted social justice though the distribution of power in their schools, specifically through the decision-making process and who is included - or more importantly who is excluded - from the process (Young, 1990*).* A shared approach to decision making is also a key aspect of transformational leadership (Leithwood *et al.,* 1999). In addition, a number of principals referred to social justice in terms of cultural justice (Gewirtz, 2002; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003), recognising the need for increased access of learners and educators from different cultures to their school. This insight into the principals' beliefs was an essential first stage in the thesis, as the individual principals' approach to the concept shaped their approach to legislation, and to the action they took in relation to social justice. Therefore, exploring how the principals made sense of the legislation provides insight into how they applied their beliefs and values to the expectations set down by the Ministry of Basic Education, as they established their organisational principles within the school.

Principals' understanding of the government's intentions regarding education and social justice

It was noted in chapter 2 from an examination of the literature that policy, while it emerges from a contested process is the formal expression of the government's values and that legislators expect these policies to be translated into action. Once it is enshrined in law, however, policy continues to be part of an ongoing process of redefinition because it is open to interpretation by those who apply it (Wong, 2002). This section explores how the principals in the study made sense of the legislation (previously explored in chapter 1) when applying it in their school. The government's intentions regarding social justice, as set down in the Constitution (1996) or the SASA (Department of Education,

1996), were identified by all but one principal. Though the Constitution and the subsequent legislation does not make specific reference to social justice, the principals perceived the focus to be on addressing the inequality of apartheid through the provision of one public school system, open access to schools regardless of race, and the deployment of resources to meet the principles of equity, with the highest funding going to the most disadvantaged.

For some this underpinned all post-1994 educational legislation:

> *Following the Constitution of the government to the letter playing the game according to the rules.* (Fergus)

> *All significant education legislation since 1994 has had as one of its basic tenets the principle of social justice, from the South African Schools Act through all its amendments.* (Charles)

At the other extreme, one township principal was unable to identify any information received from the Ministry of Basic Education and the Provincial Department of Education regarding social justice:

> *No nothing from the State nothing. There isn't any policy like that.* (Gareth)

However, the principals in the study agreed that the policies provided no clear guidance or specific outcomes regarding how they should address social justice within their schools, reflecting the legislation's lack of reference to how the policy should be implemented. Thus principals were left to interpret or even ignore legislation, depending on their values, beliefs and the context of the school.

Charles and Deborah reported that the government recognised that legislation was being interpreted or manipulated by schools, resulting in annual amendments to the South African Schools Act (Department of Education, 1996). These included the Education Laws Amendment Acts of 1997, 1999 and following, as well as regular changes to the National Norms and Standard for School Funding since 1996.   The amendments were intended to clarify sections of the legislation including the admission of learners, the role of the governing body, and the funding of schools, and to remove loopholes which were being used to avoid meeting the intention of the legislation. In addition,

they provided definitions of the terms used in the legislation. However the principals stated that these amendments also lacked clear guidance or outcomes, and therefore made little difference to the difficulties they faced when trying to promote social justice:

> *the Government has become aware of the ways in which schools have tried to skirt issues, looked for the loopholes, so they plug them up via these amendments … we seem to have an amendment to our Schools Act every year ... then they are not enforced … there are a lot of issues of capacity* (Charles)

The principals reported that the amendments were not enforced due to a lack of capacity in the State and Provincial Department of Education, an issue which will be covered in more detail in chapter 6. They therefore continued to interpret the legislation according to their own beliefs and values, as the State failed to provide clear guidance on the delivery of social justice in education for the principals as they identified their organisational principles.

The only legislation identified by the principals as having some influence on their actions relating to social justice was the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) and the resulting Affirmative Action Policy. This had a limited effect on staff appointments, other than the recording of all staff by racial groups and the fact that the Provincial Department of Education makes the final decision on staff appointments (see chapter 5 below for a more detailed discussion). As the principal of an ex-Model C school explained:

> *There is affirmative action policy according to which appointments are now made these statistics are now publicised every year, the number of people of different races and in different categories of employment.* (Charles)

The principals of independent schools also identified changes in employment legislation, resulting in the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) requiring information on staffing broken down by racial groups:

> *Independent schools used to be a lot more independent than they are now … Umalusi … have become much more of a watchdog … they are looking at diversity of students and staff …[they are saying] we need to test whether independent schools are compliant to our [state] values* (Bridget)

Other than this, the principals saw little specific direction from government regarding social justice. They acknowledged that there was now a single structure for public education, that they were expected to admit learners living locally, regardless of race, to appoint more educators from the different racial groups, and that the government's funding favoured the most needy schools. However the lack of capacity at the Ministry of Basic Education and especially at the Provincial Department of Education left principals with significant opportunities to interpret policy. Thus the principals' personal understanding of social justice, and their beliefs and values, were significant factors in how they attempted to provide social justice, as explored below in chapter 6.

The initial views given by the principals regarding social justice and government legislation revealed that they all saw social justice in terms of the distribution of resources, with the most disadvantaged needing to receive the greatest share. They also understood the concept as relating to how they used power to make decisions, and Bridget, Charles and Deborah identified the recognition and valuing of other cultures as an aspect of social justice that they tried to deliver. The policy which shaped their approach to cultural aspects of social justice appeared to some extent to result from employment legislation which raised the need for the principals to employ more black or coloured educators. The limited guidance from government allowed principals to interpret policy relating to social justice in the light of their personal beliefs and understanding, which in turn shaped the actions taken to promote social justice in their schools. When exploring with the principals how they promoted social justice in their schools they referred first to the culture of the school, which they saw as reflecting their beliefs on social justice and the behaviour they expected from the learners and educators to meet these.

School culture

The personal beliefs, values and attitudes of principals are translated into actions, including the school culture they establish (Sayer, 1992). An exploration of the school culture, therefore, began to illuminate the different approaches the principals took to promote social justice in their individual schools. All but one principal described the culture of the school as focusing on caring for the children and ensuring that everyone was treated equally,

implemented through a code of conduct. The educators interviewed all agreed that, in this instance, treating members of the school equally regardless of race was central to the school's culture:

> *We build that through the code of conduct … everyone knows what to do, what is expected of them … its about what the government says about being equal, everybody having a fair opportunity.* (Fergus)

Adrian focused on social justice in terms of rules and structures and saw that the culture established was about retaining integrity in all forms of decision making:

> *We don't just say we are not going to do A, B, C, we say we are not going to do A, B, C, because we believe that it would compromise people's integrity.* (Adrian)

The influence of contextual issues on school culture was reflected in the specific actions the principals took, or wished to take, which revealed a clear division between the township schools and the other sectors. For Gareth and Fergus and their staff such action was as basic as providing food for students:

> *We go out of our way to look after the orphans. We even cook for them for their breakfast … That is how we promote social justice.*   (Gareth)

However for Deborah, Charles and Bridget the focus was challenging racism and ensuring that everyone was treated in the same manner:

> *I think what we are doing consciously is trying not to single out groups … We hammer racism as one of our worst offences.… Racial incidents, those are our top priorities.* (Deborah)

The approach of the two principals of independent schools differed. Adrian focused on ensuring that learners had opportunities to lead, whereas Bridget saw social justice as central and explored the implications of the concept regularly with the learners within assemblies:

> *Every single matric learner [has a leadership] portfolio, where they are on a committee* (Adrian)

> *We talk about [social justice] at assembly and we have an extension period every two weeks.* (Bridget)

Though all principals reported that the basic culture of the school was about caring for the individual, treating them equally and challenging racism, there

were differences that emerged, reflecting the divisions between the three sectors of education in South Africa.

In the public sector a clear division emerged between the priorities of the principals of the two types of school as they tried to promote social justice; this division related to the communities surrounding the school and the lack of clarity and clear guidance in the various policies on education's role in establishing equity in the country. Therefore the principals' personal beliefs regarding social justice also played an important role in shaping the school culture they established. For Edward, Fergus and Gareth, with learners coming from the township, this resulted in a culture focusing on providing for the basic needs of learners. For Bridget, Charles and Deborah, with schools positioned in mainly white communities, the school's culture focused on the need to challenge any form of racism in the school. In the independent schools, sharing a similar context of wealthy parents coming from a wider area, the personal beliefs and values of Adrian and Bridget led to the emergence of different school cultures regarding social justice. Adrian focused within the institution, whereas for Bridget the focus was not only on addressing racism but also making learners aware of injustice in wider society.

For two of the principals in the study, one ex-Model C and one independent, the importance of school culture was highlighted by their awareness that the approach taken by some staff to black and coloured students did not reflect the culture, and the consequent need to carry out formal and informal staff development:

> *Trying with our staff in informal and formal occasions to appreciate different backgrounds, to appreciate the different types of homes that some of our children are coming from.* (Deborah)
>
> *[Learners have] pointed out to me that teachers often say things in class that they find offensive but they do know that it doesn't come from a place of malice or racism; that it's really ignorance. … that's one of the reasons [for] this workshop with teachers.*   (Bridget)

Bridget's comments established that she felt that the racist comments made by educators were not intended as such, but rather revealed a lack of understanding of some staff that such comments, acceptable under apartheid,

were no longer acceptable; educators needed to be sensitive to the feelings of others when working with different racial groups.

Both principals acknowledged that racist behaviour on the part of learners and, more significantly, from educators towards learners still existed in these originally all-white schools. The issue of staff attitudes was also raised by a head of department at Cardogan who saw that such problems arose because people were not prepared for the change from a white to mixed school population:

> *But if you go to a mixed class and you say to the kids … if you don't know what you are doing here you must go back to the township. What are you saying to all these kids … I don't think enough preparation was done, it was just a matter of take it or leave it.* (Head of Department, Cardogan)

The differences emerging between school cultures in the different schools, based on the principals' beliefs and values, highlighted the complexity of social justice and the ability of principals to interpret government policy (Griffiths, 1998; Wong, 2002). The principals considered social justice not only in terms of material distribution but also in terms of relational and associational justice. This was expressed through the expectations they have about the way individuals in schools behave towards one another to ensure integrity is maintained. The cultural aspects of social justice were also revealed by their challenge to any racism or inappropriate comments by educators towards learners. This examination of the school's culture also provides insight into the style of leadership the principals employed as they sought to provide clear expectations for the staff through establishing a productive school culture.

The school's decision-making process was a key aspect of school culture which, the principals believed, revealed their approach to social justice, and which revealed how they addressed it in terms of the distribution of power. The size of the meeting structures established in the various schools again revealed the effect of contextual issues. However it is not only who participates in decision-making, but which members of the school are excluded from the process which is important. The reason for the exclusion of individuals or groups from the process illuminates the leadership styles of the principals.

Decision-making

The decision making process implemented by the principals is extremely important to the research study as it provides insight into how and why decisions are made within the school regarding the different facets of social justice. Decision making identified the way schools reflect the democratic norms and values underlying the Constitution and the government's expectation that schools would promote local democracy (Bush & Heystek, 2006). It also provides insight into how the principals distribute rights and responsibilities to others, providing opportunities to participate in the power structure. The process also provides evidence on the style of leadership employed as the principals engage with staff (Leithwood *et al.*, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Comparing the perceptions of the senior staff and heads of department regarding decision-making with those of the principals enhanced the authenticity of the findings.

In all but one school the principals stated that sharing decision-making was important, as those implementing decisions had to be part of the process, thus reflecting a transformational or, for the African principals, an Ubuntu framework of leadership. Decisions therefore had to involve staff, thus reflecting the sharing of power and the implementation of a democratic process (Bush & Heystek 2006):

> *I think, I have a very consultative approach; I also believe that people who have to implement, definitely have to be part of the process of what they need to implement.* (Bridget)

> *What ever I want to do I consult and I sell my idea to them, we sit down and then we discuss and agree* (Edward)

One principal articulated her role as being:

> *to bring this all together and to make sure that all the needs and concerns are being addressed.* (Deborah)

The staff in these schools confirmed that decisions were made democratically in that everyone was listened to, with a team of staff ultimately making decisions but with ideas coming top down and bottom up:

So very definitely [the principal]) is not autocratic. I think [she tries] to allow discussion from bottom up. (Head of Department, Berkeley)

The decision-making structure in place in all schools involved a senior management team (SMT), varying in size according to the type and context of the school. In Berkeley, Cardogan and Darnell the SMT included the principal and deputies, with a wider management group including 12-13 heads of department. In Ekwueme, Fumnanya and Gatru smaller staff numbers resulted in teams of five or six: the principal, deputy and normally four heads of department:

The principal is not the only one who makes the decisions, he calls the SMT … the Deputy and the HoD's and we sit down as the SMT and then we discuss whatever. (Head of Department, Ekwueme)

However several principals recognised that shared decision making in their school was not without tension. Staff who saw their views were not accepted when final decisions were made could feel that their opinions were not valued:

I'm not sure that every stakeholder would feel that their voice carried the same amount of weight. (Deborah)

This problem was also raised by a head of department regarding Bridget's style of involving staff in decision-making:

she encourages discussion which is great, the difficulty is that you allow people to voice their opinion which then can lead to someone saying, well I said it should be like that but you did not take my advice, so I can be offended. (Head of Department, Berkeley)

A head of department at Cardogan also reflected this view. He saw power as being held by the principal. Though consultations took place the principal made all decisions:

We have information coming up from staff and we have all sorts of other things but the Principal makes the decision. (Head of Department, Cardogan)

Regardless of the number of staff in a school the intention was to involve people in decision making, though it was also acknowledged that a number of decisions, including staff appointments, would be made by the principal alone. However at Addison the senior management team was seen to be the only point where decisions were made, with educators completing written surveys to

identify their needs and views which would inform the decisions made by the Senior Team:

> *The Senior Team, people of experience make the call … We have a lot of perception surveys … we take the opinions into account. … we will always ask people how they would view something before we make a decision. …* (Adrian)

Though decision-making was considered by the principal to be democratic, only five out of a total teaching staff of 59 had any opportunity to be involved in decision making. The use of surveys enabled the senior team to consider the views of staff, but such a structure avoided the possibility of any dissent or open discussion which might raise opposition to the views or proposed actions of the principal. One educator interviewed referred to the style of leadership employed by Adrian to explain the reason why staff were not involvement in the decision-making process:

> *I think it is a benevolent dictatorship.* (Head of Department, Addison)

The head of department, in describing the principal as a benevolent dictator, acknowledged that decisions were only taken by the principal with a small group of senior staff. Any form of democracy or involvement of staff in decision-making was not considered. Addison was the only school where whole school decision-making was not perceived to involve educators beyond the Senior Management Team. Here, the leadership style of the principal reflected transactional leadership where employees are told what is required of them, and not engaged in decision-making. In one section of Addison, though, a decision-making structure had been established to include the deputy and nine heads of department:

> *I have tried to make it more a case of everybody [HoDs] making a decision. … I would say its more the management, myself, the Deputy and 9 HOD's who make decisions.* (Senior staff, Addison)

Thus in one section of the school transformational leadership was emerging.

For the remaining principals the opportunity for staff to have a voice and engage in the decision-making process was seen as an important means of addressing social justice. In Berkeley and Cardogan, structures had been established to involve all staff in the decision-making process. Issues for discussion and

decision-making were brought to meetings not only by the principals; the structure of meetings supported or even encouraged members of staff to bring forward issues that could lead to decisions being made that would affect the whole school. Different meeting models existed: regular staff meetings with and without senior staff present; extended management group meetings including the grade heads; subject decisions made at subject level and ratified by the management group; committee meetings of eight to ten staff led by a member of the management group; and finally committees covering different issues, with staff encouraged to participate, bringing ideas to the Senior Management Team:

> *The staff have their own meetings without any of the top four present …. we have meetings with the small [management] team and bring in the Grade Heads, who aren't officially on the team.* (Deborah)

In Ekwueme, Fumnanya and Gatru contextual issues influenced the size of the structures for staff involvement, but not the intention of the principals to involve educators in decision-making. Staff confirmed that issues were first discussed by the Senior Management Team and then taken to the staff meeting for further discussion, leading to decisions by the group, or issues being returned to the Senior Management team for the final decision. Staff acknowledged that structures were in place to enable them to be heard and to raise issues for discussion and decision-making:

> *Decisions are taken after consultation with all educators … Sometimes ideas come from the SMT and go to the Principal and then discussion takes place. The Principal is the 'figure head' so the idea needs to be sold to him, agreed by him.* (Senior staff, Ekwueme)

In Fumnanya structures to ensure that staff had a voice were achieved through the use of commissions, with staff grouped according to their interests to oversee different aspects of the school, identify ways forward and provide information for the school:

> *In those commissions I have teachers grouping themselves according to their interest, specialisation, mainly their interest.* (Fergus)

In Gatru a 30-minute meeting was held at the end of each day to explore any issues that had arisen during that day:

From 2.00 to 2.30 pm we review the whole day … we have that time to talk to each other so that you can reflect on what has been happening during the day.   (Senior staff, Gatru)

Of the township schools in the study Gatru was unique in having educators remaining in school to meet in their own time. These meetings provided immediate feedback on any issue or need arising from the educators' experience during the day, leading to action either the following day or to further discussion to seek a long term solution.

The structures in place to involve staff in decision-making across all schools reveal the development of school leadership from the directed, centre-led education of apartheid towards the use of democratic processes identified by government (Department of Education, 1996; Bush & Heysteck, 2006). The range of ways decision-making involves other staff also provides insight into the approach taken by principals to the relational aspects of social justice and their style of leadership. Other than Adrian, the intention to involve the educators in decision-making reflected a transformational style of leadership (Leithwood *et al.*, 1999).

Another aspect of decision-making required to meet the South African Schools Act (1996) intention to promote local democracy, is the democratically elected Learners' Representative Council. The council is intended to provide opportunities to prepare learners to be part of a democratic society where social justice is dominant. The Council is technically involved in decision-making, able to bring issues to the staff through meetings with the principal, and in public schools it is represented on the governing body. Though providing an opportunity to raise issues concerning the student body, in reality the Council's impact was limited in terms of decision-making; this was expressed in strong terms by one school:

> *The fact that we have to have representation from pupils on this council is a bit toothless … I have a weekly meeting with the chair person, but that is just to hear them, I can ignore them.*   (Adrian)

The Councils, though listened to by the principals, do not involve the learners in any form of decision-making and are therefore unable to provide the democratic experience envisaged by Apple and Beane (1999) and Chapman *et al.* (1995).

The Representative Council of Learners ... they are elected by the students … we work with them ... they are representing other learners … we listen to them … so they take all the problems and report them and we sit down and see how to resolve them. (Edward)

An analysis of the findings regarding decision-making reveals that all schools have moved from the authoritarian, top-down dictate of apartheid, towards a leadership style involving educators in decision-making, thus meeting one of the key expectations of education post-apartheid to extend democracy (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). To meet the government's intentions of developing democracy Student Representative Councils are in place; however in reality they play no part in decision-making. Involving staff in decision-making also reflects the delivery of social justice in terms of the access to power (Bush & Heystek, 2006) and relational justice, as explored by Young (1990) and Gewirtz (2002).

However the findings reveal that involving staff in decision-making has a range of meanings for the principals in the study. Adrian only involves in decision-making those with the most experience, who hold the most senior positions in the school and who are perceived to have the ability to make decisions for others; this reflects a transactional style of leadership. For the remaining principals involvement meant developing structures which would facilitate decision-making at different levels within the school structure. Here the basic educator was encouraged to participate in the decision-making process by expressing their views and having the opportunity to raise issues requiring discussion and a decision within the school. Decisions were generally seen to be made by a group of people rather than by the principal alone. However not all educators saw that, in reality, decision-making involved the staff. Further the danger of engaging educators in decision-making was commented on by one educator who recognised that if a member of staff's views were ignored they might feel less valued and disengage. The context of the school affected the decision-making structure which was in place. There were complex meeting structures for schools with a large number of educators, whereas schools with a small number of staff had a simple structure of a senior team and whole staff meetings.

Conclusion

The findings in this chapter focus on the principals' understanding of social justice, revealing their beliefs and values, and explore how they understand the intentions of the government, as illuminated through the culture of the school. The comparison of the principals' perceptions of the schools culture, including decision-making, with those of the staff enabled their perceptions to be compared with the reality experienced by the staff, supporting the authenticity of the findings.

All principals referred to the distributional aspect of social justice as being of primary importance. Within the school they interpreted this to mean providing equality of opportunity regardless of race and indicated that this could require additional support for some learners who were most disadvantaged, an aspect which is explored in more detail in chapter 6. This was important in light of the historical context of South Africa and the inequality of provision under the previous National Government, which resulted in the uneven nature of educational provision post-apartheid (Christie, 1986; Christie, 2010; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). However, Adrian confirmed, that this did not mean that all learners could be equal, as those attending independent schools such as his would have additional resources and opportunities, to those attending public schools.

To varying degrees all principals saw that social justice as more than just the distribution of resources. It included the ways they addressed decision-making, how groups and individuals participated in the sharing of power, and how individuals within the school relate to one another. In South Africa the relational aspect of social justice is closely aligned to cultural justice; how learners and educators from different racial groups are treated or gain access to the school. The relevance of these aspects of social justice was illuminated by the school culture and the structure for decision-making which had been established. In all but one of the schools different structures were in place to involve all educators in the process, which was shaped by the context of the school. All the principals saw decision-making as a shared process, though acknowledging there were times when they alone would make the decisions. However the main decision-making body in all schools was identified as the Senior Management Team, consisting of the principals, deputies and heads of

department or heads of school. Adrian was the sole principal to include only the senior management of six in decision-making. He judged that only they had the experience and ability to make decisions for others, and excluded educators at all other levels. The approach of the principals, in the sample, to decision-making also met the government's intention to implement a democratic structure, following the authoritarian and centralised system of education under apartheid (Bush & Heystek, 2006).

The culture of all schools in the study was reported to be underpinned by a clear focus on two aspects: treating everyone equally, regardless of race, and the need to admit learners and appoint educators from non-white groups. This was both to meet the expectations of the government and to meet their personal beliefs in equality of opportunity. However, the contextual situation was acknowledged as influencing their ability to achieve this, an aspect which is covered in more detail in chapter 6. The principals' prioritisation of social justice in terms of the distribution of tangible benefits is understandable, given the history of the country. However they also identified that the distribution of power and the relations between individuals within the school, which closely linked to the need to address cultural justice, were also important aspects of the social justice, they tried to promote.

In terms of the policy process, it can be seen that both the progress from policy formation to implementation and the principals' identification of organisational principles, were significantly influenced by the principals' own beliefs. This was possible because a lack of specific actions and outcomes for education in the legislation, linked with the lack of capacity in the Provincial Department of Education, which allowed the principals to interpret legislation in a way that would have been impossible under the previous Nationalist government. Whether this is an advantage or disadvantage for the implementation of social justice will be explored further in Chapter 6. The findings also reveal that contextual issues facing the principals played an important role in shaping the actions they took as they attempted to provide social justice. The next chapter therefore explores the principals' perceptions of the key contextual issues to affect their ability to promote social justice as they wished.

CHAPTER 5: The context in which the principals work

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the principals' understanding of social justice and how this was expressed through the school culture. It began by providing insight into the style of leadership they employed and identifying their opportunities to interpret legislation. This was possible because not only did these policies lack specific outcomes, but the Provincial Department of Education lacked the capacity to support or monitor their implementation; the principals' ability to interpret policy according to their personal beliefs, therefore, was enhanced.   The chapter also provided insight into the complex nature of social justice identified by Rawls (1999), Young (1990), Gewirtz (2002) and Cribb and Gewirtz (2003) and the effect of the context of the school on the actions of the principals. Before exploring a number of specific actions taken by the principals to promote social justice, the data analysed in this chapter addresses the third research question for the study: What are the contextual issues that shape the action they take? Also, in conjunction with chapter 1, the data addresses the first research question for the study: What are the expectations placed on schools by government policies to provide social justice? Thus this chapter focuses on the context in which the schools function: nationally through the educational policies in place, more locally through the Provincial Department of Education and the local community, and how these contexts influence the promotion of social justice in the school.

In South Africa the school context is an extremely important aspect to consider. After 1994 it was recognized that delivering the expectations of the Constitution (1996) and providing a workforce able to meet the needs of the country would be challenging, as the education system post-apartheid was fragmented, with inequality of provision (Christie, 2010; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). In addition, it was also recognised that in many schools serving the black community the culture of learning had been lost (Department of Education, 1996). The retention of this variation in provision could be seen as a way for the affluent to maintain their cultural dominance, with the school acting as a sorting device within the hierarchical division of labour, so maintaining a form of class system. The

context of the school and the local priorities, including culture and values can have a major impact on the principals' actions (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Moorosi, 2010) which the analysis in chapter 4 began to identify. Data gathered from senior staff and heads of department in addition to that of the principals again enabled comparison, supporting the authenticity of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The principals identified the contextual issues which influenced their ability to deliver social justice as: the government's legislation, the Provincial Department of Education and the community surrounding their schools. The first of these to be explored is the national context, through a number of policies commented on by the principals in the study.

The national context

The principals and educators recognised that they worked in the context of the government's intentions regarding social justice set down in the Constitution (1996), subsequent legislation and Provincial pressures (Goddard, 2003). Both the principals and a number of educators commented that the country was not delivering the expectations of the Constitution:

> *In theory it is a magnificent Constitution but in the practice, there is a problem, I think the people who did devise it did a masterful job, but they never educated the general populous in terms of the actual running of a Constitution.* (Senior staff, Addison)

The principals observed that government policy emerging from the Ministry of Basic Education limited or even mitigated their ability to promote social justice in a number of ways. In their opinion the legislation was often not appropriate to the wide ranging variations found in education; neither did it make clear the expected outcomes, leaving policy to be interpreted by individual principals. The key policies which the public school principals identified as inhibiting their ability to promote social justice related to funding. They reported that even the quintile system, established to provide funding for public schools (Mestry & Naidoo, 2009) was failing:

> *It does hold us back without the resources you get strained. We would love to reduce the numbers in the class, it would make a significant difference, but we cannot afford that.* (Fergus)

For Charles, part of the reason for this failure was that the criteria used to identify the quintile level of funding, for each school (described in chapter 1)

were inadequate and did not provide sufficient money for the schools with the greatest need:

> *This quintile system that we have doesn't really work. The criteria that are used to determine the quintile into which you fall are ridiculous*, (Charles)

The funding difficulties were seen to be exacerbated by legislation (Department of Education, 1996) which encourages all public schools to charge annual school fees for learners attending their institution, in order to enhance the education they are able to provide. Principals from the public schools all acknowledged the socially unjust imbalance in resourcing, with ex-Model C schools already being provided with buildings and facilities of a much higher standard than those of township schools. They saw that the school fee system maintained or widened the divisions established during apartheid; Charles and Deborah charged fees to maintain their facilities and staffing levels, whilst Edward, Fergus and Gareth, in poorer areas, were unable to raise similar levels of school fees (Christie, 2010). At worst, school fees had been used to exclude people of colour from schools (Moloi & Bush, 2006):

> *there are under resourced schools that deserve to get more resources than schools like this that were historically well resourced that have access to a parent base that continue to resource the school well through their financial contributions.* (Charles)

> *There have been allegations in the past that schools used fees to keep people out.* (Charles)

The inequality in resourcing relating to the geographic position of the schools which school fees brought to the public sector, was made clear when the principals identified the fees they charged per learner per year:

> *We are asking R18,500 a year. It doesn't sound much when you think about private schooling.* (Deborah)

In contrast, township schools set school fees of R450 or less. Even then, schools did not receive payment from the majority of parents due to the poverty resulting from the effects of HIV / Aids and high unemployment:

> *In terms of school fees … here school fees are R450.* (Fergus)

> *Our school fees are R120 for a year … but some children drop out because parents don't have the money to buy uniform, pay school fees.* (Edward)

The value of these fees in sterling of £1,480.00 for Deborah, £36.00 for Fergus and £4.00 for Edward (see table 3) highlights the lack of funding resulting in the inability of Edward, Fergus and Gareth to provide the same education as ex-Model C schools. Currently the majority of the black population still attend township schools and as some 79% of the population in South Africa are black the link between the delivery of a poorer quality of education and poverty is maintained (Vally *et al.,* 2010). Worse, it enables some schools to reject the application of learners living close to the school but unable to pay school fees.

The affect of the average annual income of 2012 also provides greater insight into the financial differences between the different communities, as an average wage for the black population was R69,632.00 (£5,571.00) for coloureds R139,190.00 (£11,135.00), for Indians R252,724.00 (£20,217.00) and for the white population R387,011 (£30,960.00). Further high unemployment, an average of 33%, has a much greater affect on the black population as does a minimum annual salary of R23,760.00 (£1,900.00) (South African Government statistics 2012).

The government's response to this situation was to pass legislation to introduce fee exemptions to enable poor families to apply for an exemption of part, or all of school fees (Department of Education, 1998a); later, non-fee schools were created (Department of Education, 2006). However though the impact on Charles and Deborah was limited, as the vast majority of their cohorts were able to pay school fees (Chart 1), exemptions have led to concerns for these principals when they consider admitting learners from townships, as they rely on school fees to maintain staffing levels and provide the additional facilities which are still expected by the local community:

> *Though we offer access to all we are concerned about affordability, we encourage those to attend the school no matter what colour or creed who can afford the school … we have to have a cash flow or we cannot exist.* (Deborah)

It was the township schools which were most affected, as additional funding was not sufficient to replace the unpaid school fees:

> *[They know we do not receive fees but] no they don't bother about that because it is a national issue, all the black schools in particular are in this very same dilemma.* (Gareth)

This lack of additional funding results in a lack of material and human resources, shaping the quality of learning provided:

> *Yes [we have]) 40, 45 or even 50. [learners in a class]*
> (Fergus)

> *There is a lack of resources … We only have 13 rooms and therefore in grade 11 and 12 we have 75 pupils in one classroom.* (Senior staff, Ekwueme)

Edward, Fergus and Gareth reported they were unable to deliver the type of education they equated with promoting social justice, in terms of providing a quality of education to meet that of ex-Model C schools, even though they were expected by some to reach the standards achieved by these schools:

> *people expect the results that are similar to people who are at the other schools with high fees* (Fergus)

In Fumnanya the fees received were used by Fergus to provided additional security and cleaning, as the amount received was insufficient to provide additional educators:

> *We use the money to cover those activities that are not covered by the Department of Education … we are forced to employ security guards daytime and night time … every school is given a cleaner, but a school of this size cannot be cleaned by one person. … we have seven others paid by the parents.* (Fergus)

In the poorest rural schools the lack of funding meant that even basic repairs could not take place:

> *We can't even employ a cleaner or a handyman. Where a door or pipe is broken no one can fix it if you don't have money in the petty cash to pay, it will take 5 to 6 months to get those people to come and stop the leak.* (Gareth)

Another policy reported as failing to support the principals' attempts to promote social justice was the government's attempt to improve the quality of education,

in the public sector, through school self evaluation. The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was introduced in 2006. It was intended to amalgamate the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) (which appraised individual educators); the Performance Management System (PMS), (evaluating educators for salary progression); and the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) (evaluating school effectiveness). The policy was seen as ineffective, partly due to the Ministry of Basic Education's lack of planning and preparation, leading to poor implementation and failure (Bisschoff & Mathye, 2009):

> *This IQMS thing. Introduced with the best of intentions, upgrading the standard of teaching, but look what's happened to it. … a lot of these policies don't actually filter down to grass roots level.* (Charles)

The intention of improving the standards of teaching was approved by the principals, as it supported their focus of promoting social justice by providing the best educational experience possible. However it was unsuccessful because the Ministry of Basic Education failed to plan for the introduction of the policy at the school level, by providing training and time for the new process to be introduced. This problem was exacerbated by the lack of capacity at provincial level which is explored in the next section of the chapter. Therefore the intention of the policy was not always understood or fully implemented, especially in township schools.

This lack of planning by the Ministry of Basic Education was raised by Fergus and Gareth, who observed that their role in the monitoring of educators' performance was limited by the policy. They viewed this as an ongoing barrier to their attempts to improve the quality of education, which was exacerbated by the fact that they did not have a role in directly monitoring classroom practice:

> *It becomes very difficult because I am not directly involved in monitoring the educator performance because as a Principal I do not do classroom visits, it is the Head of Department.* (Fergus)

The policy in place identifies a system of classroom monitoring or appraisal which is a form of peer appraisal, where the individual educator evaluates their own practice. This is then discussed with a Development Support Group consisting of the head of department and an educator chosen by the member of staff being appraised; the principal therefore is not involved (Bisschoff & Mestry,

2009). However, even this form of appraisal does not always take place in township schools as the process is costly, involving as it does three educators. Moreover, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) has not agreed to any form of classroom observation (Mestry *et al.,* 2009).

Fergus also raised the problem of the government's system of providing food for the poorest learners in primary schools, but not in high schools. He saw this as a failure to deliver the appropriate distribution of resources to meet even the basic needs of learners, leaving principals trying to find food for the learners:

> *Who said that High School students don't starve**,** they still come from the same family they were coming from when they were in the primary school.* (Fergus)

Charles and Deborah referred to the regular amendments to the SASA (1996) as attempts to ensure that the intentions of policy were implemented. However, these changes were not improving their ability to promote social justice. Therefore they did not see legislation shaping their actions regarding social justice. The vacuum left by the failure of policy to provide either appropriate guidance on action or sufficient resources, led to the principals' actions being determined largely by their personal beliefs and values, as they attempted to give meaning to the policies. This lack of clear guidance not only left Deborah in a position of being unclear on the specifics of the government's intentions, but she also acknowledged the possibility that she could knowingly interpret the policy solely to meet the needs of Darnell which could run contrary to the promotion of social justice:

> *Yes, I suppose [I am aware of legislation], but it is not always a conscious things I am aware of that, and quite frankly we sometimes manipulate things … to suit yourself.* (Deborah)

Adrian and Bridget recognised that attempts to promote social justice in schools through legislation had even less impact on them. The only pieces of legislation that all principals saw as influencing them to varying degrees were the open access of schools to all racial groups (Department of Education, 1996); employment legislation seeking to increase the number of previously disadvantaged groups in all levels of employment (Department of Labour, 1998); and the need to establish a democratically elected Learners Council

(Department of Education, 1996). These three elements of legislation will be explored in chapter 6. Though all the principals acknowledged the government's commitment to social justice and the intention that education should play a major role in promoting social justice, they stated that the lack of clear expectations or guidelines allowed them to interpret the policy as they translated it into the organisational principles which would set the targets and success criteria for its implementation within the school.

The public sector principals noted that legislation, especially relating to the funding schools received and the lack of the provision of food for the most impoverished learners as they moved from primary to secondary school, mitigated against their efforts to promote social justice in terms of distribution. Similarly the principals' inability to use classroom observation as a tool to improve the quality of teaching in their schools made achieving their primary means of promoting social justice - providing the best education possible - more challenging. The public school principals' efforts to implement the government's policies are overseen by the Provincial Departments of Education, which were tasked with monitoring the implementation of policy, providing support and training for the schools and monitoring the improvement of the quality of education and the levels of achievement of the learners. The influence of the Provincial Department of Education on the ability of principals to promote social justice is therefore explored in the next section.

The Provincial Department of Education

Under the South African education system, the administrative responsibility for legislation lies with the nine Provincial Departments of Education, as noted in chapter 1. The Provincial Department of Education's role is to work with the public schools and the public, however all the public school principals saw the Department's influence on their ability to address social justice as negative, the key issue being a lack of capacity in the Department:

> *The education system doesn't seem to have the capacity to ensure that that legislation is effectively adopted at all levels of the system.* (Charles)

A range of problems relating to the Department of Education were raised by Charles, Deborah, Edward, Fergus and Gareth. They confirmed that the

Department provided very little, if any support in terms of developmental work for educators when there were changes to the curriculum, or when new developments were introduced in legislation. Edward, Fergus and Gareth cited IQMS as an example of the Department's failure to help. When the system was introduced the Department was unable to provide the necessary support or training making it difficult if not impossible to implement, a factor that has previously been reported in the work of Bisschoff and Mathye (2009) and Mestry *et al.,* (2009). The principal of Ekwueme was dismissive of their role:

> *We didn't get much support from them.* (Edward)

Charles reported difficulties when sending documentation requested by the Department:

> *I have submitted I think its now five sets of applications, it's an enormous amount of paper work, that you have to submit for every teacher, I'm still waiting to hear once whether those applications have been approved.* (Charles)

All the public school principals highlighted the difficulty they faced when trying to make contact with the Department to ask questions or ask for support on any issue. At the same time they were faced with meetings set without notice, where out of date information was circulated:

> *Most of the time we don't see him, I can't even get him on his cell phone … He will suddenly out of the blue phone us and say there is a meeting, and we will have to drop everything and go, and he will give us a file of circulars, some from last year that we should have had … and we have to make sense of it all.* (Deborah)

Charles and Deborah believed that the Department's lack of support left them isolated regarding decision-making that affected their promotion of social justice. As an example they cited the fact that school admissions policies had still not been approved some 17 years after they had been submitted:

> *The Governing Body determines the admissions policy … submitted to the Head of the Department, for approval … in this Province not a single school admissions policy that has been approved.* (Charles)

However, they did acknowledge that when necessary they were granted the funding necessary to pay for support from external consultants.

Though the current situation was challenging Charles and Deborah were both concerned that were their link inspector to change, their position could become extremely difficult:

> *We have a good relationship with the gentleman who is in charge of us now …. but who knows. His successor could have a political agenda, and we could have a completely different scenario so we are very much grateful for our present situation … but it could change tomorrow.* (Deborah)

Charles and Deborah's concern for their future relationship with their link inspector from the Department added to the tension they felt as they sought to promote social justice in their schools.

The Department of Education's lack of capacity was more significant however for Fergus, and especially for the Section 20 schools led by Edward and Gareth. All three relied on the Department for support and training in order to deliver any policy changes. They could not afford to employ support or training from external consultants when the department failed to provide it. Edward and Gareth, whose funding is held by the Department, relied on requisitions to the Department for purchases but both claimed that they faced serious difficulties due to the Department's inability to respond to requisitions, the response either taking months or never being received:

> *… it takes more than 6 months for them to respond or they do not respond. Schools … do not have working telephones because you do the bill and then it takes 6 months whereas telecom switches off the phone.* (Gareth)

> *At times you requisition text books and the Department does not deliver the text books.* (Fergus)

Edward and his member of staff both revealed the difficulties they faced both in relation to the employment of educators and in dealing with educators when they did not meet the required standards of teaching. The Department's lack of support in these two areas impeded their attempts to provide the highest quality education for learners, their primary means of promoting social justice. Edward's attempts to deal with educators with high absentee rates by requesting the Department to stop their salaries were ignored, an issue confirmed by a member of staff:

> *The problem here lies mainly with the Department of Education … they don't do their jobs properly … a teacher is always absent from school… instead of the Department deducting the money from the teacher's salary it does not get deducted and that actually encourages the teacher to do it even more …* (Head of Department, Ekwueme)

Gareth raised the question of corruption by members of the Department, in addition to a lack of capacity. One example he gave was that the number of educators allocated to a school should be based on the number of learners. They were not always provided, however, resulting in larger classes which affected the quality of education he could provide:

> *[the Department] works out the number of children … in the primary school the ratio is 1 teacher per 40 children, this year. I have been given only 2 posts because our number has increased from 877 to 1062.* (Gareth)

The additional 185 learners on roll should have resulted in the provision of 4.6 additional educators, for which the Provincial Department of Education would have been funded. Since only two posts materialised, however the implication is that the funding for 2.6 educators was held back by someone in the Department.

As a further example of corruption Gareth also noted that the cost of goods purchased through the Department was much greater than if the schools were allowed to make their own purchases. He observed that the additional costs to the school resulted from the fact that members of the Department purchased the goods from suppliers known to them, at inflated prices. This reduced the limited funding available to schools even further, and consequently their ability to provide the quality of education they sought:

> *Section 20 schools are actually robbed by the Department and officials, those who handle the funds … toner [for the fax] at Game will cost about R200 but when you requisition it from the Department you will get that toner in 6 months time and the price can be 10 times more.* (Gareth)

The apparent lack of interest in the township schools by members of the Department of Education was seen by Edward, Fergus and Gareth as resulting from the fact that the officials, and even educators, had moved their children out

of the township schools. Their own children, therefore, were not affected by the poor levels of funding and the resulting lower quality of educational provision:

> *They are not interested because their children don't go to these schools their own children go to [ex-Model C schools]. That is another barrier to the improvement of our education system because the people at the top, their children never go to these schools which need to be heard.* (Gareth)

The Provincial Department of Education's lack of capacity to support the public schools exacerbated the effects of the funding problems faced by the township schools as they sought to promote social justice by providing a quality of education similar to the ex-Model C schools. The effect of the Department's lack of capacity proved most damaging for Section 20 schools, who relied on the Department to provide all their needs. The lack of capacity resulted in absent educators' still being paid, which made challenging such staff impossible. For Gareth there was even a question of corruption in the Department. It can be concluded therefore that the National and Provincial context within the public schools principals worked constantly challenged their attempts to promote social justice, especially in the township schools. The final contextual issue raised by the principals as significantly influencing their actions were the parents and local community of the school, explored in the following section.

Community

Public school principals referred to the community in terms of the parents of learners in the school. Adrian and Bridget did not see the local community as affecting their promotion of social justice because the school took learners from a wide catchment area. However the Principals did refer to the fact that parents did have some influence on their actions. Adrian and Bridget raised two issues: first, many parents wanted the school to remain as it was before the end of apartheid, alluding to the expectation that the school would remain white, which was sometimes reflected in the attitude of some learners:

> *I think a lot of our parents just want the [school] to stay like it was before and are living their lives that way and speak that way. They see the abolition of Apartheid as a politically expedient thing that, it is not something that they can embrace completely … Learners come out with things … it's something they've learned at home, or absorbed unconsciously from the home background.* (Bridget)

Bridget's comment shows that racist attitudes are still present in some families, with the comments of learners reflecting what they hear in the home. As seen in chapter 4, the culture of the school attempts to address this and to promote social justice. The second issue, reported by Adrian, was almost the opposite: changes in the parent body had resulted in a number of parents not holding the same morals or values as the school. These parents were less supportive in terms of giving time to school events, and for Adrian this was challenging the culture and practice of the school:

> *I think we have a lot of people who are not necessarily coming from the families that sets a good example … you can't always take for granted that people will have the right value systems … the nature of our parent body has changed from being … very involved and caring.* (Adrian)

Principals in both public sectors faced a growing awareness by parents of their rights regarding education, resulting in more challenging parent bodies:

> *Parents are becoming more and more aware of their rights … there are organisations, advising parents of their rights so parents are becoming more demanding.* (Charles)

Charles' comments reflected the changes he was facing once the strictures of the previous Nationalist government had ended. The emergence of democracy in South Africa meant that parents were now experiencing social justice, in that they had the right to question decisions made in the school, which was a new experience for the principals. This change was also experienced in the township schools. Here, local community organisations had been established to support parents making complaints about the school, rather than communicating with the school:

> *There is a challenge in terms of the local community structures who have their own expectations. Once we take action against the parent who has not paid they will rush over to the community structures and say this Principal is treating me unfairly.* (Fergus)

For Fergus, the community organisation was not focused on the needs of the school and the government requirements that, where possible, parents should pay school fees. Therefore tension arose as he attempted to obtain school fees from those parents who were able to pay, despite the fact that these fees would enable him to improve the quality of provision for all learners and, through this,

promote social justice. The local community organisations appeared to Fergus to support the parent, rather than listening to the school:

> *Some of them are ready to listen. Some of them at times become very unfair, they just demand without giving you the opportunity to explain your side of the coin. Some of them don't have a way of speaking to us, they just pounce on you and make their demands. You cannot do this, you cannot do that.* (Fergus)

In the township schools, especially the rural schools, principals were concerned by the lack of support from parents in the face of poor attendance, lateness, misbehaviour or a lack of school work. Edward felt that because of their experiences many of his parents did not recognise that education was a means of providing opportunities for their children, of providing social justice:

> *Some do have expectations, but some don't because in the rural area like here most of the parents are illiterate. They have never been in school before, they can't read, they can't write … they don't see how important education is, even to their children.* (Edward)

In part, this reflected the breakdown in the culture of learning experienced during apartheid, which left many parents illiterate and unable to recognise the importance of education for their children (Bush, 2003; Moloi & Bush, 2006).

For Charles and Deborah, the issue was the balance of the racial mix in schools and the racist attitudes still present in the white community, a concern that was also acknowledged by Adrian and Bridget. All perceived that the white parents and community monitored the percentage of different racial groups in the school fearful that if the percentage of non-white learners grew too high, the culture and quality of the school would decline. Charles and Deborah had observed this process in other schools, resulting in white parents removing their children, or not sending children at transition. The result was an increasing number of non-white students being admitted to fill the places, and the school becoming even less attractive to the white population:

> *I do feel that the community is watching where the school goes, we have very good private schools in the area, and there is quite a lot of money in this community, so I don't want to lose the children, because they perceive us as going too black. [said with hesitation]* (Deborah)

> *There is a perception amongst white parents that there's some kind of a tipping point. If you have too many black students it will change the*

culture of the school and with that they mean standards will drop … it's
unfounded fear at this stage, but it is real fear.   (Bridget)

The principals recognised that an increase in the racial mix could also have a long term effect on the resources the schools would be able to provide. As the schools' catchment widened they would take more learners from poorer families in the outlying townships who were exempt from paying school fees, and therefore the income stream would reduce. Charles and Deborah were faced with a complex moral dilemma of 'right versus right' (Stevenson, 2007: 776). Should they increase the racial mix in their schools, with the concomitant risk in a decline in the quality of education, or should they maintain existing numbers of non-white learners in order to ensure the quality of provision for the different racial groups currently attending the school? Thus the principals' attempts to increase the cultural diversity within their schools are constantly conflicting with the need to limit the percentage of black and coloured learners to maintain the current status of the school in the local community.

For Charles and Deborah, and to a limited degree Adrian and Bridget, the racial perceptions of parents and community were a significant contextual factor influencing their approach to cultural justice in terms of admitting learners. For Edward, Fergus and Gareth the significance of the community as a contextual factor was primarily the levels of poverty, the levels of illiteracy and a lack of a culture of learning, especially in the rural areas, (Badat, 1995; Moloi & Bush, 2006; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010) resulting from the years of apartheid. All these factors challenged their ability to promote social justice by providing an education which would enable learners to succeed in their examinations.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the significance of the influence of context on the actions that principal's take (Bottery, 2004; Barry, 2005). The data raises three key contextual issues that were acknowledged by principals to shape their ability to promote social justice in post-1994 South Africa: legislation; the Provincial Department of Education; and the local community and parent body. Though all principals commented that they recognised the government's intention to promote social justice for the population and to use education as an important

means of delivering this social justice, the reality was that contextual issues limited their ability to achieve this.

Policy relating to school funding provides the greatest amount to the most disadvantaged schools, so meeting the distributional nature of social justice explored by Miller (1970) and Rawls (1999). However, it was seen as insufficient. The introduction of the existing school fees policy compounded the problem as it enabled the ex-Model C schools, educating learners mainly from the wealthier communities, to charge substantial school fees to maintain the standards enjoyed under apartheid. The township schools, especially the rural schools in the poorer black areas, were only able to set school fees of between 0.5% and 2.2% of the ex-Model C schools' fees (calculated from the figures in Table 3) above. Even then, the majority of parents were still unable to pay. As a result, the township schools were unable to improve the quality of their facilities, equipment, materials or staffing levels to meet the levels which had been in place for the white population under apartheid. Thus the use of school fees maintained if not widened inequalities within the public sector (Christie, 2010). This was seen by the principals to maintain social injustice in terms of distribution. Although the use of school fees was recognised by the Ministry of Education as maintaining inequality in education, it was still implemented (Department of Education, 1998a), raising the relational aspect of social justice in terms of how the government uses its power to treat others.   The government's provision of free food for the poorest learners, being provided only during primary education, was also seen as an unfair distribution of resources.

The Provincial Department of Education's lack of capacity, their inability to support schools, respond to requests from the schools, or complete important paperwork that had been requested, was also seen to have a negative effect on the public school principals' attempts to promote social justice by providing a quality of education that would enable the learners to achieve their potential. It was Edward, Fergus and Gareth who experienced the greatest effect, faced with a Department whose members seldom sent their children to township schools and whose actions could be seen as corrupt.

The final key contextual issue which, in the principals' view, influenced their action was the position of the school, which determined the racial grouping and wealth of the families of the learners. This resulted in mainly white ex-Model C and independent schools, while township schools had a black cohort. The level of racism still present in the white community led to a moral dilemma for Charles and Deborah, who had to decide how many non-white learners to admit to their schools. For Edward, Fergus and Gareth the challenge was how to promote equality of opportunity for their learners whilst parents were unable to pay school fees and while a number did not support the school, as they did not value education.

The principals were therefore faced with communities which are still largely divided on racial grounds, and in which perceptions about education and the academic ability of different races are still present. They saw the extreme variations in resourcing as running contrary to social justice in terms of equitable distribution. Government policy, which set out the intention that schools would promote social justice, lacked clear guidance or support to meet the intentions at either the Ministry of Basic Education or the Provincial Department of Education, leaving Principals to rely on their beliefs and values regarding social justice, (chapter 4) as they make sense of the government's intention and identify their organisational principles as they prepare to promote social justice within the constraints of their context. The next chapter explores specific actions taken by the principals which reveal how they ultimately interpret the legislation in light of the range of contextual factors they face.

CHAPTER 6: Actions taken to address social justice

Introduction

The findings reported in the previous chapters revealed the principals' conceptual understanding of social justice, the government's intentions for the role of education in delivering social justice, and the key contextual issues principals reported which shaped their approach to social justice. The exploration of the principals' understanding of social justice (see chapter 4) was crucial to the research, as their beliefs and values were a major factor underpinning their actions regarding social justice in their schools. The data revealed that the principals understood the concept in terms of the distribution of resources, power and responsibilities. How individuals and groups related to each other, the relational aspects of social justice (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002), or the absence of associations and cultural justice (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003), were explored through the culture and decision-making process they established. The analysis also began to illuminate the principals' leadership style, which is explored further in this chapter. Chapter 5 revealed the vacuum left by the lack of guidance and support on the part of the government and the Provincial Department of Education, which in many respects left the principals to interpret legislation according their own beliefs and values. It was also established that the context of the school also shaped the actions the principals felt able to take to promote social justice.

The data analysed in this chapter addresses the fourth research questions for the study: In what ways do principals take specific action to promote social justice? Also the fifth research question: What is the impact of these actions? Therefore, this chapter explores how the actions of principals are shaped, not only by their understanding of social justice but also by the key contextual issues they face, as explored in chapter 5. These elements are set within a legacy of unequal funding, provision and training of educators (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010) resulting from the inequalities of resource distribution built into the previous Nationalist government's system of education. The actions analysed were limited to the key actions the principals identified as means of promoting social justice, access to the school by educators and learners, and the

approach taken to the different cultures in the school through the curriculum and extra mural activities, which met the constraints of the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

The purpose of the chapter is at all times to provide a voice for the principals and, through them, to gain an understanding of the reality of how social justice is promoted in schools. As in chapters 4 and 5, interviews with educations provide a comparison of the principals' perceptions with those of their staff (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The chapter begins by exploring the key decisions made by principals regarding the appointment of educators, and how their understanding of social justice and the government's policy affect these decisions. This is followed by an examination of the actions taken regarding the access of learners to the school. The chapter concludes by exploring the way principals address cultural justice through the curriculum and extra mural activities, aspects which are significant in the light of the recent history of racial division in South Africa and issues of racism (Vally *et al.*, 2010; Shields, 2009).

The Appointment of educators

The principals and senior educators interviewed confirmed that they sought to appoint the best candidate for any teaching post, irrespective of race. This enabled the principals to ensure that the school was able to deliver a quality of education which would enable learners to achieve their potential, a factor which they identified as a primary means of promoting social justice:

> *When we want to appoint them [educators] we check the qualification we also check the quality of the teacher, it works hand in hand.*   (Gareth)

> *We've always made appointments in terms of ability not in terms of affirmative action.* (Charles)

Charles' comment indicates a difference in priorities between the appointment of staff and the policy of the government to increase the number of non-white educators employed in schools which, under apartheid, had been all white. For Charles and Deborah, delivering high quality education took precedence over the government's aim of increasing the number of black and coloured employees at all levels of employment, as identified in the Affirmative Action Policy expressed in the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998)

(see chapter 1 and 5).   This reflected these principals' transformational style of leadership, with the desire to meet their vision for the school. However they recognised that the government-funded posts, ultimately being selected by the Provincial Department of Education, might lead to the appointment of more black or coloured educators, so they needed to be confident that the candidates they put forward to the Department for confirmation would be able to fulfil the post:

> *You submit three names in no particular order and you get given one of those people and it would look a bit strange if all three of the names you were submitting for a range of posts … happened to be people of one colour so again they've kind of forced the issue.*   (Charles)

However Charles and Deborah argued that the government's attempt to increase the number of non-white educators in their schools had a limited effect. This was because they employed an equal number of educators funded by school fees, and these appointments were not referred to the Provincial Department of Education:

> *They give us 31 educators, but we have to employ 30 of our own*
> (Deborah)

The effect of this legislation on the township schools was limited, as only black educators applied for posts. Gareth saw the lack of white educators as a problem for the school, as in his opinion they have a greater expertise to bring to the school:

> *… you will find that people who are better experienced … but they do not apply to our schools because of the fear … none from the white community … That is always the case.*   (Gareth)

The absence of white educators is significant, highlighting as it does the racial divide still present in education and raising questions about the quality of educators from different racial groups. The lack of white staff did not reflect pay issues, as pay levels are the same for all public schools. It may, though, reflect the fear still held in the white community that it is not safe to work in a township school. It may also reflect the fact that the poor provision of facilities and equipment in township schools means that white educators only chose to work in the well resourced ex-Model C or independent schools (Bush, 2007; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

Adrian and Bridget appointed educators without reference to the Department of Education, though they were asked to provide a racial breakdown of those employed within the school. This breakdown, though, was by numbers of people employed and did not report the different roles held by the different racial groups, or therefore reveal the fact that the educators remained mainly white:

> *We have quite an enormous labour force, our manual labourers are black, our kitchen staff are all black, so we kind of get by… but it's smoke and mirrors.* (Bridget)

Charles, Deborah and Bridget confirmed that they actively sought non-white educators, not only to meet the government's policy but to address their own desire to promote cultural justice; they acknowledged, though, that only a small percentage had been appointed as they were not seen to have the ability to fill the post. However where ability was seen as being equal to that of white candidates, they stated they would appoint the non-white candidate. For Bridget this was an important means of meeting what she saw as her moral obligation to provide social justice:

> *If they were vaguely similar I would go for the black definitely.*
> (Bridget)

However for Deborah, the appointment of black staff was seen as a means of increasing the number of non-white educators to avoid the possibility of the Provincial Department of Education challenging the appointment of a white educator at a later date. The appointment of black staff was a means of promoting the objectives of the school, reflecting transformational leadership rather than a desire to promote social justice through increasing the percentage of non-white educators in the school:

> *I probably would go for the African because I do not want it forced upon us.*   (Deborah)

Principals reported that the historical situation in South Africa played a significant part in their difficulty in appointing non-white staff. Before 1994 educator training was separated according to race, and the quality of training varied according to racial group with black South Africans receiving the least training (see chapter 2):

From an Asian point of view it has been relatively easy because in the previous system … The training was very similar … so it has been a very easy transition for us and so consequently I have about 10 Asian staff. (Deborah)

The independent and ex-Model C principals identified that at interview they saw a difference in ability between educators from different racial groups. This would be understandable for educators trained before 1994, under the three racially-divided Departments of Education. However for more than ten years all educator training has been delivered without racial division. This could suggest that there is still a perception that black educators are less able, or that there is an issue with the quality of training provided. The result is a racial division in what was perceived to be the ability of different racial groups.

The principals reported that limited movement of staff within and between the independent and ex-Model C schools exacerbates the situation, resulting in strong competition from experienced white educators for every post:

I think one of the frustrations that teachers have is that people are trying to get out of the Government schools into the private schools but no one is moving in the private schools. (Adrian)

Charles also identified that the situation was further exacerbated by the fact that many appointments for posts of responsibility are made internally, employing staff already acting in the post:

For white people in particular it's quite difficult to move to other positions. The other thing is that if we have a vacancy here invariably there's already someone acting in that position in the school so it's quite rare for schools to make outside appointments. (Charles)

Addison and Berkeley had increased the number of black educators by using internships, allowing students to be employed as educators whilst completing a university course. Here the actions taken by the principals appear to be focused on enabling the delivery of social and cultural justice. However, different reasons emerged for the use of such internships. Adrian saw them as a means of allowing a few of their former students to complete their education in order to gain employment:

We had two black kids, finished matric here … their fees paid by an organisation ... they did not get a tertiary bursary ... became sports

coaches here in the afternoons … so we introduced internship, one is now a teacher here the other is still training. (Adrian)

For Bridget and the senior member of staff who was interviewed, internship was a proactive means of training young black Africans to gain employment in independent or ex-Model C schools by improving the quality of black educators:

To address the racial issue we brought in years ago an intern system, I'm running five interns this year. (Bridget)

This was a specific means of promoting social justice by enabling black trainee educators to become highly skilled educators, not only extending the number of black educators in the school, but also enabling the interns to be employable in any school in the country. Bridget's actions reflect a transformative or moral/servant style of leadership, where her beliefs lead to actions that will ultimately change the status quo regarding the employment of black educators.

Analysis of the data in this chapter revealed that, despite the principals' personal beliefs and values regarding cultural justice and their understanding of the government's intentions to increase the number of black educators, their primary focus took precedence. The principals all showed that their primary means of delivering social justice was through the provision of high quality learning which would enable learners to achieve their potential. The need to meet their vision for the school was of primary importance: a key aspect of transformational leadership. Appointments, therefore, were based on the quality and ability of the candidates as principals sought to ensure the best conditions for learning; however these were normally white educators (Lingard *et al.*, 2003).

This highlights the tensions present when addressing the relational and cultural aspects of social justice. The fact that the interview process in the schools resulted in the principals' perception that non-white educators were less able to fulfil the advertised post, despite the fact that educator training had not been racially divided for more than ten years, requires further examination. However Bridget's values and transformative style of leadership had led to the introduction of internships to improve the skills of black educators. Significantly, the data also revealed the total lack of white educators working in the township

schools, reflecting a level of racism or the lack of desire to work in township schools with limited facilities and equipment. If the lack of resources in the schools led to the lack of white educators it also reflects a link between poverty and the provision of poor quality education (Vally *et al.*, 2010).

The impact of the principals' personal beliefs and values and of the contextual issues of location and history are further reflected by the differences between public and independent schools (Bottery, 2004). The government's policy of increasing non-white appointments was overridden, since the principals' belief that social justice would be promoted by the provision of the highest quality education, took precedence over government policy and their promotion of cultural justice. The conflict between the principals' beliefs, legislation and local contextual issues was also revealed by the admission of learners. This aspect provided further insight into the principals' approach to cultural justice and how the decision-making processes in the school and the needs of the whole school influences the way they attempt to promote social justice (Young, 1990).

Access of learners to the school

The actions taken by the principals reflected both differences in the beliefs and values of the individuals, and the contextual differences faced by the schools. The admissions policy for public schools is technically set down by the government through the Provincial Department of Education. Learners come from the local area, although no specific catchment areas or zones have been established. Thus schools positioned in previously white areas remained mainly white, and township schools only took learners from their local black or coloured community. Deborah reported that if specific catchment areas were set a number of learners living in the township areas would not be able to attend:

> *A lot of kids would end up having to go to township schools again. So they want the kids from the township to be able to come to these sort of schools so they don't want to say that you have to go to the closest school.* (Deborah)

Principals and staff reported that the flexible admissions criteria of ex-Model C schools had resulted in some schools not always behaving appropriately. Such schools selected learners from outside of their locality in order to maintain a

largely white school population, an issue that was being looked at by the Provincial Department of Education:

> *Some schools are choosing not to take the children closest in their area. Because they are not the best children … But that child is going to take the place of a township child … because a school is declared full at some stage.* (Deborah)

Though Charles and Deborah reported that they wished to increase the number of black and coloured learners in their schools in order to deliver their understanding of cultural justice, they confirmed that other factors shaped the actions they took regarding learner access; these were explored in the section on Community in chapter 5. The first factor was that as admission to public schools is technically granted to those living in proximity to the school, their intake was largely white middle class with a small but growing number of black and coloured learners from families moving to these areas. Only a few, able to pay school fees, came from townships close to the school. The principals and staff reported that, even should they wish to, they could not refuse entry to local white learners to increase the number of non-white learners:

> *I can't say to the person who lives across the road who happens to be white sorry I can't take you because I've taken 20 people who live 40 kilometres away* (Charles)

The second factor was the perception of parents and the local community that an increase in the number of black learners attending a school would lead to a drop in school standards. The threat of losing white learners able to pay school fees constrained their actions regarding increasing the number of non-white learners (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003).

> *The mixture I have got at the moment is pretty ideal … but I am not sure if we became 80 to 20 the other way around, I am not sure if that mix would work for this particular school.* (Deborah)

Both Charles and Deborah were faced with faced with the moral dilemma described by Stevenson (2007) as 'right verses right'; should they increase the racial mix at the school, which could result in a decline in the quality of education they provided, or ensure the quality of education by limiting the number of non-white learners? Their action reflected transformational leadership's prioritisation of meeting their vision for the school.

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The movement of middle class black learners to ex-Model C schools affected the township schools by reducing the number of families able to pay school fees and support the school, further reducing the resources they could purchase. It also meant that those families who might be employed in the Provincial Department of Education, or as educators who could support the school, had no ownership of the local township school. Principals saw this as reinforcing the inequality of education in their schools:

> *That is another problem because those Africans who are better off are moving to places like [X], to stay there. They take their children [out]… because they can afford it. They are middle class.* (Gareth)

Access to the independent sector was dependant on the ability of families to pay the fees, which would be some four times greater than those charged by the ex-Model C schools (see Table 3). This limited access to a small section of the white population and an even smaller section of the black population:

> *It is a financially class based school, because we are sitting in a situation where matric fees are about R45,000 … opening of all these ex white government schools that they can go to, why go and pay four times as much for the private school.* (Adrian)

Adrian's comment also reflected his view that many black or coloured families would be satisfied by moving to an ex-Model C school rather than pay the fees at an independent school.

For Adrian, the key factor shaping Addison's approach to providing more places for black and coloured learners was whether the school could offer places which would not result in higher charges for other learners or in larger class sizes:

> *I think [what] Private schools grapple with is… if you can sell the seat are you still going to give it away free, because it's a black kid.* (Adrian)

In order to provide greater access for black learners, Adrian made places available in grade 10 until matriculation, at a cost equivalent to the current ex-Model C school fees. This became possible in grade 10 when additional classes were created for subject options, and the additional places for black learners could be created at no cost to the school:

> *In grade 10 … where I have gone from 4 classes of 26 to 5 classes of 20*
> *I can put bums on those seats for nothing… So we are giving away*
> *places more cheaply to people of colour at grade 10.*   (Adrian)

However Bridget took a completely different approach which reflected her values and leadership style. She regarded the percentage of black students at Berkeley as insufficient to meet her beliefs regarding social justice:

> *I think it's very much an aspect of social justice. I think we are not mixed.*
> *I mean South Africa is definitely a rainbow nation, [our school] is not …*
> *we have fewer than 10% black children.*   (Bridget)

To address this, the number of bursaries in place to provide places for black and coloured learners from the primary level had been increased:

> *We offer scholarships and that's purely based on academic potential but*
> *… we're introducing more and more, bursaries and we secretly call them*
> *affirmative bursaries, so they are really are remarkable students of colour*
> *that show potential.* (Bridget)

To further improve the access for black and coloured learners the admissions policy was being changed, seen as an essential step in ensuring that the school increased the percentage of students from the black and coloured communities:

> *… we [have] changed our policy of admission … black learners do have*
> *preferential treatment. They have to pass our entrance exam but if we*
> *have to choose between a black learner and a white learner at the*
> *bottom rung, the black learner will get preference.*   (Bridget)

This data identified the significance of contextual issues influencing the principals' actions. For public schools the key issue is the position of the school, which dictates the school population and largely reflects the divisions of apartheid. Thus ex-Model C schools have a majority white, middle class, cohort and township schools have a black, poor or unemployed, cohort, unable to pay school fees; these schools also face the movement of learners from more affluent township families, to ex-Model C schools. The community of independent schools is wider and based on the wealth of families, mainly white, with a small percentage of black and coloured families.

Charles and Deborah revealed tensions between three aspects: their desire to meet their personal beliefs to address on cultural justice by admitting more black learners, meeting the intentions of the government to increase the

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percentage of non-white learners and, lastly, the white community's perceptions of the quality of education in schools with a high percentage of black learners. In the independent sector, fees dictated who would have access and Adrian's action to admit black learners was limited to providing places at no cost to the school. However Bridget regarded admission as an important way of promoting social justice, and she proactively provided places through bursaries and changing the admission policy of the school.

The context of the school therefore limited the principal's ability to provide open access in the way some wished. The vast majority of black learners remain educated in all-black township schools which are poorly resourced. However, principals from the previously white schools now work with a mix of races, which would have been unthinkable prior to the 1990s, which raised the issue of cultural justice within their schools. This is explored further in the next section of the chapter, through an examination the action taken by the principals regarding the curriculum and extra mural activities. These were two areas where principals saw they were able to promote cultural justice (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003) by recognising and valuing the different cultures in their school.

Cultural recognition

The principals' approach to different cultures in the school provides insight into their understanding of cultural justice and how they supported the government's intention to make South Africa a united society, providing justice and mercy for all (Constitution, 1996). Charles, Deborah and Bridget revealed a similar understanding of cultural justice, initially through recognising and celebrating the different cultures in the school, acknowledging specific religious or cultural festivals and having clubs for the different racial groupings within their schools:

> *We annually have a cultural evening, headed up by the Department where they celebrate their culture in all sorts of different ways. This year they have brought the Asians in and some Afrikaans culture and I think that is better. I think it is going to be a broader cultural evening.*
> (Deborah)

The recognition of the different racial groups raised the awareness of the different groups and their values. However this also promoted the differences

between racial groups within the school, rather than seeing them as part of the school (Fraser, 1995).

Bridget added that white students were denied social justice if they were not exposed to the diversity of South African culture:

> *I think it's an injustice to the white students to be educated in this ivory tower environment and it's an injustice to the black students to be denied their identity, but they feel the need to assimilate, to become white.*
> (Bridget)

The latter part of Bridget's comment identified the concern that black learners in mainly white schools faced the expectation that they needed to accept the white culture of the school to such a degree that they outwardly were seen as white. Charles, Deborah and the staff who were interviewed also acknowledged this issue and a shared concern that learners may feel marginalised when offered activities specifically for their culture, reflected by the black learners grouping together during non-teaching time:

> *Though our children mix beautifully on the sports field, in the classroom, but you go round at break and you will still see they stick to their own cultural group.* (Deborah)

Bridget saw this situation reflected in the behaviour of learners once they had left the school; at university the friendships between learners from different cultures were ended by the black learners, an issue also raised by senior staff at Cardogan and Darnell:

> *At University level, often, the blacks shun the white girls and the reason for that is they don't want to be seen as sell outs. … I think it should be addressed at school that they don't feel that need to reach back to who am I?* (Bridget)

For Bridget this identified an important issue for promoting cultural justice, that learners should remain confident with their own background and culture. The experience of these principals resonates with Fraser's (1995) work, which identified the importance of transformative rather than affirmative action to promote cultural justice.

Principals from the township schools in the study, with learners coming from the local community and mainly representing one tribal group, expressed a different

understanding of cultural justice. For them the issue was to deliver an education for their learners which met the opportunities provided for learners in ex-Model C schools. The principals from independent and ex-Model C schools reported that one means of recognising the importance of the local African culture was through the curriculum of the school.

Curriculum studies

The school curriculum, although set by the state, retains a level of flexibility for the principals in terms of the subjects offered. Charles, Deborah, Bridget and the interviewed staff saw a key means of promoting cultural justice in the introduction of the black learners' home language into the mainstream curriculum. This was acknowledged as a significant step in providing a level of equality in education for black learners. In Cardogan and Darnell, the indigenous language was available from entry as a second language, enabling black students to avoid Afrikaans. Bridget had introduced the indigenous language from the primary section of the school and increased the time given to the subject to match the time given to Afrikaans. She believed that to promote cultural justice it was important for all members of the school to learn the language to matriculation to gain an understanding of the local culture, an approach confirmed and supported by educators at the school:

> *It gives those non-[indigenous language] speakers an opportunity to learn a language and a culture that they would otherwise never be exposed to.* (Head of Department, Berkeley**)**

The three principals reported that delivering the indigenous language not only acknowledged the value of the culture within the school, but also raised the self esteem of the black learners, as they were immediately more successful than their white peers:

> *About the self esteem if they're struggling in other subjects this is the one subject where they can really do well.* (Charles)

However, Deborah and Charles acknowledged that their intention for white as well as black learners to study the language to matriculation had failed:

> *Sadly there aren't any white students in those senior classes. It is because [the others] are mother tongue speakers … so the interaction is*

> *at such a rapid and high level that the non-mother tongue speakers started to flounder.* (Deborah)

One head of department questioned the reality of promoting social justice in ex-white schools by introducing the indigenous language when all other lessons were delivered in English:

> *I don't think there is really justice being done … all the lessons are in English and if there was total social justice then we would have all lessons in [X] or whatever the local language is.* (Head of Department, Cardogan)

Charles and Deborah also raised the provision of additional support for black learners in their schools as a means of promoting social justice. Though the majority (some 90%) of the black cohort came to the schools from ex-Model C primary schools, there were still some who came directly from township schools. In addition there was considered to be a problem for a number of the other black learners as English was not the main language spoken in the home:

> *…There's still probably about 10% that come to us from Township and Valley schools. …* (Charles)

To support learners' progress, Charles and Deborah provided funding for additional support in English, which was seen as the main academic barrier:

> *These learners are drawn from classes for additional English.* (Charles)

However both principals acknowledged that the level of support provided was not always sufficient, and reflected a conflict between providing additional funding to promote social justice to a small group of learners unable to achieve their potential because of their limits in English, or meeting the need of the whole school community. The principals' focus was on meeting the overall objectives for the school, a key element of transformational leadership, rather than addressing their need to promote social justice. The situation forced the principals to make decisions regarding the equitable distribution of resources within financial constraints:

> *There is actually a need for additional remedial assistance to help especially with their English, even though they can speak English you've got, subject specific terminology which they don't understand.* (Head of Department, Darnell)

Edward, Fergus and Gareth also attempted to promote their interpretation of cultural justice. However two key contextual issues shaped their ability to take action. The first was the funding streams put in place by the government, and the second was the socio-economic situation of the local community and the parents of learners. The lack of funding resulting from both issues resulted in low levels of staffing, high class numbers of 40 or more and limited facilities and equipment. Therefore, to promote social justice by providing the educational experience for learners that they sought, Gareth turned to charities and other external organisations:

> *We have plans for our learners to learn computers but we don't have enough computers so we are still trying to organise some more … at least 20 for a start.* (Senior staff, Gatru)

In Fumnanya, Fergus had introduced skills not normally covered in the school curriculum in order to enhance learners' skills and employment opportunities; this was recognised and supported by the educators interviewed:

> *Our school has tried with very few resources to shift from the package of subjects that we offer because we felt that we need to provide our learners with subjects that will make them employable. We need to provide our learners with subjects that mean even if they are not employed they can create job opportunities for themselves.*
> (Fergus)

Both leaders' attempts to improve the curriculum can be seen to reflect the principles of Ubuntu, in that their actions show their concerns and oneness with others.

The principals from township schools saw cultural justice as the need to provide their learners with the opportunities available in the other, mainly white public schools. The independent and ex-Model C school principals, however, saw cultural justice in terms of demonstrating that the different cultures were valued and recognised (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). The principals from all schools identified that they attempted to promote cultural justice through the formal curriculum and through extra mural activities.

Extra mural studies

Berkeley, Cardogan and Darnell provided wide ranging extra mural activities for

one to two hours per day, a large percentage of which were sporting activities run by coaches employed by the school. The principals and educators maintained that by introducing activities that were representative of the indigenous culture they celebrated that culture in their schools and helped to raise the self esteem of the black and coloured learners, which was transferred into the classroom:

> *When a child realizes he has a talent in a sport, what ever the sport is it boosts their confidence tremendously and that has played a big role in some of our [indigenous] speaking children.* (Senior staff, Cardogan)

For these principals the introduction of soccer, a black sport in South Africa not previously played in white schools, had been a key change, formally recognising the cultural norms of their black learners. Over the years soccer has grown in popularity amongst the white students, for both boys and girls, with racially mixed teams:

> *The African children really come into their own and that is where they get a lot of their self esteem especially from the soccer.* (Deborah)

Bridget and Charles reported that musical activities have also supported the recognition and celebration of different cultures. However educators reported that some of the activities only attracted participants from one racial group rather than involving different racial groups:

> *There's [an[African music ensemble, there's quite a lot of [indigenous] folklore and tradition*   (Senior staff, Berkeley)

> *The gospel choir now only has black learners.* (Head of Department, Cardogan)

However the comment from Cardogan again raises the issue of racial groups remaining separate. The activities at the schools provides recognition through affirmative action which raises the difference of the cultures in the school without involving any redistribution, both of which, Fraser (1985) asserted, would be needed to bring about real change or transformation.

In the case of Edward, Fergus and Gareth, their ability to promote social justice by providing the same opportunities as those of learners in non-township schools was constrained by the socio-economic status of the parents and

community. This can be seen in the limited extra mural activities available due to a lack of funding and sports facilities, other than uneven dirt areas. Reflecting Ubuntu and/or transformational leadership, the principals attempted to overcome this inequality of opportunity by involving the educators in delivering extra mural activities in addition to their teaching:

> *Yes we have different activities led by different committees, including: soccer; netball; athletics; debating; cricket; music; rugby. Each is led by teachers working with the learners.*   (Senior staff, Ekwueme)

Fergus had taken part of a day per week to cover sporting activities:

> *No we are not able to give them much, it is the cost and time. We have a Thursday set aside for sports, but at times when there is pressure we do pinch some teaching and learning time.*   (Fergus)

However in Gareth's opinion the activities remained limited as they did not have educators with the knowledge to teach a range of sports and did not have the funding to employ instructors:

> *That is the problem we are lacking skills, like for example we are coming from the old order, we don't have the knowledge, the know how.* (Gareth)

Despite the limited number of extra mural activities available the principals recognised that these activities had led to improved self esteem amongst the learners, and greater motivation in lessons:

> *What I have discovered is that the learners that are good in the extra curricular activities tend to do very well also in class.*   (Fergus)

In recognition of the need to promote social justice in the poorer communities around the school, Adrian, Bridget, Charles and Deborah had also established outreach programmes to support needy schools and learners from the townships. These programmes enabled their own learners to engage in addressing the needs of less affluent people or schools, not only by raising money but by spending time in the schools:

> *We have got a big outreach programme; every grade in the school has an outreach focus. It may be that they will adopt a particular outreach institution.*   (Adrian)

However educators at Addison and Berkeley raised the concern that if outreach was limited to raising funds or providing items there was a danger that for some

learners the programme would have little meaning and would not address the real issue of promoting social justice:

> *maybe the outreach is there as a sop to the consciences of those who have, and it is nice to be able to say I have been doing a bit of outreach. But that is quite cynical … at least we are sowing the seed somewhere and they wouldn't do it if they weren't here.* (Senior staff, Addison)

Despite all the attempts to promote cultural justice at Cardogan, Darnell and Berkeley, the principals and educators identified the underlying issue affecting the learners from different cultures as the fact that in reality different cultures were not equally recognized in the school, and other races had to adapt to white school standards:

> *It's very much of a white school with white policies and everyone within the school has to fit into the standards that we as a white school sort of enforce on people, and because of that I think there isn't real justice being done.* (Head of Department, Cardogan)

> *We pretend that there are no differences and we pretend that we're not racist … but I think we're doing the black students a disservice, pretending they are just like white students.* (Bridget)

Both saw that though the different cultures in South Africa were being recognised and valued in the schools, this was not only raising awareness of the different racial groups but also promoting differences. The activities in the school did not focus on transformative action, promoting the view that different racial groups' in the school were equal, but on affirmative action (Fraser, 1995).

All the principals regarded extra mural activities as promoting cultural justice in some way. They also maintained that the activities that were in place supported their primary means of promoting social justice, enabling their learners to achieve academically, as they raised the self-esteem of the black learners which was transferred to the classroom. However, other than soccer, educators from Berkeley, Cardogan and Darnell recognised that such activities tended to become exclusively black. For the township principals providing extra mural activities of any form was challenging but seen to be essential for social justice, as they provided their learners with experiences similar to those in the ex-Model C schools. The outreach programmes provided a further means of involving

their learners in providing social justice, but it was recognised that these could become meaningless if the outreach was limited to fund raising.

Conclusion

The examination of the ways principals promote social justice has highlighted the effect of the contextual issues on their actions. The findings revealed not only the significance of the context of the school but also the tensions that arise as principals try to address social justice for the needs of groups, or for the whole school population, or to meet their personal beliefs or the intentions of the government. The evidence also confirmed that the divisions in education established during apartheid were still in existence. The appointment of educators highlighted an immediate division between the actions of the principals of previously white and of township schools, and the tensions resulting from their desire to appoint the most able educator.   For township schools, the lack of white applicants reflected either the level of racism still prevalent, or the fact that white educators did not want to work in schools with poor facilities and staffing levels. For the other sectors the principals' belief that promoting social justice meant providing an educational experience enabling learners to achieve their potential, took precedence over their belief that social justice also requires an increase in the number of black educators in their type of school. The admission of learners also varied according to the type of school. Although open access regardless of race was in place, the position of the school significantly affected admissions. For Charles and Deborah this led to a tension between their personal beliefs and the expectation of the local community that there would be more white than non-white learners on roll. Adrian's and Bridget's approaches revealed differences in their personal values regarding social justice, with Bridget seeing increasing the number of black learners as a moral duty.

The curriculum again revealed different actions, both according to the type of school and shaped by the context of the school. Charles', Deborah's and Bridget's actions were based on recognition and as such raised the awareness of the group, thereby promoting the groups' differences (Fraser, 1995). However it was acknowledged that this had not led to integration. Edward, Fergus and Gareth reinterpreted cultural justice to mean providing learners with

the opportunity to receive a similar education to those in ex-Model C schools; they strove to achieve this despite the limited funding from government and the inability of parents to provide additional funding.

The actions of the principals highlighted their interpretation of social and cultural justice resulting from their beliefs and the context of the school. They recognised the complexity of social justice as they were forced to make decisions as to which aspects of social justice took priority as they took action. The actions also reflected the range of leadership styles applied by the principals as they attempted to promote social justice.

CHAPTER 7   Conclusion: The Policy Pathway

Introduction

This thesis argues that leadership is a contextualised activity (Bottery, 2004). The contextual issues, both at macro and micro level, significantly influence the principals' interpretation and implementation of any policies relating to social justice in South Africa. Furthermore, it is apparent that the wide variation in school contexts has led to the failure of the government's intended promotion of social justice through the provision of equality of opportunity in education; this was designed to underpin the changes brought about by the Democratic Government post-1994, with education recognised as a key means of promoting social justice (Department of Education, 1996a). However little if any research has been undertaken to explore how principals are making sense of the legislation in light of the contextual issues they face. This thesis therefore contributes to the body of knowledge by revealing how principals make sense of the government policy, the actions they take to promote social justice, and the influence of context on these actions. To provide a structure to support the analysis the hierarchical policy model of Bell and Stevenson (2006), was applied. This model consists of two sections, firstly, policy formation, with two levels, socio-political environment followed by strategic direction. The second section, policy implementation, follows, with two levels organizational principles and operational practices and procedures, discussed in chapter 2. However, the importance of context emerging from the analysis has led to the inclusion of a section on the context at the different stages of the policy process, evidencing the significant influence of context on principals as they make sense of the government's intentions for education.

The review of social justice (see chapter 2), its complexity, the tensions arising as principals seek to meet the government's intentions, and the effect of the contextual issues on individual principals provided a means of gaining insight into the reality experienced by the principals in the study (Griffiths, 1998; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003; Bottery, 2004). The findings in Chapters 4 and 6 identified the specific beliefs and values of individual principals, and illuminated how they interpreted social justice through their approach to the distributional nature of

social justice (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999), revealing that they hold a common interpretation of the concept. These chapters also addressed relational aspects of social justice, including the opportunities available for individuals to participate in decision-making, and identifying those who hold power and how decision-making influences distribution (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002). The chapters also address the principals' approach to cultural justice (Fraser, 1995; Gewirtz, 2002), revealing different interpretations of the concept by the principals. Chapter 5 focused on the effect of the national and local contexts in which the principals work, including: resources, the capacity of the government and Provincial Department of Education, the school's geographic position, the community and the perceived parental attitudes facing principals as they attempt to promote social justice (Ball, 2006; Ball, 2008; Bell & Stevenson, 2006). This final chapter applies the policy process defined by Bell and Stevenson (2006) to reveal how principals make sense of social justice and take action to promote it within the context in which they work. The initial stage of the policy process explored in the following section reveals the intention of the government to promote social justice; this provides the national framework within which the principals are expected to promote social justice in their institutions, addressing the first research question raised in the thesis: What are the expectations placed on schools by government policies to provide social justice?

Policy Formation in South Africa

The socio-political environment resulting from the country's recent history of apartheid was detailed in chapter 1. The intentions of government for South Africa post-1994 were initially outlined in the *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) (Ministry of the office of the President, 1994) produced by the ANC. This document had the promotion of social justice at its core, recognising the importance of education and the need to establish an education system that would enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society. The Constitution (1996) placed the provision of social justice at the centre of change in South Africa post-1994, the intention being to establish 'a society based on democratic values social justice and fundamental human rights' (The Constitution Chapter 2, 1996) and affirming the right of every individual in South Africa to basic education and equal access to educational institutions.

The *political discourse* of the RDP (Ministry of the office of the President, 1994) and the Constitution (1996) identifies four key intentions regarding social justice by the government:

- To provide a stable country, unifying a divided society without threatening the white population
- To promote equality through the alleviation of poverty and recognise the basic rights of all people in the country regardless of race
- To provide the conditions to support economic growth and development
- To promote and extend democracy and the democratic values of human dignity and freedom.

(Christie,1986; Sayed, 2002)

A range of legislation on education followed, which provided a *strategic direction*. The legislation included the creation of a single National Department of Education; the right to a basic education was extended to all, with parents responsible for sending their children to school from age 7 to 15 years; school governing bodies were established to oversee admissions, with the provision that there could be no racial discrimination or victimisation of parents unable to pay school fees (Department of Education, 1998); funding for public schools was designed redress the former inequalities of educational provision, with the most disadvantaged receiving approximately seven times more than schools that had been advantaged during apartheid; and the use of school fees (Department of Education, 1996; Department of Education, 1998a; Mestry & Naidoo, 2009).

To support the development of economic growth public schools were to improve the provision and quality of education, improving standards of achievement by raising additional resources, including school fees (Department of Education, 1996; Bush & Heystek, 2006). However, the legislation failed either to identify the fees to be charged, or to address the inability of the majority of parents who to pay (Department of Education, 2011; Department of Education, 1998a). Democracy was to be developed through the formal structures of the school and through informal education (Department of Education, 1996; Bray,1996; Bush & Heystek, 2006). The formal structure of education, requiring democratic practices in schools, defined school management as the responsibility of the principal, with the governance of the school resting with a governing body which

should include educators, other staff, parents, and members of the community and learners, with parents in the majority (Department of Education, 1996; Bush & Heystek, 2006). Schools were also to establish a Representative Learners Council in every school, comprising students of grade 8 and above. Though not specifically concerning education, the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998), which aimed to promote social justice in the country in terms of employment, also affected schools. The purpose of the Act was to promote equal opportunity and treatment in employment. It introduced affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment which had been experienced by designated groups during apartheid.

A range of legislation therefore acknowledged the role of education in meeting the four key intentions of government regarding social justice. However the research findings reported in chapter 4 identify that although the principals recognise the government's intended role for education in promoting social justice, they found that the legislation did not provide clear guidance or outcomes. The legislation did not acknowledge the significance of the contextual factors which principals faced when attempting to make sense of the legislation, or take account of the effect that these might have on their ability to meet the government's intentions; these factors are explored in the following section.

Contextual influences

Two key contextual issues affected the ability of legislation to support the promotion of social justice: was the geographical location of the school (chapter 5) and the funding system established by the government.   The government recognised the challenges inherent in using the fragmented education system to promote the intentions of the Constitution (1996). The legacy of unequal funding and training of educators resulted in there being many township schools without basic facilities, and suffering from a shortage of text books and libraries (chapter 1). The government also recognised that in many schools serving the black community the latter years of apartheid had led to the loss of the culture of learning; this resulted in parents being unwilling to support schools, and seeing education as irrelevant (Department of Education, 1996 and 1996a). However the findings suggest that the government either did not acknowledge, or did not

recognise the significance of these factors in determining the ability of the Principals to apply the legislation (chapters 5 and 6).

In the case of public schools, their position also determined the community surrounding the school which, for the most part, reflected the divisions in society established under apartheid. The result for Edward, Fergus and Gareth is a cohort of black learners from township populations which suffer from high levels of unemployment, or low paid employment, with a high percentage of Aids orphans. As explored in chapters 1 and 5, there are a number of parents who do not value education or support the schools. Educators are late for school and lessons or are regularly absent, with a number failing to meet the expectations of delivery or assessment of the national curriculum, as previously reported by Moloi and Bush (2006) and Christie (2010). For these principals, promoting social justice meant the provision of daily food for the Aids orphans and the poorest learners who would otherwise have nothing to eat and struggle to learn (Barry, 2005) and attempting to improve the facilities and opportunities for learners. In contrast Charles and Deborah, whose schools are positioned in areas previously reserved for the white population, have a mainly white cohort with black and coloured learners whose families now live within the catchment of the school or who come from the township but are affluent enough to pay school fees. The facilities and staffing levels are maintained at apartheid levels and both parents and educators are supportive of the school. Thus the position of the school still largely dictates the community surrounding the school and, therefore, their willingness and ability to support their schools, including financially.

Public schools are funded through the quintile system detailed in chapter 1, which was designed redress the inequalities of distribution in education (HSRC, 2009). However chapter 5 reveals that the principals saw that this funding system was failing. Firstly this was seen to be due to the fact that the criteria applied to identify the school's band had not been amended as the population distribution changed, resulting in some schools banded by position not by the needs of the cohort. The government has acknowledged the failure of the funding structure (HSRC, 2009; Chamane, 2009) but no changes have been made to the criteria. Secondly, as Edward, Fergus and Gareth identified, the

funding received by the township schools was insufficient to provide for the basic needs for the school, falling short of the funding provided for white-only schools during apartheid. Thus the most deprived schools retain high class sizes and poor facilities.

The funding issue was exacerbated by government policy that schools should set school fees to improve the quality of education (chapter 5). This increased inequality, as while Charles and Deborah were able to raise sufficient fees to maintain the staffing and facility levels they experienced under apartheid, township schools were largely unable to raise even low school fees (table 2). The resulting inequality was again acknowledged in legislation (Department of Education, 1998a: Pt 47; Department of Education, 2006). However the government's introduction of partial or full exemptions of school fees and no fee schools in the poorest areas has not changed the disadvantage experienced by Edward, Fergus and Gareth as there has been no significant additional funding to replace the school fees; the funding available, therefore, fails to match the funding received by the ex-Model C schools.

The combination of the position of the schools and the funding structures established by the government was seen to be compounded by the legislations, with its lack of clear guidelines or outcomes. This maintained the inequality in educational provision in the schools (chapter 5 and 6) resulting in a two-tier public education system rather than a single system of public education providing equality of opportunity. Township principals were unable to provide the educational opportunities of ex-Model C schools, although they sought to provide the best educational experience possible in the circumstances. They acknowledged that these contextual factors limited the learners' ability to achieve academic success and the skills needed to be employable (chapter 6), thus also failing to support the government's intention to provide social justice through the economic growth and development of the country. For some principals, the results of these contextual factors meant that the intention of the SASA (Department of Education, 1996) for education to promote social justice was challenging, if not impossible. The influence of context on the principals is further illuminated as the policy process moves from formation to implementation, beginning with the organisational principles established. This

also addresses the questions of how school leaders understand the concept of social justice and make sense of the political agenda.

Policy implementation in South Africa

Organisational principles

The initial stage of an analysis of policy implementation is the identification of the organisational principles which underpin the actions taken by principals. The school principals identified a number of organisational principles regarding the promotion of social justice (chapters 4 and 6):

- The open access of learners regardless of race
- The provision of the highest quality education possible
- The need to increase the appointment of non-white educators identified by the mainly white schools
- The sharing of decision-making as a means of providing opportunities for others to participate in the power structure (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002) and promoting local democracy.

The research revealed that a number of contextual factors significantly influenced the decisions that principals made, even as they formulated their organisational principles and later sought to implement them, thus addressing the third research question raised in the study: What are the contextual issues that shape the action they take?

Though all principals stated their intentions to promote social justice through meeting the four organisational principles, they identified that context significantly affected their ability to fulfil them. Of primary significance were the principals' personal beliefs, values and attitudes underpinning their actions within their schools (Sayer, 1992). Chapter 4 revealed that all the principals in the research referred to the promotion of social justice as being extremely important in education, specifically in the light of South Africa's history of apartheid. The initial focus they took was on the distributive aspect of social justice, referring to the need to provide equality of opportunity within their institutions through a fair distribution of resources, and providing for the most

needy (Miller, 1970; Rawls, 1999). However the principals redefined social justice to mean providing a high quality of education in their schools, which would enable learners to achieve their academic potential. This understanding of the concept was shared by the principals in all types of school.

Closely aligned to this was their interpretation of cultural justice (Gewirtz, 2002; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). Here a clear difference emerged between the previously white schools and the township schools. For Bridget, Charles and Deborah cultural justice involved the recognition and celebration of the different cultures in their schools, and their approach to increasing the number of non-white learners and educators in their schools. However this approach to cultural justice raised the differences between the racial groups rather than seeking transformative action to 'blur' group differences (Fraser, 1995). Edward, Fergus and Gareth interpreted cultural justice as providing learners with educational opportunities similar to those of learners in ex-Model C schools, providing them with some level of equality of opportunity. The principals maintained that their approach raised the self esteem of black and coloured learners, both in ex-Model C schools and in township schools, thus supporting their primary means of promoting social justice through the quality of education they were able to provide. Promoting relational justice (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002) was recognised by the principals as taking place through shared decision-making, which also met the government's aim to use schools to promote local democracy (Bush & Heystek, 2006). With the exception of Adrian, every principal made attempts to involve all educators in the decision-making process through a structure of meetings which varied according to the number of educators at the school.

The different beliefs on social justice held by the principals reflect the complexity of the concept, and its openness to interpretation based on the individual's construction of reality, resulting from their perceptions of their experiences (Bassey, 1999; Scott & Morrison, 2006; Griffiths, 1998; Wong, 2002). However the principals' responses confirmed that their ability to interpret legislation in light of the context of the school was aided by the lack of guidance and outcomes in the legislation, which left principals to use their own values and beliefs as guidance while they tried to make sense of the legislation in relation

to the context of the school (Goddard, 2003). Further they acknowledged that their understanding of social justice clashed at times with government policy (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003; Griffiths, 1998) and accepted that their aspirations and intentions regarding social justice were not always achieved.

The differences in the personal beliefs of the principals regarding social justice was reflected in the different styles of leadership they applied. Leadership was a new experience for the principals, since their role had changed from that of manager during apartheid, to that of leader post-1994 (Department of Education, 2005; McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Christie, 2010). Thus their individual leadership styles, shaped both by national and Provincial pressures and local circumstances (Davies, 2005; Bottery, 2004; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010; Moorosi, 2010), in turn shaped their approach to social justice. The principals did not talk in terms of their leadership style during the interviews. Their actions, however, reflect a number of different leadership frameworks, including Ubuntu. Throughout the interviews their lack of reference to leadership styles may reflect a lack of language or concepts relating to leadership. For Bridget and Gareth, the promotion of social justice as 'a moral obligation' had to be addressed (chapters 4 and 6). They sought to do what was morally right, not only within the confines of the school but also within the wider community (chapter 6). Bridget's and Gareth's actions revealed their commitment to social justice and vision for the school, and their establishment within the school of a culture emphasising the delivery of equal treatment and opportunities for all, which included their commitment to sharing power through decision-making structures involving all staff.

The moral stance expressed by Bridget and Gareth reflects the moral, servant leader where the moral belief of the leader in promoting social justice drives action (Sergiovanni, 1992; Bush, 2003; Farling *et al.,* 1999). Their style of leadership also reflects transformative leadership, stemming from their high moral commitment and deeply-held understanding of social justice and democracy, which leads them to challenge and change practice and structures (Shields, 2009). In the case of the principals in this study, it led them actively to seek to promote all aspects of social justice, as explored in chapter 6. Though Bridget's attempts to promote cultural justice were mainly in terms of affirmative

action, which raised the differences of the racial groups, she also attempted to undertake redistributive action (Fraser, 1995) through changes to the admissions policy. For Gareth, the framework of leadership also reflects Ubuntu (examined in detail in chapter 2), where the leader's actions reflect their concerns emanating from their belief that 'I am because we are'. Leadership is based on the exchange of the values and beliefs binding the leader and followers together, achieved by providing a climate of trust where vision is shared with educators. The leader is concerned for the whole school community, and indeed the wider community. Both these principals sought to promote social justice through providing equality of opportunity, relational justice and cultural justice.

Charles, Deborah and Fergus shared a similar style of leadership, which reflected a transformational framework (see chapter 2) (Leithwood *et al.*, 1999; Stone *et al.*, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).   Structures were in place to engage educators at all levels in the decision-making process, thus promoting relational justice (Gewirtz, 2002). These principals provided clear direction for the school, setting clear goals and high expectations for learning. A key means of promoting social justice was by providing a high quality education, to enable learners to achieve their academic potential by providing the best educators, facilities and materials possible in terms of the funding received (chapter 4 and 6), promoting the distributional aspect of social justice. The promotion of cultural justice varied according to the type of school and the interpretation of the concept, which for Charles and Deborah led to affirmative action highlighting the differences of the racial groups (Fraser, 1995).

The leadership style of Edward reflected, in a limited way*,* transformational leadership and the promotion of relational justice by involving educators in decision-making (chapter 4) (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002). However, the educators from Ekwueme who were interviewed for this study reported a lack of a clear direction for the school and the difficulties faced regarding the absence of educators (chapter 5). This evidence suggested that staff lacked motivation and commitment, which would affect the quality of teaching in the school. Thus limited efforts were made to promote social or cultural justice in the school.

Finally, Adrian applied a more authoritative or transactional style of leadership. He conveyed a clear vision to educators and they knew what was expected of them. Decision-making was tightly controlled and only shared with the senior management team of six people; the views of staff, learners and parents were gathered through surveys. To explain his style of leadership one educator described him as a 'benevolent dictator' (chapter 4).   There were very few black learners or educators in the school, so the promotion of social justice at Addison was focused on ensuring that learners' rights were protected within the school.   To promote social justice for poorer black community members in the locality of the school a number of external projects were undertaken by learners, using extra mural activities to support needy township schools or individual learners (chapter 6).

From this exploration of the different approaches to leadership taken by the principals in the study a typology of leadership in relation to social justice is presented in Table 4. This typology explores the links between the stance taken by the principals to promoting social justice, the style of leadership they employ and the leadership frameworks most representative of this style.

Table 4: Typology

Stance taken to social justice	Style of Leadership	Leadership framework
• Felt morally obligated to address social justice • Takes action to address social justice in the school and community • Shares the need to deliver social justice with others.	• Beliefs and values take a high priority • Vocalises racial issues of social justice • Takes action to change the *status quo* re. social justice • Sharing the vision and decision-making with the school and community is important.	Transformative Moral/Servant Ubuntu
• Recognises an obligation to deliver social justice • Providing the best education is perceived as the means of delivering social justice • Shares the vision through the culture established in the school	• Beliefs and values regarding social justice do not always take priority over meeting the school's needs • Recognises there are racial issues regarding social justice in South Africa • Actions focused on maximising learning • Involve staff in decision-making.	Transformational
• Recognises the state's expectation regarding social justice • Focused on addressing social justice for students within the school • Vision shared through school culture and expectations.	• Beliefs and values focus on the institution • Actions relate to delivering social justice to the students in the school • Decision-making limited to a small group.	Transactional
• Recognises the state's expectations of social justice • Felt unable to take any specific action to deliver social justice.	• Limited vision shared with the staff • Basic decisions shared but not enforced.	The management stance of the National Government

In addition to the influence of the beliefs and values of the principals on the organisational principles and the eventual action revealed in the thesis, a number of external contextual issues influenced the principals as they made sense of social justice and took action. The community surrounding the school had little effect on any decisions or actions taken by the independent schools regarding social justice, as the learners came from a wider area self-selected by their ability to pay the fees (chapter 6). The community had a significant influence, though, on Charles' and Deborah's ability to promote social justice. Both schools, positioned in largely white, middle class areas were able to maintain their levels of staffing and resources during apartheid through the use of school fees. However they faced the white community's belief that increasing the racial mix in a school would lead to a drop in standards. This belief had resulted in white parents seeking alternative schools, a perception which was confirmed by Adrian and Bridget (chapter 5). Both feared that any loss of white learners from their schools would result in a further increase of learners from the township and a concomitant increase in the number of parents unable to pay school fees, thus reducing the ability of the school to maintain current standards of staffing, materials and equipment. Therefore, despite their organisational principle to increase non-white educators, both principals were extremely concerned about increasing the percentage of black learners.

For Edward, Fergus and Gareth the township community surrounding the school reflected the problems identified in chapters 5 and 6. The effect of this was an inability to deliver the quality of education they regarded as necessary to promote social justice and limited success in promoting this interpretation of cultural justice. This indisputable link between poverty and poor quality education supports the work of Vally *et al.,* (2010) who raised this as a significant issue in South Africa. In addition they faced a movement of affluent township learners, keen to gain a higher quality of education, to ex-Model C schools, which exacerbated the poverty of township schools. For Gareth this led to difficulties when dealing with the Provincial Department of Education, whose employees had moved their children out of township schools and therefore had no personal interest in ensuring that the quality of education improved in township schools.

The second contextual factor shaping the principals' ability to promote social justice was seen to be the capacity of the Ministry of Basic Education and the Provincial Department of Education. Principals saw themselves as unsupported when trying to undertake any developments supporting the promotion of social justice (chapter 4). Legislation was seen to lack guidance or outcomes and, because of the quality of provision in schools, was at times impossible to implement. The inability of the Provincial Department of Education to provide support or training for government-introduced changes left principals feeling isolated. The effect at Cardogan and Darnell, which had the resources to employ external consultants, was limited but Edward, Fergus and Gareth, in township schools with limited funding, were left unsupported. Charles and Deborah even suggested that the lack of capacity at the Department appeared to have allowed some principals to limit or even deny access to black learners - the fundamental expectation of equality of opportunity without reference to race. The lack of capacity at the Provincial Department of Education caused the greatest challenge in those township schools categorised as Section 20 schools, where all funding is held by the Department of Education and schools requisition resources. Edward and Gareth reported that requisitions were dealt with very slowly or not at all, resulting in unpaid bills, telephones being cut off and furniture requests never delivered; even the possibility of corruption within the Department was identified (chapter 6). Gareth reported that part of the difficulty when dealing with the Department of Education was the fact that employees had moved their children out of township schools and therefore had no interest in ensuring the quality of education improved in township schools. Thus the lack of guidance or support at a National and Provincial level left principals to rely on their personal beliefs when taking action to promote social justice.

The range of contextual factors facing the principals had led them to reinterpret social justice. For them the concept primarily meant providing the highest quality education possible within their school which, for Adrian, Bridget, Charles and Deborah, superseded all other organisational principles relating to social justice. The principals also promoted social justice through the sharing of decision-making power, which was reflected in the style of leadership they employed. Cultural justice, though, was interpreted differently by the two types

of public school. In Cardogan and Darnell cultural justice was interpreted as recognising and celebrating the different cultures in their schools. Township principals reinterpreted cultural justice to mean providing opportunities for learners in their schools similar to those provided for learners in former white-only schools. The effect of context on the principals' application of their organisational principles was revealed in the final stage of the policy process, which is explored in the following section.

Operational practice

The initial opportunity of principals to promote social justice was through the provision of open access for learners. However practice varied according to the type of school. Charles and Deborah reported that the wish to increase cultural diversity in their schools conflicted with their perception that increasing the number of black learners in their schools would lead to a withdrawal of white learners. This appears to reflect an underlying racism which is continuing to influence the promotion of social justice in education, as raised by Shields (2009). Therefore open access was interpreted as admitting black learners from within their catchment areas, with limited attempts to provide places for other township learners.   Edward, Fergus and Gareth, principals in township schools, only had black learners most of whom came from poorer families. These principals were concerned that parents able to pay the higher school fees moved their children to ex-Model C schools. Adrian and Bridget admitted learners of any race if they were able to pay the school fees. Adrian also admitted black learners in grade 10 at no extra cost to the school. However, Bridget's approach to social justice led to her actively seeking to provide places for able black learners through bursaries from the primary level and changing the admissions policy of the school to support the admission of more able black learners.

Bridget's, Charles' and Deborah's wish to increase the number of black educators employed was overtaken by their interpretation of social justice; this required the employment of the most able educators, the majority of whom were perceived by them to be white (chapter 6). This situation was seen to be exacerbated by the fact that there was a limited movement of educators between schools. Edward, Fergus and Gareth, receiving applications only from

black educators, also sought to appoint the most able individuals. However the lack of white educators applying for township schools and the limited appointment of black educators in ex-Model C schools maintained the division between the two types of public schools. In the independent schools, Adrian did not express the need to employ black educators. In contrast Bridget, acknowledging that insufficient black educators were employed, had introduced internships as a means of developing black educators for employment in the school, or anywhere in the country (chapter 6). She saw the employment of more black educators as a moral duty, reflecting relational justice (Gewirtz, 2002).

The principals' intention to promote relational justice, the distribution of power (Young, 1990; Gewirtz, 2002) and the government's intention of promoting democratic practice (Bush & Heystek, 2006) was revealed through their approach to decision-making.   Practice, however, varied across the schools. Adrian limited decision-making to the most senior team of staff, while seeking views from educators, learners and parents which were gained through surveys. The remaining principals in the study implemented a variety of structures, dependent on the number of educators, to provide opportunities for the senior staff, heads of department and mainstream educators to be involved in the process. Edward, Fergus and Gareth, with the smallest number of staff, had a simple structure of senior team meetings and whole staff meetings.   Bridget, Charles and Deborah, with a larger staff, had established more complex structures with a senior team, a larger leadership team and meetings to engage other educators through departmental, grade and whole staff meetings (chapter 4). The structures they implemented provided opportunities for issues to come from educators as well as the senior leadership team.

The different interpretations of cultural justice by the mainly white schools and the township schools led to different actions to promote the concept. Bridget, Charles, and Deborah sought to promote cultural justice by several means, first by introducing the indigenous language of the province to the curriculum. For Bridget, this included the primary section of the school*,* to enable these language skills to be developed by the mainly white learners. Secondly, they celebrated the culture of indigenous learners through extra mural activities,

including cultural days or evenings, traditional music ensembles and choirs and, most importantly for boys, the introduction of soccer. The principals identified that, as a result of this action, the black learners' self esteem rose, which in turn positively influenced their levels of engagement within lessons. However the range of affirmative actions highlighted the differences between the cultures rather than destabilising those differences (Fraser, 1995). The township principals' interpretation of cultural justice reflected their all-black intake. For Edward, Fergus and Gareth the importance of cultural justice meant seeking to overcome the disadvantages faced by their learners by providing similar opportunities for their learners as those provided in ex-Model C schools.

Charles and Deborah identified their need to promote social justice through the distribution of resources within the school by the provision of additional English for the most needy black learners. However, both principals acknowledged that the support the school was able to provide was insufficient (chapter 6). They saw that they were faced with the moral dilemma of balancing the needs of the whole school against providing additional support for the most needy (Stevenson, 2007) leading to tensions as principals translated their beliefs into action (Griffiths, 1998). For Fergus and Gareth the distributional aspect of social justice was, at its most basic, the provision of food for the Aids orphans and poorest learners, who would otherwise have nothing to eat during the day and be unable to learn (Barry, 2005). For Gareth it also meant the provision of adult literacy classes for illiterate members of the community.

Possible future research and limitations of the current study

The findings in this study highlighted four significant aspects relating to the promotion of social justice which, while outside the scope of this research study, would prove rewarding to investigate. The first is the funding of public schools, which shapes the ability of principals to provide equality of opportunity in education regardless of race, and to raise standards to support the economic growth of the country. Research is needed into whether the quintile system reliably provides the highest level of funding for the schools most in need, as school populations change and the level of funding provided may not be sufficient to lessen the effect of the poorest parents' inability to pay school fees. Secondly, there is a need to research the white community's perception that

increasing the numbers of black learners in school leads to lower standards. Understanding the reasons for this perception, and its effects, is significant for the development of multi-racial schools in South Africa. Thirdly, research is needed into both the quality of teacher training and the racial breakdown of the best educators leaving training, linked with the principals' perception that white educators are more able to teach in their institutions.   Finally, there is a need for more research into the current topic, involving a larger sample and including more provinces.

The size of the sample, seven school principals from one circuit in one district of one province in South Africa, is small, and as such, is recognised as a limitation of this research.   A further limitation is the fact that a small number of educators were interviewed and no interviews took place with parents or with representatives from the District Education Office. The decision to omit parents and officials was made because of the nature of the topic and the need for principals to feel able to express their views without concern.   Finally, it is recognised that as some of the sample were known to the researcher, this can also be seen as a limitation. However, this factor did support the development of the level of trust needed for the principals to be able to provide sufficient data to answer the research questions. Thus, despite these limitations, it is argued that this thesis provides findings that other principals across South Africa will recognise and relate to (Lincoln & Guba 1985).

Conclusion

This research reported in this thesis reveals that the principals in the study sought to apply the different interpretations of social justice revealed in the work of by Miller (1970) Rawls (1999), Young, (1990), Gewirtz (2002) and Cribb and Gewirtz (2003). It argues that contextual factors in South Africa significantly influence the principals' ability to promote social justice and lead to a reinterpretation of the concept in terms of distribution and cultural justice. The principals in the study saw the primary means of promoting social justice as the provision of a high quality education, enabling learners to achieve their academic potential. The township principals reinterpreted cultural justice to mean the provision of as many as possible of the experiences and opportunities provided in the ex-Model C schools, for their black learners. Though intended

to support the promotion of social justice, the lack of outcomes or guidance in government policies, and the lack of capacity at a national and provincial level, are not only failing to address inequality in public schools but continue to increase divisions in the provision of education.

Nelson Mandela has argued that education is of great importance to South Africa; the country cannot really develop unless its citizens are educated, as:

> Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.
>
> (Mandela, 1995:194)

As this thesis has shown school principals have a role to play in that development through the promotion of social justice, but the contextual situation of many schools which are disadvantaged because of the unequal provision of resources, the poverty of the surrounding community and the implicit racism of the white community, makes this almost impossible.

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APPENDICES

A)   Initial interview instrument with principals – Original

B)   Interview instrument with principals - Amended

C)   Interview instrument with principals - Township

D)   Interview instrument with staff

E)   Letter of agreement with principals

F)   Letter of agreement with educators

Initial interview instrument with principals - Original

1. What do you understand by the term social justice?
Points to consider
- Issues of distribution of resources: distributive
- Issues of decision making – power: associational
- Issues the extent to which all cultures are recognised: cultural

2. Is it an important aspect in the school?
Points to consider
- In what ways is it relevant within the school
- Is it relevant to the external factors affecting the school
- Are there expectations for the school to address social justice, from whom

3. Do policies in the school reflect the schools approach to social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Is there a specific policy
- Which policies relate / refer to social justice

4. What does the state expect of the school regarding social justice?
        How do you address these?
Points to consider
- Is it beliefs, values that impact on your decision
- Is the resources available
- Is it that you feel you must meet the external expectations – why?

5. Are there external expectations of addressing social justice?
Points to consider
- [Provincial] education department
- Local education offices
- Local community
- Other schools
- Churches

6. Are there pressures / concerns within the school about social justice, what are they?
Points to consider
- Staffing
- Students
- Parents
- Admissions

7. How do you address social justice within the school?

Points to consider
- Through the curriculum
- Through additional activities
- Personally
- Through the school structure
- Through staffing
- Through the systems and structure in the school and decision making processes

8. Are there issues / resources which support or create barriers to addressing social justice?
Points to consider
- Resources, material, human
- Individuals expectation within the school
- External factors – which

9. How do you measure the impact of any action taken re social justice?
Points to consider
- Involvement of staff
- On pupils
- On external issues
- On specifically targeted issues

10. Anything you feel is relevant that I have not covered?

Appendix B

Interview instrument with principals - Amended

1a What does the term social justice mean to you?

1b What does the term social justice mean to you as the Principal?
Points to consider / raise
- Is it about the resources you receive – money / staffing / equipment / materials (distributive)
- Is it about decision making – who makes the decisions / contributes to the decisions made – can change proposed decisions (power: associational)
- Is it about making sure that all cultures in the school are recognised / equally valued /contribute to all aspects of the school life (cultural)
- Is it about access to the school - for learners the admission policies – who / how are they decided and applied. Do they support the entry of all. For educators – how are decisions about appointments made – are there processes in place.
- Is it about the values held in the school – attitudes to equality / fairness / equal opportunities / breaking down barriers limiting students' achievement?
- Is it about opportunities within the school for educators to grow / develop and/or for learners to extend themselves /take new courses / break down learning barriers or material barriers.
- Is it about equity and fairness within the school

2. Is social justice important within the school?
Points to consider /raise
What are the issues within the school that make it important
- Educators – who gets appointed – who gets internal promotion – how they are used within the school.
- Learners – who comes to the school – who doesn't – who cannot.
Are there factors outside the school that make it an important issue to you
- The type of learner – home issues
- The community around the school

   Do you feel there are expectations from inside or outside the school regarding the need to address social justice, from whom – how.

3. Do you have policies in the school that reflect the schools approach to social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Is there a specific policy
- Which policies reflect the position of the school re social justice.
- Which policies do you see would impact to social justice.

4. What are the expectations on the school from State policy regarding social justice?
Points to consider / raise

- What are these expectations – what Acts/ policies do they come from.
- Do you consider these when leading / managing the school.
- Is it beliefs, values that impact on your decision
- Is it the resources available
- Is it that you feel you must meet the external expectations – why?

5 Are there other institutions / organisations outside the school which hold expectations regarding the schools' delivery / support of social justice?
Points to consider /raise
- [Provincial] education department
- Local education offices
- Governors
- Local community
- Other schools
- Churches

6 Do you face pressures /concerns within the school about social justice, what are they?
Points to consider / raise
- Educators - appointing
- Learners
- Parents
- Admissions

7. How do you deliver social justice within the school?
Points to consider / raise
- Through the curriculum – how much flexibility do you have
- Through additional activities
- Personally
- Through the school structure
- Through staffing
- Through the systems and structure in the school and decision making processes

8. Are there issues / resources which support the school addressing social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Resources, material, human
- Individuals expectation within the school
- External factors – which

9. Are there issues / resources which create barriers to the school addressing social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Resources, material, human
- Individuals expectation within the school
- External factors – which – other schools – local press

10. How do you measure the impact of any action taken re social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Involvement of educators
- On learners
- On external issues
- On specifically targeted issues

11. Is there anything you feel is relevant that I have not covered?

Appendix C

Interview instrument with principals - Township

1 What does the term social justice mean to you?

2. What happens in the school that you would say is about social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Are there things that you do for your learners – food – school fees
- Are there things that you do for your educators - appointing

3. What does the term social justice mean to you as the Principal?
Points to consider / raise
- Is it about the resources you receive – money / staffing / equipment / materials (distributive)
- Is it about decision making – who makes the decisions / contributes to the decisions made – can change proposed decisions (power: associational)
- Is it about making sure that all cultures in the school are recognised / equally valued /contribute to all aspects of the school life (cultural)
- Is it about access to the school - for learners the admission policies – who / how are they decided and applied. Do they support the entry of all. For educators – how are decisions about appointments made – are there processes in place.
- Is it about the values held in the school – attitudes to equality / fairness / equal opportunities / breaking down barriers limiting learners' achievement?
- Is it about opportunities within the school for educators to grow / develop and/or for students to extend themselves /take new courses / break down learning barriers or material barriers.
- Is it about equity and fairness within the school

4. Is social justice important within the school?
Points to consider /raise
What are the issues within the school that make it important
- Educators – who gets appointed – who gets internal promotion – how they are used within the school.
- learners – who comes to the school – who doesn't – who cannot.

Are there factors outside the school that make it an important issue to you
- The type of learners – home issues
- The community around the school

5. Do you have policies in the school that reflect the schools approach to social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Is there a specific policy
- Which policies reflect the position of the school re social justice.
- Which policies do you see would impact to social justice.

6. What are the expectations on the school from State policy regarding social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- What are these expectations – what Acts/ policies do they come from.
- Do you consider these when leading / managing the school.
- Is it beliefs, values that impact on your decision
- Is it the resources available
- Is it that you feel you must meet the external expectations – why?

7. Are there other institutions / organisations outside the school which hold expectations regarding the schools' delivery / support of social justice?
Points to consider /raise
- [Provincial] education department
- Local education offices
- Governors
- Local community
- Other schools
- Churches

8a. Do you face pressures /concerns within the school about social justice, what are they?
Points to consider / raise
- Educators - appointing
- Learners
- Parents
- Admissions

8b How do you address these within the school?

Points to consider / raise
- Through the curriculum – how much flexibility do you have
- Through additional activities
- Personally
- Through the school structure
- Through staffing
- Through the systems and structure in the school and decision making processes

9. Are there issues / resources which support the school addressing social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Resources, material, human
- Individuals expectation within the school
- External factors – which

10. Are there issues / resources which create barriers to the school addressing social justice?

Points to consider / raise
- Resources, material, human
- Individuals expectation within the school
- External factors – which – other schools – local press

11. How do you measure the impact of any action taken re social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Involvement of educators
- On learners
- On external issues
- On specifically targeted issues

12. Is there anything you feel is relevant that I have not covered?

Appendix D

Interview instrument with staff

1 What do you understand by the term social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Is it about distribution of resources: distributive?
- Is it about decision making – power: associational?
- Is it about the extent to which all cultures are recognised: cultural?

- Is it about access to the school for students / staff
- Is it about opportunities within the school for students /staff
- Is it about equity and fairness within the school

2 In what ways do you see the school addressing issues of social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Through the curriculum * introduction of [indigenous language] – *extra support / remedial help for students with lower levels of English – Township students
- Through additional activities - *introduction of soccer - *Gospel choir - *Hindu students' association,
- Student admissions - the balance of students in the school? – *about 1/3 black –very small no. Township
- Personally - *ethos of the school ? - * equality of all
- Through staffing - *are attempts made to balance cultures
- Resources - The use of school fees to buy additional staffing including HOD's and resources

3 Are there policies in the school which address issues of social justice?
Points to consider / raise
- Is there a specific policy – subject policy
- Which policies relate / refer to social justice - *Government policies the school applies – school fee exemptions - staff appointments (3 staff identified)

4 Who is involved in any decisions about these (the ones identified) in the school?
Points to consider / raise
- Is it the Principal
- Is it the Senior members of staff - *does it involve the management team?
- Are wider groups of staff involved * are other staff involved in decision making? – how?
- Is *decision making – relatively democratic? - *what types of decisions?

5 Do you know if any attempts to address social justice work.
- Monitoring of students given remedial support –from Township background.

6 Do you know how?

Appendix E

Letter of agreement with principals

Dear

A letter of agreement between the Principal at [xxx] School and Margaret Turnbull to facilitate the undertaking of a research project in which [xxx] school and the Principal are participants. The research project is titled "How do school Principals in one Province in South Africa make sense of social justice, embodied in Educational Policy, in their schools." The research will result in a thesis as part of an EdD at the Centre of Educational Research and Development at Lincoln University in England. It will therefore be published for the purpose of achieving the EdD.

During the period of the project Margaret Turnbull will:

- Ensure ethical issues are addressed through the University of Lincoln ethical approvals process.
- Provide information about the project and a consent letter for all participants interviewed.
- Meet with all participants on a one to one basis to discuss the project and answer any questions
- Ensure that no individual interviewed is identified or identifiable to anyone other than the researcher.
- Ensure that the participating schools are not identified or identifiable to anyone other than the researcher.
- Be contactable by email at all times and by telephone when in South Africa.
- Provide a transcript of interviews for all participants to enable them to check that the interview is recorded accurately.
- Provide, at the end of the project, the summary findings document with key findings and recommendations.
- Attempt to publish aspects of the research through articles in journals and contributions at conferences.

During the period of the project [xxx] School will:

- Facilitate access for the researcher to the staff identified as participants
- Make practical arrangements to facilitate the interviews.

Contact details

Margaret Turnbull

Cell 0837 100694

Email: Margaret.turnbull@btinternet.com

Signed by Margaret Turnbull …………………………………………………..

Agreed by …………………………………………………………(*print name)*

Job title ………………………………………………………….

Signature ………………………………………………………….

Date ………………………………………………………….

Appendix F

Letter of agreement with staff

Dear

A letter of agreement between individual staff participants at [xxx] School and Margaret Turnbull to facilitate the undertaking of a research project in which [xxx] School is a participant. The research project is titled "How do school Principals in one Province in South Africa make sense of social justice, embodied in Educational Policy, in their schools." The research will result in a thesis as part of an EdD at the Centre of Educational Research and Development at Lincoln University in England. It will therefore be published for the purpose of achieving the EdD.

During the period of the project Margaret Turnbull will:

- Ensure ethical issues are addressed through the University of Lincoln ethical approvals process.
- Provide information about the project and a consent letter for all participants interviewed.
- Meet with all participants on a one to one basis to discuss the project and answer any questions
- Ensure that no individual interviewed is identified or identifiable to anyone other than the researcher.
- Ensure that the participating schools are not identified or identifiable to anyone other than the researcher.
- Be contactable by email at all times and by telephone when in South Africa.
- Provide a transcript of interviews for all participants to enable them to check that the interview is recorded accurately.
- Provide, at the end of the project, the summary findings document with key findings and recommendations.
- Attempt to publish aspects of the research through articles in journals and contributions at conferences.

Contact details

Margaret Turnbull

Cell 0837 100694

Email: Margaret.turnbull@btinternet.com

Signed by Margaret Turnbull …………………………………………………..

Agreed by …………………………………………………………(*print name)*

Job title …………………………………………………………….

Signature …………………………………………………………….

Date …………………………………………………………….