

***PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING TO DEMOCRATISE
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE :***

***THE ROLE OF THE PARENT-TEACHER
STUDENT ASSOCIATION***

by

SIMON SIPAMLA

**PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING TO DEMOCRATISE SCHOOL
GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE OF THE PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

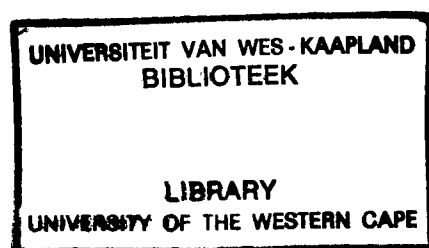
by

SAMSON SIPAMLA

**A MINI-THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF EDUCATION IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF
THE WESTERN CAPE**

SUPERVISOR : DR G. KRUSS

DATE : NOVEMBER 1995



KEY WORDS

1. PARTICIPATION
2. DECISION-MAKING
3. DEMOCRACY
4. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE
5. PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION
6. SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL
8. POWER SHARING AT SCHOOL
9. GOVERNING COUNCILS AT SCHOOL
10. SCHOOL BOARDS

ABSTRACT

**Participatory Decision-Making to Democratise School Governance:
The Role of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association.**

This mini-thesis is an attempt to investigate how the Parent-Teacher-Student Association of one high school goes about its aim of democratising school governance. It attempts to identify the influences and constraints which affect the way in which the Parent-Teacher-Student Association as a governing body is conducted in practice.

The general problem in the Parent-Teacher-Student Association is the capacity to participate effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. Central to the problem of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association is the concept of power relations among the three constituent groupings that form this governing body.

One high school was visited to gather data. Data was gathered through a case study method using a technique of non-participant observation, an analysis of documents and minutes of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association's meetings and interviews.

The historical development of Parent-Teacher-Student Association was investigated. The problems and possibilities in the functioning of each sector of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association were also highlighted.

The other findings are that power has influence in decision-making. The "lay" professional relationship becomes dictated in terms of the professionals. The relationship between the headmaster and the PTSA is important for the smooth running of the school. Generational domination was evident between the parent and student sectors of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association. The forging of a partnership between the school and community was found to be problematic, given the perceived uneven distribution of power in the Parent-Teacher-Student Association.

The mini-thesis concluded that there are problems in the functioning of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association. The problems are caused by the following factors: methods of election, mistrust among members, uneven distribution of power, the representative nature of the PTSA components, one year term of office, inconsistency of the membership, not a paid job, legislation of PTSAs, questioned role of the student sector, generational and educational gap and no capacity building programmes.

There is scope for developing the partnership between the school and community in school governance. The mini-thesis proposes ways in which this might be approached.

Date : NOVEMBER 1995

DECLARATION

I declare that "Participatory Decision-making to Democratise School Governance: The Role of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association" is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by complete references.

SAMSON SIPAMLA

SIGNED: ... *Sipamla* DATE: *30-11-95*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Africa Education Trust (London) for awarding me a scholarship to pursue some of my work at the University of Bristol in England.

The financial assistance of the Centre of Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed, and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr G. Kruss, for the guidance and generous support through the course of this project.

Finally, I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to Norma Derby and Nompumelelo Miti for the time sacrificed in the typing of this dissertation.

SAMSON SIPAMLA

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Nobonani and my children, Unathi, Sibongiseni, Hlubikazi and Lubabalo for their love, understanding, support and the inconvenience they suffered during my period of study in England and Cape Town.

Also to my parents: Father, Mgidi and my late Mother, Nosamson.

ACRONYMS

PTSA :	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
SRC :	Student Representative Council
COSAS:	Congress of South African Students
SMC :	School Management Councils
JMC :	Joint Management Councils
AZASO:	Azanian Students Organisation
SPCC :	Soweto Parents Crisis Committee
DET :	Department of Education and Training
NCC :	National Consultative Conference of the SPCC
ANC :	African National Congress
NECC :	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI :	National Education Policy Investigation
ERS :	Education Renewal Strategy
DES :	Department of Education and Science (UK)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		i
DECLARATION		ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iii
DEDICATION		iv
ACRONYMS		v
TABLE OF CONTENTS		vi
<u>CHAPTER 1:</u>	CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.	
	THE STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.	1
	Methodology	6
<u>CHAPTER 2:</u>	THE HISTORICAL DYNAMICS OF THE PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.	16
	The contested terrain in school governance.	20
	The emergence of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association in time perspective.	25
	The shifting role of the PTSA.	28
	Potential problems in the functioning of PTSAs.	34
<u>CHAPTER 3:</u>	THE PORTRAYAL OF THE PTSA AS A THREE-LEGGED POT STRUCTURE	38
	The parent governor.	41
	The appointment of parent governors at Sunshine High School.	42
	Problems and possibilities in functioning of parents in the PTSA.	44
	The need for capacity building.	48
	The teacher governor at Sunshine High School.	49
	The appointment of teacher governors at Sunshine High School.	52

The functioning of teacher governors at Sunshine High School: Problems and Possibilities.	55
Participation and responsibility.	60
The Student governor at Sunshine High School.	62
The election of student governors at Sunshine High School.	64
The functioning of a student governor in meetings.	66
The student voice in decision-making.	70
CHAPTER 4: RELATIONSHIPS AND FUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS WITHIN THE PTSA	72
Power and influence in decision-making.	74
The "lay" professional relationship.	80
The relationship between the head-teacher and the PTSA.	85
Generational domination in the PTSA.	93
Partnership.	96
Power and decision-making.	100
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	103
The Case Study method.	103
Lessons from the case study of Sunshine High School.	104
Capacity building through training.	108
Further recommendations.	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY	118
APPENDICES	1-27

CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.

THE STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The demand for participation in decision-making has been in the centre of power contestation between the state governance structures and organised formations of civil society in South Africa.

Civil society refers to the organised non-governmental structures opposed to the government policies on educational matter. The concept of civil society will be used to mean such organised formations as the NECC, PTSA, SRCs, SADTU, etc.

Under the apartheid system, the State governance structures were school management councils (MSC) and the prefect system. Civil society, which is defined as the domain of organised special interests, such as the trade unions, co-operatives and community based organisations, (NEPI 1992) was represented by organised formations like the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC), the Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA), Student Representative Councils (SRCs), Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and many other student organisations and unions (Tywala 1992). The organs of civil society described by Friedman (1991: 5) as "a web of institutions formed by voluntary association" organised and contested the monopoly of the government governance structures in decision-making process in

African schools under the Department of Education and Training (DET).

I argue that participation in decision-making would democratise the governance of institutions that regulate our daily lives.

During the apartheid era, governance of institutions was dominated by White groups. Their political power was entrenched in the apartheid system to take decisions for and on behalf of the Africans in South Africa. The decision-making process was unilateral, autocratic and bureaucratic.

Contestation over school governance in African Schools should be seen as part of a broad liberation struggle. The demand to have a say in the policy formulation process affects policy implementation.

That the African institutions had to carry out policies that were decided by other racial groups is central to the power struggle and contestation around schooling. Out of that contestation for power, control and the demand for democratic representation and participation in decision-making, Student Representative Councils (SRCs) and Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSA) were born.

The SRCs argued for representation of students in the day to day running of the school. They contested the unilateral decision-making by the school management team. The SRCs were formed parallel to the system of prefects, a student representative

structure preferred by the apartheid government.

The PTSAs were formed in the mid 1980s to contest the system of governance of schools. They were organs of civil society formed parallel to the system of school management councils which were an apartheid state governance structure.

SASE
The PTSAs aim to participate in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. The 1994 White Paper recognises PTSAs as organs of school governance; thereby assigning them legal duties. (refer to Appendix VIII for details).

My study therefore raises questions about their capacity to govern. This case study aims at opening up the debate, especially the power dynamics within the sectors of the PTSA.

Case Study
Applying the structure

However, Johnson (1993) argues that the PTSA is a potentially problematic structure in that it forges into a single unit three different constituent groupings which have different roles and responsibilities, and participate quite differently in the educational process. I agree with this view because the three PTSA components are like the three legs of a pot. If there is an imbalance in the three legs, the probability is that there would be a problem of balance in the three-legged pot. Thus the question is, according to Johnson (1993), not only about the potential of the PTSA to govern but how the PTSAs could begin to accommodate the differing demands made on each sector. The argument raised here highlights the problem of the composition

of the PTSA as a governance structure, which will have an impact on the functioning of the PTSAs.

The imbalance in the composition of the PTSA raises a question on whether the PTSAs have the capacity to participate effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance.

Central to the notion of the right to participate in decision-making is the concept of power. Power in the decision-making process entails the capacity and the ability to influence decisions. The manner in which power is constituted and located is a determining factor in the successful shaping of the decision-making process.

Power manifests itself in different ways, knowledge is one source of power. Does the PTSA have knowledge as source of power. *depend*

According to Bullock (1980)

For those participating in decision-making an informed knowledge of issues being considered and the ability to take a global perspective on them is essential for effective decision-making. (Bullock, 1980:23)

Bullock argues that every participant in decision-making should have knowledge and even expertise in the topic dealt with. It implies the standard of education of the participants as well. The PTSA components seem to vary much in terms of educational gap, more especially the parent component. If not then Bullock (1980) gives a warning that;

* [It is one thing to seek the right to participate in decision-making, it is another issue to have the responsibility for

being accountable for the outcome of those decisions. (Bullock, 1980:21)

Political and constitutional powers are a prerequisite for any effective participation in decision-making. Any participant in decision-making needs to have a clear constituency he/she is representing and a mandate to represent others. We need to view contestation for representation and participation in decision-making as different from being accountable for the outcome of those decisions. That is, to seek the right to participate will be fruitless unless one has the ability to be accountable for decisions taken. So the notion of participation embodies accountability. Inherent to decision-making is the question of bargaining which depends on the balance of power between the bargaining parties. The debate on participation, power and the capacity to participate leads Lucus (1976) to claim that participation has come into vogue. It is on everybody's lips. But like many vogue words, it is vague. Everybody wants it, but it is not at all clear what "it" is, and would-be participators are often dissatisfied with all attempts to meet their demands. Participation according to Belasco and Alutto (1975) "can range from the mere presentation of an opinion, where the locus of final authority rests elsewhere, to membership in the group which exercises final authority over an issue" (Belasco and Alutto, 1975:124).

An example cited by Maepa (1991), that in 410 schools contacted, the Soweto Education Co-ordinating Committee (SECC) has established 360 PTSAs. At the end of June 1991, 22 of those PTSAs had "collapsed due to a lack of service", (Johnson, 1993:7)

indicates that PTSAs have problems of participating in school governance.

As far as is known according to Johnson (1993) there is as yet no indication of how far PTSAs are being sustained in schools across the country. If the statistics of the SECC are generalisable, the attrition rate could be quite high. The question is therefore, how can we sustain the PTSA's capacity.

PTSAs aim to participate in the democratisation of school governance. The question is whether the PTSA have the capacity to participate effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. This study will probe into the problems of the PTSAs participation in school governance.

METHODOLOGY

I used a case study method to investigate the capacity of the Parent-Teacher-Student Association to participate effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. I conducted a case study of one school in Cape Town. I call this school Sunshine High School. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) define a case study as "a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents, or one particular event". (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:42)

In a case study, the researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit, like the governing body at

a school, or the PTSA. The purpose of such observation according to Cohen and Manion (1980) is

"to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with the view to establish possible generalisation about the wider population to which the unit belongs" (Cohen and Manion, 1980:99).

In a case study, the target population is properly described, like the Parent-Teacher-Student Association of Sunshine High School investigated. Boundaries are kept in focus, i.e try to work with that one unit without exceeding the boundaries.

It is widely believed (Stake, 1980) that case studies are useful in the study of human affairs because they are down to earth and attention-holding. Adelin, Jenkins and Kemmis (1980) agree with Stake (1980) that the advantage of case studies are that they are in harmony with the reader's own experience, and thus provide a natural basis for making conclusions. It makes comparison easy and drawing of generalisations more acceptable. So for example, school governing structures are present in all schools, and a case study on school governance will be within the experience of every parent, teacher and student.

Case studies allow generalisation either about an instance or from an instance to a class. From a case study one can make generalisations which may not be far from the general trend about what is happening with regard to PTSAs around the country. A case study presents research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research report. In case studies, the data is descriptive of the situation studied. It

does not give data in complete statistical figures that may cause misunderstanding and misinterpretations. Case studies allow the reader to judge the implications of the study her/himself. The study of one PTSA increases the understanding of what might be happening in the PTSAs around the country.

phenomenon
Another advantage of a case study is that researchers working with a well-articulated theoretical framework which is allowed by a case study, may well be able to pinpoint the phenomenon under investigation, identifying its theoretical or empirical boundaries. Wilson and Gudmundsdottir (1987) confirm that case studies are helpful in coming to grips with complex phenomena.

it will be useful
G.S.
A case study method has been useful in my research. Very little is known about the functioning of the PTSA. There is a lack of literature about the PTSA as a governing body at schools. This is a new phenomenon in school governance. To undertake an in-depth study of the PTSA, the case study was thus viewed as more suitable rather than a large scale survey study. It allowed me to have an insight on what is happening among the different sectors of PTSA. The power relations which are dominant in the functioning of PTSAs are better probed through a case study. It has allowed me to understand the dynamics in the relationships that are forged by the PTSA, e.g power struggle among the PTSA components.

The potential limitations of a case study may be caused by the

empathy of the subjects. On the first meeting, in which you introduce yourself, your purpose of the study, that it is towards obtaining a degree, the subjects of your study want to assist you to pass your degree. In data collection, they try to tell you what they think you want to hear. For example, at Sunshine High School, all the teacher interviewees talked highly about the principal. They described the principal as neutral and not taking sides or dominating meetings. While students, on the other hand gave a different view that he does dominate meetings at times. Though it is not easy to know who is telling the "truth", it is clear that teachers say only good things about the principal, while students do indicate some negative feelings. Teachers as colleagues may be holding sensitive information that may cause conflict in the school.

Winters

Thus in a case study the subjects choose the information they tell the researcher. They may avoid giving "bad" information about each other. They may nurse the "good" relations at school. They may hide sensitive information from the researcher.

Walker (1986) distinguishes three constraints in case studies. These are intrusion in the lives of the subjects, a distorted view of the world and conservatism of case studies.

In my data collection at Sunshine High School, I found interview questions potentially explosive. Questions to the students about their teachers and the influence of their principal in decision-making were sensitive. Questions designed to elicit the

perception of the powers of each sector of the PTSA might cause conflict and estrange relations at school. I had a feeling that I was intruding in a manner in which the principal runs the school. He may need to withhold some sensitive information about the behaviour of the other teachers in the PTSA. To open up to a stranger, an outsider about other members of the staff may threaten the relations in the institution.

That case studies give a distorted view of the situation might be true. This problem starts from whom you select for interview to what they select to tell you, to how you select what to write. The status and characters of the interviewees, the validity of their information and the interpretation of the information may distort the picture of the functioning of the PTSA.

The observational research which is characteristic of a case study often underestimates the significance of what subjects say, and makes too much of what the researcher claims to observe. Inherent to the case study is the selective bias especially when the view is not shared by the researcher.

Case studies can be conservative. They capture an instant in time and space which can then be held against a moving and changing reality. Situations change over time but when you read a case study report, it is as if those situations exist in the present. But since then everything might have changed. The researcher then has a feeling of being overtaken by events.

The shortcomings of a case study centre on the generalisability of the findings. One cannot draw a rule out of a case study. The nature of the topical issues that are discussed in the meetings at Sunshine High may not be universal to all PTSAs. The nature of problems encountered at Sunshine High might be unique to their school.

The boundaries of my case study could not be adhered to. In my case study I permeated the boundaries in order to have a greater insight of the PTSA under investigation. I went out of the PTSA studied to other interested parties in school governance. These are NECC, SACHED and the inspectorate. The permeability of my case study boundaries allowed me to draw into my case study experiences that might facilitate generalisation.

The NECC, SACHED and the inspectorate are outside the PTSA studies. They are in constant interaction with PTSAs with a variety of interests. They all agree that PTSAs are problematic and need support services to sustain them. The interviewed members of the PTSA also agree that the PTSA is a problematic structure and therefore, has problems in its functioning. These are indicators that one can generalise from the particular unit studied. Stake (1980) says that generalisation may not be all that important but particularisation does deserve praise. What becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge of the particulars. That knowledge is a form of generalisation too. It is arrived at by recognising the similarities in what the PTSA members themselves say and other interested parties outside the

*generalisation
particularisation*

PTSA say about the capacity of the PTSA. It would be an intuitive and empirical generalisation. A case study allowed an in-depth study of one PTSA in order to understand the dynamics in its functioning.

The fieldwork was conducted between April and June 1994. The case study was done at a school I call Sunshine High School at Crossroads Township in Cape Town. The catchment area of this school is characterised by low socio-economic status, unemployment, a high crime rate and informal housing. The population of this area is from farms, rural areas and urban areas. There are party political dynamics in this area. The dominant political parties are the ANC and PAC. The party political dynamics seem to have no influence in the PTSA at Sunshine High School. The majority if not all members of the PTSA at this school are ANC members.

I negotiated access to this school through a written request to the PTSA to observe their meetings. With regard to research ethics Smith (1980) highlights the importance of informed consent, anonymity of participants and confidentiality of records.

At my first meeting with the PTSA of Sunshine High School, I explained the purpose of my study. I mentioned that the research is to be assessed by the University of the Western Cape for examination purposes only. I expressed the hope that the final report may be of benefit to improve the capacity of the PTSA to

participate effectively in decision-making. This information served to inform the subjects about the study and helped them to make informed consent. For ethical purposes, anonymity and privacy to the individual interviewees, I used coding. I used pseudonyms for both persons and the school.

Sunshine High School is a modern newly built high school, is well resourced in terms of facilities and equipment. There is a library, a laboratory, typing centre for commercial subject, a resource centre and home economics centre. A variety of subject options for students such as Home Economics, Natural Science, Commerce and Human Science are offered. There are 38 classrooms and 50 teachers. Facilities like a school library and laboratory are not well equipped. The school is also characterised by a high enrolment of 1 804 students.

At Sunshine High School I observed the PTSA meetings, as a non-participant observer. It helped not to be part of the participants because I was readily accepted in the meetings as an observer.

Indepth interviews were conducted with a sample of two parents, two teachers and two students. One parent (PI) is thirty-six years old, a domestic worker. The other parent (PII) is fifty-six years old and works as a commissioner. The first teacher (TI) is thirty-six years old and teaches an African language. She is an experienced teacher but has only taught for three years in this particular school. The second teacher (TII) is a male teacher. He is thirty-two years old and teaches Mathematics and Physical

Science. The teacher has two years of service in this particular school but is also a well experienced teacher. Both students are twenty years old, members of the SRC and are doing standard ten. The first student (SI) is the convenor of cultural activities for the SRC. The second student (SII) is the SRC treasurer and has two years experience in the PTSA. The selection of interviewees was done according to the principles of opportunity sampling. In addition to the PTSA members, I interviewed the principal, an inspector, the NECC regional organiser and a SACHED official. The interviews aim to capture an overview of perceptions of key stakeholders on participatory decision-making in school governance.

Documents to

Documents

I examined documents such as the constitution of the PTSA and minutes book of PTSA meetings. From the constitution, information on the structure, term of office, functions and constitution of the executive of the PTSA was drawn. From the minute book I explored how decisions were taken and whether there was domination of one sector over the others in decision-making. I also isolated the issues on which decisions were taken. It helped me to ascertain if there was a pattern in the way decisions were taken.

The central question raised in this study is whether the PTSA has the capacity to govern. Is not contestation for participation without capacity a recipe for further problems? Will the decision-making process not end up causing dissatisfaction and confrontation? Will there be domination of one sector of the PTSA

over others? Is the composition of the PTSA at Sunshine High School going to pose a power relations problem? Are teachers perceived as more powerful in educational issues than other sectors of the PTSA? Is Sunshine High School's decision-making process going to degenerate into a power struggle? These and other questions are to be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter Two will explore the development of the PTSA in South Africa in historical perspective. It will spell out the development stages and adjustments to political agendas of stages of the liberation struggle.

Chapter Three will present the PTSA as a "three-legged pot" structure. It goes on to explore whether these three "legs" - the three sectors of parents, teachers and students at Sunshine High School - are equal in supporting the "pot". Problems, possibilities and issues around parents, teachers and students will be isolated.

Chapter Four will examine the internal functioning of the PTSA using the case study of Sunshine High School. The concept of power will be central to this chapter.

In conclusion I will make recommendations for capacity building for the PTSA as an organ of school governance.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL DYNAMICS OF THE PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Introduction

At the heart of apartheid education has been a racially, ethnically and regionally based system of governance. It resulted in a varied system of representation in the governance of schools.

SMC



In predominantly white schools administered by the former House of Assembly, parents had considerable powers to make decisions at schools. The School Management Councils appointed teachers, decided on the curriculum and the raising of school funds. They decided the medium of instruction in their schools. In state schools administered by the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates for Coloured and Indians, parents elected school committees called the school management councils which had little say over substantive educational matters and functioned as advisory bodies. In state schools under the Department of Education and Training for Africans, there was provision for school management councils comprising elected and nominated parents. The school management councils were not represented and had no say in policy formulation on educational matters. They had to implement and enforce policies that were decided by a parliament where they had no say or input.

In the DET, school management councils' powers were limited to signing employment forms for teachers and signing school cheques for purchases. The non-consultative, opaque and top-down style bureaucracies had restricted wider participation in policy and ensured political control by the top echelons of the bureaucracy.

With regard to the governance of Black schools and African schools in particular, the education system has no history of involving all stakeholders in education matters and decision-making. As Behr claimed, "some of the schools had local committees of a purely advisory nature to assist the (white) manager" (Behr, 1984: 177).

This system of governance, which totally excluded teachers' and students' participation in decision-making in the schools, has been the focus of intense contestation in African and Coloured schools. The chief demand of political contestation at every level through the years of resistance to apartheid education has been for a unitary and democratic system of governance that facilitates the participation of all legitimate interest groups.

Protest against these governance structures took the form of attempts to institute alternative forms of institutional governance mainly in schools under the Department of Education and Training. This was expressed mainly through campaigns in the early 1980s for the establishment of and recognition of Student Representative Councils at schools. The formation of SRCs was a result of contestation around the representation of students in

school governance. In 1986 Parent-Teacher-Student Associations were formed by the National Education Crisis Committee, to contest the representation of all stakeholders in decision-making at schools. These alternative governance structures were formed alongside existing formal governance structures like school management councils and prefects.

The demand for participation in school governance is not unique to South Africa. In the 1980s, in the British context, a similar trend may be observed.

Indeed McGinn (1990) argues that participation in school governance is the function of government officials and non educators outside the government, eg. parent organisations, religious bodies and owners of capital. These are the formations which should share their participation in decision-making in institutional governance. Gamage (1993) agrees with McGinn (1990) that democratic representation in school governance is a desirable system when he suggests that:

Some formal structure known as a "council" or "board" consisting of the principal and the representatives of the teachers, parents, community and in some cases students is created so that school level participation can be directly involved in school-wide decision-making. (Gamage, 1993:134).

It is argued that the devolution of power which is of prime importance in participatory decision-making should be coupled with the creation of new structures for the participation of all stakeholders to foster autonomy, flexibility, productivity and accountability.

The importance of the involvement of organisations in civil society and the broader community is further highlighted by Fitz-Harris in his analysis of school effectiveness, using Dr Comer's model school:

Dr Comer had identified a number of correlations which characterise effective schools. These are where parents and families play a key and active role regardless of their economic status, ethnic background, or levels of education, where all stakeholders within the school setting (parents, staff, community, students and school leaders) participate in a form of a shared school governance; and where the school community holds high expectations for all, while using a preventive approach to solving and forestalling problems. (25)

This long statement by Fitz-Harris shows a system of school governance which involves all stakeholders. More importantly are the benefits that are gained from this democratic governance system. However, in South Africa, the multiplicity of the departments of education made the participation of all stakeholders in educational governance different, and segregated on racial, ethnical and regional basis. There was no uniformity in participatory decision-making with regard to the governance of schools. Parental intervention in the education crisis in 1985 was a direct response to filling the vacuum that existed in school governance. It was also to redirect student activities and to prevent anarchy and the destruction of educational institutions. The intervention of parents resulted in the origin of the PTSA as a governance structure at school.

The establishment of PTSAs as governance structures was the transformation of a civil society organisation into a formal governing body. Given the background of their development, this might be met with some difficulties in their success to

democratise school governance.

The next sections will explore the contested terrain around school governance by the organised formations of civil society. It places the development of the alternative governance structure called the PTSA in time perspective, and explores the potential problems that this civil society structure, transformed into a formal governing body at school might experience.

The contested terrain in school governance

The contested terrain in school governance is the democratic representation of all stakeholders in decision-making at school, that is parents, teachers and students. The contesting parties are the school management councils and prefects on one hand and PTSAs and SRCs on the other, representing the apartheid state and organs of civil society respectively.

The contestation became more acute in the early 1980s, when the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) mobilized students around issues such as the demand for democratically elected SRCs, dissatisfaction over poor matric results and unpopular age restriction (Christie, 1985).

The SRCs were formed alongside the system of prefects. The prefect system was a discredited student representative structure in school governance. Prefects were nominated student representatives. They were nominated by teachers for a student

leadership role. Teachers used criteria such as cleanliness, punctuality, intelligence, submissiveness, good character, good conduct, good behaviour and good attendance for nominating prefects. This structure did not represent the views of all students at school. Students had no voice in the running of the school. They had no way of registering their protest against rules, regulations and policies of apartheid education. Prefects were not a student voice in the day to day running of the school. The prefects enforced the school policies. They never questioned these policies even if they disadvantaged students. The prefect system became increasingly unpopular among students. Prefects carried out functions which were regarded by students as "dirty" and collaborating with authority. For example, prefects monitored late coming, absenteeism, wearing of school uniform and noise making. They supervised manual labour which was used as one of the forms of punishment, enforced the use of English in school premises and reported "trouble makers". These functions were not acceptable to students because prefects acted as "policemen" at school.

The monitoring functions of the prefects were seen by many students as part of the hidden curriculum to produce submissive servants who do not question policies that oppressed them. It was argued that some prefects passed secret information to the principal about other students. Prefects were informers and collaborators, as far as many students were concerned. It was against this background that the demand for an alternative student representative structure (SRC) was high up on the list of

student's demands.

Similarly, the Parent-Teacher-Student Associations were to contest the governance of schools with the school management councils. The statutory parents councils in African schools were not very different from the prefect system. The school management councils in state schools for Africans were rejected by organised formations of the civil society as the governing bodies at schools. It was argued that School management councils were not democratically elected to govern schools. They were formed by the various apartheid education departments as organs of manipulation. Only parents were appointed as school governors to the total exclusion of teachers and students.

This structure, like prefects, was not seen to represent the aspirations of the community at school. They were not involved in any policy formulation at school. They were used primarily to rubber-stamp and enforce the policies of the apartheid government. This was seen as collaboration by organs of civil society with the apartheid government. ✓

A demand for the dismantling of this structure became more acute in the 1980s. Government agents infiltrated some SMCs and used them to channel secret information to the intelligence service about "problematic people" in the community in unrest areas. Some people who were regarded as "trouble makers" were detained, killed, harassed and some disappeared based on information from school management councils (Interview Siswana, 1994).

The statutory parent's councils thus became increasingly unpopular. The democratic movement organisations which had an interest in the education of African communities in South Africa, such as the National Education Co-ordinating Committee, demanded the establishment of people's authority structures alongside the existing authorities. These were in the form of SRCs and PTSAs.

The apartheid government was concerned about governance contestation at schools. It wanted to suppress the demands for democratic representation and participation of all stakeholders in decision-making at schools. The government was determined to crush any opposition in this regard because it regarded the dismantling of SMCs as a way of taking over power in school governance. The government's reaction to this power struggle in school governance was strong repression. In an attempt to counteract the dissatisfactions which were demonstrated by demands for democratic representation at all levels of school governance, the government formed a coalition of school management councils to strengthen their position. They were to resist the demand for their dismantling.

Contestation of power in school governance was underpinned by the philosophy of "people's education for people's power". The power struggle and contestation over representation in decision-making at schools should not be seen in isolation, it is part of the broader liberation struggle in which it is embedded.

People's Education surfaced against a background of substantial

challenge to existing state structures and institutions and the creation of alternatives such as street committees, people's courts, defence committees and other organs of people's power during the mass struggles of 1985/86 (Levin, 1991).

In the words of Obery (1987), People's Education became an attempt to shift the balance of educational power, beginning by establishing a people's authority alongside the existing state authority in order to lay the foundation for the development of future educational structures like PTSAs. People's Education and People's Power evolved in a broader process of struggle which viewed the formal state-controlled schools as the site of struggle, and a fundamentally powerful social institution through which society as a whole could be transformed (Levin, 1991). Molobi (1991) agrees with Levin when he argues that "the concept of people's power lies at the heart of the people's struggle for control over the forces, structures and institutions that govern their lives" (Molobi, 1991:279). So the philosophy of People's Education aimed at the transfer of power within education. The PTSAs were to be set up as part of People's Education. The parents, teachers and students were meant to participate in People's Education in all its forms.

With the emergence of the People's Education strategy, the focus of the education struggle increasingly shifted to the question of ultimate control of the educational system. Thus Prinsloo (1987) contended that the political problem in education is not how to evade the power of the state, nor even how to best use what is

available in the state systems, nor how to resist state power in education, it is ultimately how to take control of the education system. What is clear, however, is that the development of People's Education became a key element of a "dual power" strategy for the winning of state power. PTSAs became a threat on the political terrain because they began to challenge the authority of the state at African schools.

The emergence of Parent-Teacher-Student-Associations in time perspective.

The birth of the Parent-Teacher-Student-Association was influenced by among other factors the call for People's Education for People's Power which is already discussed in the foregoing section. The other factor was the student political activities which caused concern for parents and the ultimate result was the formation of the PTSA. This section will map out the historical development of PTSAs as influenced by student political activities. It will put this development in time perspective.

The 1984/85 student activities marked another watershed in the governance of schools. By this stage, student activity had become a general political struggle. Students wanted changes not only in schools, they also wanted broader social change. Students grew more and more militant. They organised rallies and pickets. They barricaded streets and waged street battles with the police and the army. They burnt property and attacked people they saw as collaborators. They took part in necklace killings and were part

of "peoples court's". They helped build yard and street committees. Their slogan became "liberation now, education later" and the year of no school (1985). Students were threatening not to return to school the following year (1996) if their demands were not met by the government and also in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the student revolt in 1976. COSAS was banned in August 1985 and the struggle intensified.

Parents and other political organisations became concerned about the deterioration of education. There was a need for a meaningful intervention of parents and political organisations in the education crisis. Parents were opposed to acts of arson, necklace killings, people's courts and the slogan of "liberation now, education later" and "the year of no schooling". Parents wanted to give direction to student's activities. Parents wanted to channel the activities of students to redirect the misdirected anger and organise and focus their struggle.

In response to these fears by parents, the Soweto Civic Association called a meeting of parents to discuss the crisis in schools in October 1985. At this meeting, the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) was formed. The SPCC was mandated to negotiate with the Department of Education and Training (DET) about, among other things, the postponement of the end of year examinations. The SPCC wanted to improve communication between parents, students and teachers and to build up a leadership structure for students. As a result, a National Consultative Conference (NCC) was organised at Wits University in December

1985. The theme of that conference was "people's education for people's power". This theme was meant to oppose the slogan of "Liberation now and education later". After consultation with the African National Congress (ANC) in Harare, it was agreed that learning should not be postponed. Schools were seen as important places where students could be organised to advance their struggle for a democratic governance at schools. Students should try to change the governance of schools from within by demanding the participation of SRCs in decision-making at school level. They should build organs of people's power to contest school governance. They should demand representation and democratisation of decision-making, thereby achieving the principle of including the stakeholders in decision-making. They could organise and speak in one voice to demand the release of students in detention and the unbanning of COSAS.

Education was to be seen as a means of empowerment. It was a tool to be used to articulate national demands like the scrapping of apartheid and release of political leaders and unbanning of ANC, PAC, AZAPO and others. Parents intervened in the education crisis with the aim of taking part in decision-making at school which was the domain of the state.

The SPCC was to report back on its progress at a second conference in March 1986 in Durban. In that conference, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed. As one of its many tasks, the NECC was mandated to initiate a structure that involved parents, teachers and students at school through

democratic organs of school governance. These were called "rudimentary organs of school control." They were to challenge the state's authority in control, administration and management of schools and education. This structure was called the Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), aiming to democratise school governance. They were to demand representation and participation of all stakeholders in educational matters. Therefore, the origin of PTSAs must be seen in the context of resistance against apartheid laws that govern our education and the philosophy of People's Education underpinned the process. The question at this point of the development of PTSAs is whether they have the capacity to govern schools because their role shifted with the shifts in political agenda.

The Shifting role of the PTSA

Since their inception in 1986, in a period of heightened political conflict, PTSAs have apparently not intervened effectively in decision-making to democratise school governance. Have they been able to move beyond opposing and contesting existing governance structures at school? Democratisation of school governance remained an ideal. The result was that PTSAs tended to become pressure groups at schools. They challenged the way decisions were made at school and how the schools were administered. They worked in close collaboration with political organisations without a specific focus on education crisis. They functioned as crisis managers at schools. They were called to schools only to resolve a crisis. Their agenda became involved in

the broader political struggle rather than focusing on school governance. Because of the lack of service and the lack of focus of purpose, the outcome was the shifting in their role with the shifts in broader political agenda.

The first period identified is one in which the role of PTSAs was conceived of in directly political terms. With the Durban conference (March 1986) where NECC was formally launched and mandated to form PTSAs, the role of the PTSAs became more focused to challenge government governing structures at school. They engaged in direct confrontation with the DET by negotiating on student grievances while contesting for control and participation in decision-making in schools.

In this period PTSAs engagement in the power struggle with the SMCs was directly informed by the philosophy of 'people's education for people's power'. PTSAs were viewed as a threat to the state as attempting to seize power from the state. PTSAs were met with a strong repression from the government. PTSAs challenged the Department of Education and Training's authority within the schools. They thus played a directly political role.

A second period may be discerned from 1988, following a period of intense state repression. With the banning of NECC in February 1988, the functioning of the PTSA was affected. There was little activity on the part of PTSAs because of the disorganising effect of repression. Members of PTSAs were detained, harassed by the state, killed and some went missing.

The third period saw a resurgence of PTSA activity. During the defiance campaign of 1989 a number of organisations, including NECC, decided to unban themselves. This marked another shift in the role of the PTSAs. They shifted from their political role in challenging the authority of the DET at schools and focused on taking over governance of schools. There was an increase in the number of PTSAs established. After the period of political lull and the banning of SRCs there was a low morale as a result of repression.

The NECC held a conference in Cape Town in December 1989 after the defiance campaign and unbanned themselves. The theme of the conference was "Consolidate and advance to people's education". This was a reviving conference. There was a building and consolidation of PTSAs. The NECC continued with the building and consolidation of structures of people's power (PTSAs) as informed by the theme of the conference. At this conference, the National Education Crisis Committee was changed to National Education Co-ordinating Committee.

The fourth period begins from February 1990. The second day of February 1990 marked a great change in the politics of this country. The then State President, F.W de Klerk, made major announcements in parliament, unbanning all political organisations and releasing political prisoners. This major shift in politics affected the functioning of the PTSAs. PTSAs now operated in a context which shifted from the politics of resistance, contestation and protest to the politics of

transformation, reconciliation and reconstruction.

Up to this stage, there is little evidence to suggest that PTSAs became effective democratic governance structures. Indeed Tywala (1992) argues that PTSAs actually became crisis management committees who only went as far as opposing the SMCs of the government without necessarily being better at governing schools themselves. However, the existence of this structure gave rise to debate in a number of political circles. Position papers emerged that suggested varied ways of participatory decision-making in a future system of school governance. The three education policy discussion documents that emerged after February 1990, are the *National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI)*, *Education Renewal Strategy (ERS)* and *A Policy Framework for Education and Training* by ANC. These three documents will be compared and contrasted on their proposed governance policies. They lay a foundation for future school governance.

Among the principles of governance put forward by the ERS is that of the involvement of the community by the systematic establishment of management councils at schools as opposed to PTSAs. The composition of the management councils as proposed by the ERS excludes teachers and gives students observer status in meetings. The ERS further proposes that elected learners on management councils of secondary schools could be given observer status when certain matters came up for discussion, in cases where communities believe that there is a need for this. ERS seem to be maintaining the old order of school management councils.

The ERS emphasized the financial autonomy of this governance structure over policy matters at school. The ERS seem to be entrenching the interest of the privileged groups. Financial autonomy would favour the rich sector of our community who can afford to pay for the education of their children, e.g in Model C schools. The proposals underplay the democratic representation of all stakeholders in decision-making.

While the ERS fails to propose democratic school governance where all stakeholders participate in decision-making, the African National Congress (ANC), in its 1994 *Policy Framework for Education and Training* discussion document, encourages the maximum democratic participation of all stakeholders, including the broader community. The ANC believes this democratic participation of all stakeholders will enhance equity, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and the sharing of responsibility. It believes in devolving decision-making and executive responsibilities to institutional governance bodies in order to secure their full participation in the transformation and efficient management of the system.

NEPI on the other hand in 1992 proposed that at the level of individual institutions, the key governance bodies are the PTSA. NEPI breaks school governance into management mode and representative mode. The representative mode is the domain of the PTSA and would be responsible for the setting of local school policy. The management mode would be the domain of the principal, senior staff and administrative personnel responsible for

administrative functions and the implementing of the policies. The management body would be accountable to the PTSA.

The ANC discussion document and NEPI are agreed that the governance structures of all schools should include parents, teachers and students at secondary school level. They should be elected representatives of the constituent groupings. These, together with representatives of the wider community will form school boards. The ANC document further agrees with NEPI that democratic participation in school governance in the form of PTSAs must be distinguished from the responsibilities of the management and administration of the school which are vested in school principals.

The period prior to the 1994 *White Paper on Education and Training* was marked with confusion at schools. Different schools had varied forms of governance structures. Some schools retained the old school management councils while others implemented PTSAs amidst confusion and mixed feelings caused by the non-statutory nature of the PTSAs. Some people were questioning the role of students while others waited for a directive in writing from the government. This was caused mainly by the lack of knowledge in many communities and lack of information on the constitution of the PTSAs and their composition, powers and functions. The establishment of PTSAs was sporadic and often confused and some did not even take off. Many questions remained unanswered until the release of White Paper in 1994.

The fifth period in the shifting role of the PTSA is the post 1994 period. The White Paper enshrines the significance of the PTSA as the form of school governance for the establishment of statutory PTSAs at schools. In primary schools according to the White Paper (1994), the governing body comprises parents, teachers and representatives of the broader community. In secondary schools, students would be involved in addition to parents and teachers. It is claimed that this will enhance the ownership of the school by the communities they serve. Though there has been no detailed constitution of the PTSAs from the government, at least the legal status has been clarified.

Now that the PTSAs are established as statutory governance structure at school, the question that remains to be answered is whether they have the capacity to govern and indeed, becomes more significant.

Potential problems in the functioning of PTSAs

The potential problems in the functioning of PTSAs forms an important starting point for my research. The in-depth study of one PTSA will be carried out to highlight some of the problems that face the functioning of PTSAs.

Potential problems of the functioning of PTSAs lies in their historical origin itself. They represent an idea born out of a political struggle. They exist mainly in African schools. PTSAs are political in origin. Moreover, the fact that they were

established by the NECC with the mandate of the ANC, might be contested by other political parties.

It is crucial to examine the capacity of the PTSA to participate effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. To transform a civil society liberation structure into a governing body needs empowerment of those who take over the new responsibility of governing. Will PTSAs succeed in their new task of formulating school policies? Are they going to contest the principals' powers to run the school? Is there going to develop a different type of power contestation among the PTSA sectors themselves? Is there going to develop a mistrust and domination of each other in the different sectors of PTSA?

The composition of the PTSA itself is potentially problematic. Parents, teachers and students have different functions, interests and come on different terms to school. Teachers are trained and paid government employees and students come to learn and parents pay for the learning requirements at school. To bring the three sectors together to take rational decisions on the government of the school is potentially volatile. The question is, how stable are the PTSAs as a governing structure at schools?

There is a structural problem that lies with the functional differentiation between the representative structure of the PTSA and the management team at school. Duties and interests overlap with the potential for conflict. This raises a question about whether the PTSA can bring about democratic participation in

decision-making in school governance.

The legal implications of the functioning of the PTSAs were contestable in a court of law before the 1994 White Paper. First, because they had not been constituted as a statutory body. Whatever decision or action they took could be nullified by law. They have functioned and continue to function illegally where they existed. For example, the contracts they sign for employment of teachers were not legally binding to teachers.

Domination of one sector over others is a possibility given the uneven distribution of power among the three constituent groupings. Power is central to any decision-making process. Whichever sector has more power may exercise them to the detriment of other groups in the PTSA. Generational domination is also a possibility. There might be a protection of sectoral interests in decision-making which may overshadow the interest of the school.

Effectiveness, efficiency, responsibility and accountability are some of the expectations of the PTSA. But to achieve them needs capacity to deal with educational matters, knowledge, skills and expertise. Policy-making at school is a process that calls for maturity, experience, and theoretical understanding on which policies should be grounded. Can PTSAs meet these requirements?

PTSAs are used at schools as a conflict-resolution mechanism. They are called only when there are problems to be solved. The

PTSA is not a paid structure. There are no incentives to serve on the PTSA.

The PTSAs are not as yet clear about what is expected of them at schools. This may result into a power struggle at school even among the sectors of the PTSA itself.

Given these potential problems, in the functioning of the PTSA, can they provide the best form of governance at schools? The next chapter will explore the ability of PTSAs to become democratic decision-making structures in South African schools, through the case study of Sunshine High School in Cape Town.

pot. The three legged-pot metaphor illuminates and highlights the dimensions of the PTSA. The PTSA is three-legged in that it is composed of three interest groups. These interest groups are supposed to function equally in order to democratise school governance. Do the three PTSA components have the same length and strength, like the legs of a pot? Do they have the capacity to govern at schools? The three legged pot metaphor will be used to explore the notion of balance of power which is central to decision-making processes.

If one leg is shorter or longer than others, there is no balance. The risk would be the domination of one sector over the other or one sector being weaker than others. The decision-making process becomes skewed. If this is the case, the decision-making process would call for other ways of reaching consensus. Maturity of the members of the PTSA, their global understanding of the education process, their genuine interest to bring about change would be among other strengths to draw from. The metaphor of a three-legged pot explains that a balance has to be struck even though the components of the PTSA are not balanced in terms of power to influence decision-making. The failure to strike this balance will jeopardise democratic participation in decision-making.

The composition of the PTSA may pose problems in that parents may fail to keep abreast with events in the sphere of education. Yet in governing bodies, they will be expected to make educational statements and make informed decisions and choices. The PTSAs are expected to integrate schools with the communities. This should

be done by collective decision-making. The standard of education of parents and the insight they have on issues that are discussed will determine their success in the decision-making process.

Teachers on the other hand who are professional and trained in education, might have an advantage over parents who are according to Kelly (1991) always part time, often lay and occasionally out of sympathy with the organisational milieu and culture they find themselves in.

The student component of the PTSA raises a great debate. Questions are raised as to whether students should or should not be part of decision-making at schools. There could be legal problems with minor students holding public office and taking binding decisions on behalf of others. The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) argues that students should be observers in meetings. The NEPI (1992) on the other side and the *Policy Framework for Education and Training* of the ANC advocate the full participation of students in the governance of schools and participation at all levels of decision-making. The 1994 *White Paper on Education and Training* (while acknowledging students' role in school governance) also recognises that students should not participate in some categories of school business.

The problems and possibilities raised in this discussion about the three sectors of the PTSA indicate that the "three-legged pot structure" might experience problems to function and participate

effectively in decision-making in order to democratise school governance. The nature of PTSAs given their history, structure and composition has a potential for internal conflict.

The case study of Sunshine High School explores the role of each constituent group of the PTSA. Sunshine High School is a typical school, with a PTSA which has been functioning since the establishment of the first PTSAs in 1987. Collective decision-making has been in place in this school ever since. It aims to open up issues concerning their appointments, their functioning and their attitudes towards one another. That is, it aims to explore how the "three-legged pot" of the PTSA structure functions in one school.

The Parent Governor

Parental involvement in school governance has been limited during the apartheid era. Parents were appointed to the governance structure at school to the total exclusion of teachers and students. They were appointed by government officials and the principal. This caused discontent as it was seen as undemocratic and not representative of all stakeholders.

Parents failed to voice the aspirations nor represent the ideas and ideals of the broader society they represented in school governance. They are not known for contesting any policy issues with the government but to enforce and monitor the implementation

of policies which they were never a part of formulating. Their duties did not go beyond rubber stamping unpopular apartheid policies at schools.

The establishment of the PTSAs in 1986 saw the seeds of democratic representation of all stakeholders in school governance. Do these PTSAs have the capacity to participate effectively in the democratisation of school governance? What are the implications of their legal functions as a non-statutory body?

This section will explore parental involvement in decision-making at Sunshine High School. The main issues considered are how the parent governors are appointed, whether there are problems in their functioning and the possibilities of their functions. How do parent governors relate to other sectors of the PTSA? Interviews, observations, literature and documentary analysis will support the argument.

The Appointment of Parent Governors at Sunshine High School

The parent governors at Sunshine High School are appointed at a general parents' meeting at the beginning of the year. Only parents with students registered at this school are eligible for election. The elections and voting for the parent governors is done by show of hands.

Parent II interviewed complained about the manner in which elections are conducted. He complained first that parents do not know each other's strengths and weaknesses, so they do not know who could be suitable to serve in a particular position. The result is that "they elect parents who just come and sit and keep quiet in meetings". Those parents do not bring any parental voice to school governance. "We need to know each other before making elections" he added. This is important but difficult, because Sunshine High School draws students largely from squatter areas and there are few social activities to bring parents together to know one another.

The show of hands as a method of voting parents into office is problematic. The voter could be influenced by the presence of the candidate. The voters might please a friend whom they might otherwise not like to vote for. There is also a possibility of intimidation. There might also be a clapping of hands to invite votes for particular candidate. A secret ballot method could minimise the election problems caused by show of hands.

The duration of the term of office is one year. Parent I interviewed complained about the duration of term of office. He felt it was not enough for the implementation of all the policies adopted in a year. Answering a question on the duration of their term of office he complained, "no it is not enough, I think we leave a lot of things hanging and unresolved". The issues left hanging become a burden for the next PTSA to follow up and can have an effect on the effectiveness of the PTSA. Formulation of

school policies require a longer period than a year.

Seven parents are elected to represent other parents in the governance structure. The requirement that a parent must have a child in that school is potentially controversial. A parent should rise above being a parent of a particular child. Should it not be parents with a genuine interest in education who should be elected? Should it not be the community members instead of parents? Tipton (1989) argues that the parent governor's qualifications for the job, having a child at the school, is paradoxically in part a weakness.

In the British context, Pugh (1991) claims that parents elected to the governing bodies tend to be middle class, middle aged, middle brow and articulate. This is not true of Sunshine High School parents serving on the PTSA. Working class parents, unemployed and single parents are elected to the PTSA. The implications are that the PTSA reflects the true community of this school. There are no predetermined requirements for serving on the PTSA, except that a parent must have a child at school. Gender is not a significant factor influencing the elections of parents to the PTSA of Sunshine High School. Of the five parents two are males and three females.

Problems and possibilities in functioning of parents in the PTSA

From my observations, a number of PTSA meetings were either postponed or cancelled because of non-attendance of parents.

Documentary evidence shows that the parent component of the PTSA caused the failure of many meetings. If I may refer just to a few instances. According to minutes of the PTSA meeting dated 30 May 1990, "the parents who did not attend meetings were visited". The aim of the visit to these parents was to revive them in their duties. To demonstrate that the parent component was "diminishing by day", parents were asked to "add other members of PTSA" according to minutes dated 07 June 1990.

Parent II interviewed gave his reasons for not attending meetings: He is far from the school. He has no transport. He is the only one in his area who is a member of the PTSA. He also blamed the timing of meetings. Meetings are held during evenings. Sometimes meetings are on Sundays when he goes to church. These concerns are typical and explain the poor attendance.

At Sunshine High School, parent governors claim that they are not acquainted with the contents of the constitution and therefore, are not sure of their duties. When asked about the issues that they discuss in meetings, Parent I answered "disciplinary matters, like a teacher who sold reports, students who got drunk and stabbed each other, and students who do not want a certain teacher at school and the problem of burglary and stealing of school property". This is confirmed by Parent II who does not even want to attend the PTSA meetings. Despite the problems he mentioned earlier, he also complains that the meetings are crisis-solving meetings and far from policy-making at school. Thus, for parent governors, their duties are not clearly defined

to them. At Sunshine High School, the duties are largely problem-solving and crisis management. This type of decision-making tends to scare parents away from meetings.

Responding to a question on who convenes the meetings, Parent I answered "the principal, you know, he is always at school and all the problems happen to him, so when he feels that a certain issue needs a PTSA meeting, he calls us". The statement confirms that the PTSA at Sunshine High School meets only when there is a problem or crisis to be solved. The PTSA does not have its own programme; it tend to respond to what has happened.

Moreover, as a result of the strong student voice at schools "the parent representatives diminish by day". Parent II complained that students dominate meetings and are rude and forceful to make their voice heard. Because of the undisciplined students, Parent II fears to attend meetings. He claims that students bully teachers, as well as they "can burn your house" if the parent is strong on maintenance of discipline at school.

On the question of the legal implications of PTSA functions, a DET inspector interviewed reiterated that "the PTSA are de facto", "the DET counter-sign to legalise what was signed by the PTSA". He argues that PTSAs contravene the Education Labour Relations Act when they expel teachers and they loose those cases in court. Parents' ignorance of the legal implications of their duties was confirmed by Parent II when he said "if we suspend a

teacher (the one who sold reports) say for six months, the teacher gets his salary, so in that way we shall be failures". It may be appropriate for the PTSA to suspend a teacher, but the teacher continues to get paid, because PTSAs have been non-statutory structures. This makes them an illegal structure with no right to suspend or expel any teacher or student at school.

The inspector's view on PTSAs in general and the parent component in particular is that they are problematic. The inspector explained that ever since the establishment of PTSAs "problems at schools have intensified", and that PTSAs are not making any headway to resolve them.

From the interviews and observations at Sunshine High School, it is evident that the parent component of the PTSA is ignorant of what is expected of them. They seem not to differentiate between their role and that of the principal and his/her management team. Their basic role is to participate in policy debates at school. They represent parents in policy-making at school. The principal and the management team are responsible for the implementation of those policies.

Because of a variety of reasons given by parent governors for their failure to participate effectively to take democratic decisions at school, it becomes imperative that the decentralisation of school governance as argued by Holt and Murphy (1993) does not automatically mean "real" decision-making will be extended to a broader cross-section of a school's

community. That is, decision-making will be dominated by the more confident sector of the PTSA. The parent sector at Sunshine High School does not have power and confidence and it fears because of an experienced failure in their duties to expel or suspend a teacher. Though the White Paper enhances their participation, it does not provide for immediate capacity building.

The need for capacity building

The parent governor seems to be left wanting. Beatie (1978) argues in the United Kingdom context that many schemes of participation place parents not only in the position of being a minority at the points at which real decisions are made, but also subject them to various psychological disadvantages often arising from quite mundane matters such as the timing and style of meetings. This is evident in the experience of the parents at Sunshine High School. Many are not used to the formal language used in committee meetings.

On educational matters such as resource allocation, the curriculum, public examination and so on Woods (1988) feels that the influence of parents as a group remains limited, because this is perceived as the domain of the professionals. Parents at Sunshine High School never mentioned any involvement in discussion on policy matters; they discussed problems and crises. Student empowerment and strong student voice at Sunshine High School needs to be balanced by strong parent participation. Parents do not have the capacity to debate policy issues at

schools. That is one reason why parent participation is weak.

These problems suggest that parental empowerment is necessary to build confidence, capacity and informed knowledge in order to participate in governance issues at schools. There is no training provided to build capacity which may improve the participation of the parent component of the PTSA.

Lastly, the election of parent representatives is problematic in that the system of voting is open to abuse. A secret ballot system may be better than a show of hands. This first leg of the three-legged pot therefore appears to be weak.

The Teacher Governor at Sunshine High School

Teachers too were not part of the school governance structure during the apartheid era. Teachers were represented by the principal in the School Management Council. The practice was fiercely contested as undemocratic. The establishment of PTSAs by the NECC in the mid 1980s (Badat, 1991) brought in the voice of the teacher to decision-making at school.

Teachers, who are often professional, are trained in their school tasks and experienced in handling educational matters on a daily basis. They often acquaint themselves with government acts, circulars and notices. They are seasoned educators who have an interest in education. Teachers should be an asset in shaping debates in the PTSA. Their inclusion in school governance would

have the advantage of devolution of power, collaboration in policy implementation and diversity in bringing in a wide variety of ideas to formulating school policy. Furthermore, they are the people to carry out and be accountable for the interpretation of school policies in practice. The partnership they form with parents could improve school effectiveness.

There is an international trend towards greater participation and involvement of teachers in decision-making at schools, for example, the United Kingdom. As parents, teachers and the general public become more involved in school affairs, according to Holt and Murphy (1993) a shift in power and authority is obviously going to occur. No longer can a principal be "Lord of an educational fiefdom" (Holt and Murphyp, 1993:177). A democratic coalition of interest groups would be responsible for administration and management of schools.

In the words of Sallis (1977), the teaching staff generally should be able to present ideas to the governing body and vice versa, as well as expressing views through teacher governors. This would make "schools more accountable to the community" (Brooks, 1991:31). Teacher participation in decision-making at school is quite a new phenomenon. The experience in England could benefit our system of education and school governance in particular.

On the other hand, since the 1980s teachers in South Africa did not wait for the legislation of their participation in school

governance. Teachers have also felt the impact of powerful extra-organisational forces in the political struggle and sought a more central seat at the educational decision-making table. Teachers opposed the authoritarian and paternalistic administration, whose bureaucratic exercise excluded teachers from decision-making in school governance. The cumulative effect of personal, intra and extra-organisational factors have according to Boyan (1967) stimulated large numbers of teachers to seek, through extra-school organisations, an expanded role in the government and governance of schools. It is the search for this expanded role which has brought teachers into direct confrontation with the existing authority structure of schools, the bureaucratic authority. Teacher organisations in South Africa like SADTU have demanded teacher participation in decision-making. The new role of the teacher in the PTSA has been contested for by teacher unions.

As members of teacher organisations, the behaviour of teachers have shifted from relative docility to aggressive militancy, demanding representation and participation in decision-making. The contributing factors reside in themselves, in the school systems in which they work, and in the larger society in which they live. The contestation by teachers to have a say in decision-making has landed them in the school governing body of PTSA. It is the effective participation of the teacher governor in decision-making at Sunshine High School that this section sets out to explore. The election of a teacher governor, the function, success, difficulties and relationship with other sectors of

school government will form the gist of this discussion.

The appointment of Teacher Governors at Sunshine High School

Teachers take turns to take part in the PTSA at Sunshine High School. Teacher II explained in an interview that teacher governors are elected annually by a secret ballot system. It is seen as the best method of electing the members democratically and is void of any kind of external influence on making a choice. The voting is secret and the results are more reliable than a show of hands. This voting method could eliminate gender prejudices and stereotypes that men should be in decision-making positions. It is noticeable that at Sunshine High School, out of seven teacher members of the PTSA there are six female teachers and one male teacher. However, this is in line with the proportion of male teachers to female teachers on the total school staff. Some teachers were sole candidates for governing positions and others were asked to stand by colleagues.

Answering a question on whether she would stand for this position in future or volunteer, Teacher II answered:

I don't think I can volunteer, because in this PTSA, I have experienced that there are very delicate issues that we have to iron out. Some of them are concerning our colleagues, so it is very difficult to take such bold decisions like terminating the services of a colleague. I feel that is the duty of the controlling staff than the PTSA as such.

This view of Teacher II, the reluctance to stand for the position in future, and the reasons given, were confirmed by Teacher I. She said she was not willing to take up the position and that she "was forced". Asked if she would avail herself in future after her experiences in the PTSA, she reiterated "not in this school, because of problems, not any more". She also gave personal commitments as reasons for not willing to be part of decision-making at her school.

The reasons put forward by these teachers highlight that teachers are not yet ready to take over the responsibilities and be accountable to the school community. They are frustrated by the nature of issues discussed, mainly problems and crises. Teacher II seemed not to realise that involvement in decision-making includes the future of colleagues and that is the responsibility of the PTSA and not simply the management team at school. The reason given by these teachers also show that teachers are not sure of what is expected of them in the PTSA.

When asked if they discuss issues on entertainment, academic enrichment or sport etc., Teacher I answered that "only problems are brought to the PTSA". Teacher II expressed more ethical and humane reasons when asked whether she does not want to be part of decision-making because she wishes to protect colleagues. She answered:

not necessarily to protect the colleagues, but I would not like to be part of those people who decide on the fate of other teachers. Sometimes the decision is appropriate but I feel shy to be part of that decision.

It was interesting to learn that after such a long and fierce

battle waged by teachers for participation in decision-making, is drawing a blank. If the feeling of the teacher governors at Sunshine High School could be generalised, teacher governors would have problems with their participation in school governance. Many were reluctant to serve on the governing body. Some teachers say they are shy to take bold decisions, others are frustrated by problems discussed in the PTSA meetings. There are few incentives to serve on the PTSA. It takes their time which they could use for their paid job.

A major problem is that the teachers interviewed do not appreciate the concept of responsibility in democracy. Peer pressure also plays a role in the participation of teachers in decision-making. Peer pressure and collegiality weakens the authority and power of teacher governors.

From the foregoing discussion on the appointment of teacher governors and sentiments expressed by the teacher governors, it seems that the teacher sector also needs capacity building in order to serve effectively on the governing council at school. Trying to give every teacher a chance to be a governor without capacity building remains a problem. Teachers have different characters, abilities and have different interests which "turns" do not cater for in the election of teacher governors. Character, interest and ability are limiting factors in the powers of the teacher governor to shape the decision-making in governors meetings.

The functioning of teacher governors at Sunshine High School:

Problems and Possibilities

At Sunshine High School, the teacher governor's voice is therefore weak. Participation in decision-making is an organised democratic means of making collective decisions in the interest of the school. It is a planned and systemic way of making a rational decision over an issue. Teachers, with their professional training and experience in educational matters, are thought to be equipped to participate effectively in decision-making. This view does not hold water at this school. Teacher governors seem not to play their representative role. They do not have the enthusiasm and courage to articulate the needs and feelings of teachers in governors meetings.

It may be argued that issues concerning staff are too delicate or embarrassing for teacher governors to participate in. That is for them to decide; they can always decline to be involved in something they find too painful. Teacher II does not want to participate nor be part of a decision to terminate the services of a colleague. Teacher I felt that they need to protect other teachers to maintain good human relations in the staff room. This is certainly not what democratic participation in decision-making is all about. Protection of sectoral interests would degenerate into conflict.

The blame could be apportioned to the legacy of apartheid.

Teachers are used to carrying out instructions without questioning them. They are used to getting ready-made decisions to be implemented. It is quite a new phenomenon for them to be called upon to take decisions. The paternalistic and top-down opaque form of decision-making have led to teachers passivity. They are not used to participation in any decision-making due to the legacy of apartheid.

Though they represent other teachers by taking the staff-room views or being asked to raise an issue in the PTSA meeting, teacher governors at Sunshine High School remain unmotivated. Non-attendance at the PTSA meetings appears to be evident among teacher governors as well. According to minutes dated 07 June 1994, letters were written to those teachers who do not attend meetings. Students complained about a teacher who does not attend meetings (30 May 1990). According to my observation, the teacher governors avoid the PTSA meetings as far as possible.

A teacher governor interviewed (T II) expressed his concern that their duty is complicated by the teacher-pupil relationship. According to him, students do not see themselves as young adults, they see themselves as equal to teachers. They demand to have equal powers with teachers and parents at school. They do not want to be disciplined. They want to be involved in everything that is discussed at school. Teacher II feels that there should be a limit on student participation in the PTSA. There is thus a power struggle between teachers and students.

The militancy of students is a carry-over from the liberation struggle. The culture of learning and teaching is not yet well established. To protest, contest and confront are still seen by students as means of making one's voice loud and clear. Students still use the tactics they used against the apartheid regime. These are boycotts, sit-ins, violence against teachers. Students still want to dominate decision-making at school. The methods they use hinder progress. What needs to be restored first is the culture of learning and discipline. Discipline would encompass high scholarship, rationality and maturity in dealing with school issues that affect the whole school population. The school itself should be perceived as the custodian of discipline with teachers as authority figures. With the present students, used to defying authority during the liberation struggle, the authority of the teacher at school has also diminished. The structural power and authority of the teacher is challenged by students. Authoritarianism is now giving way for more democratic decision-making mechanisms. Most students have little respect for the teachers and this further weakens the teacher component in the PTSA.

Students and teacher governors represent their own constituencies in meetings. They seem to view the process of decision-making as bargaining, a win/lose situation. No one wants to let his/her constituency down by either giving in or compromising. This is caused according to Teacher II by the mistrust that exists between teachers and students. Teacher II confirmed that the PTSA is dominated by students and that after "long deliberations we

give in to students for the sake of the progress at school". He also claimed that the mistrust between students and teachers, and teacher governors frustrates the decision-making process. Teacher I felt that his contribution to the PTSA meetings is not effective because of countering behaviour from students. He expressed that in the PTSA meetings teacher governors protect other teachers because if they do not do that, they are going to be at loggerheads with the offending teacher, and will be blamed for being harsh towards other teachers in the PTSA meetings.

Parent II complained that teachers themselves cause problems at school. According to him, teachers discuss their problems and differences with students informally outside the PTSA meetings. They discuss other teachers with students, and bring their quarrels and misunderstandings to students to seek sympathy and protection. He added that teachers at Sunshine High School, "do things together with students; they go out with students and drink together in taverns".

The few teachers who do come to meetings are quiet most of the time but make an effective contribution and show confidence when making a point in a meeting. Teacher governors participate on a variety of topics. They participate more than the United Kingdom literature suggests, which finds that teachers tend to be quiet and passive in governors meetings, showing interest only on matters that affect them as professionals.

The Sunshine High School case is not unique in comparison with the experience of other countries e.g United Kingdom. In the view of Sallis (1993) teacher governors have, in some way, the most difficult role on the governing body. They discuss the affairs of the school frankly in the presence of "outsiders" and their head teacher, who has a big influence on their career prospects. They may also feel conflicts of loyalty. The same dilemma is mentioned by Wragg and Partington (1980), that "teacher governors should not seek to embarrass the head". (Wragg and Partington, 1980:63).

New (1993) in her study of governing bodies in England and Wales found that the teacher governor's views are represented by the head-teacher and that they do not present a contrary viewpoint to that of the head-teacher. They are likely as fellow professionals to want to lend their support to the principal as much as possible within the context of governing body meetings.

In contrast, at Sunshine High School, teacher governors deny the influence of the principal. Asked if the presence of the principal influences his role as a teacher governor, Teacher I answered "no, it makes no difference, the principal is said to be an ex-officio member but he represents teachers. There are government procedures that we do not know and he explains them to us all". The role of the teacher governor was apparently not restricted by the presence of the principal at Sunshine High School.

Therefore, the role of the teacher governor at Sunshine High

School is constrained by students rather than the principal. The students are politically empowered. They are in the majority in the school community. They are articulate and forceful, making their voice heard in the governors meetings. This results in serious constraints on teacher participation. The ideal for a balance in the three-legged pot is upset. The result is the domination in decision-making by students.

Participation and responsibility

In conclusion, teacher governors at Sunshine High School participate in good sense in the PTSA meetings. They contribute and make comments that do not display any professionalism or special knowledge. This is important for them to come to the level of any "lay" governor such as parents or students. It limits the domination of one sector in meetings. They argue on issues like the vandalism at school in the same way any concerned parent or student could have contributed.

Teacher governors do give professional information in the PTSA meetings like explaining government policies and procedures to members of the PTSA. This is an important role because teaching and education entails professionalism. They are free to give personal opinions as they are representatives, not delegates. The representatives do not change every meeting. They represent their constituencies and have a mandate to take decisions on behalf of their membership. They can make personal comments and express personal views. They are free to vote if the issue needs voting.

Delegates on the other hand may change from one meeting to the other, that is some people might be delegated in one meeting and others delegated in another meeting. Delegates have a restricted role because their representation is short term; it may be one meeting and the delegation dissolves. They may not vote on behalf of those who delegated them. They have to obtain a mandate if the decision taken warrants that.

The teacher governors are representatives and not delegates who are set up for a special task and dissolve thereafter. Teacher governors sound the feelings of other staff members by seeking staff viewpoints on some issues to be discussed in the PTSA meeting. They also carry out instructions from the staff-room by being requested to raise issues in the PTSA meetings on behalf of other members of the staff.

Teachers are equally not equipped for their task. Though they read and understand the constitution, they are not aware of the legal implications of their functions. They are not aware of the demand and expectations of the PTSA. Teacher governors seem not to understand the principles of democratic participation, that democracy and participation involves responsibility and accountability. Teacher governors need to understand their role in the school, that it benefits the whole community.

Teacher governors have an important role potentially. Problems in their role have been highlighted in this discussion. Capacity building, not only for teachers but for the governing body itself

needs attention. If the three-legged pot has to be balanced, the capacity of the PTSA in general needs to be built.

The Student Governor at Sunshine High School

Student participation in school governance in South Africa is a new notion. Born out of students' protest against the apartheid education policy, students' voice has been loud and clear. Participation and democratic representation in decision-making at schools has been central to the student's opposition to state representative structures at school. In the South African context, where students have played a central role in transforming the education system, their strong voice in the PTSA should be understood in that context.

The development and empowerment of the student governor has its origin in demands for the establishment and recognition of Students Representative Councils (SRCs) at secondary schools. The gains made in this sphere have resulted in students being part of governing bodies at schools.

Though their presence is met with a range of controversy, students claim a more central seat in decision-making at schools. Having played a major role in the struggles around education in South Africa, any argument against their involvement in school governance may raise tensions. Confidence and leadership that was built over years of political struggle has produced vocal students who have a framework to articulate the needs and

aspirations of students. Strong student organisations like COSAS, PASO and AZASM at secondary schools have been a base to nurture students both politically and otherwise.

Student governors have struggled for their place in the shaping of decision-making mechanisms at schools. A growing realisation is that their presence in school governing bodies is not only necessary, but crucial, in that they have the ability to hold any educational process to ransom.

The participation of students as governors in other countries is extremely controversial. The Taylor committee of 1977 for England and Wales proposed student participation, according to Burgess and Sofer (1986). This was never put into practice because the Department of Education and Science (DES) argued, according to Richardson (1983), that only persons aged eighteen and over could hold public office. Thus far there is no age restriction in holding public office in South Africa but with a shift in legislation, this is an issue to consider.

The New Zealand system of education has student representation in secondary school boards (Gamage 1993). Australia has students in school site councils at secondary schools (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). There are no limitations put on student participation in these two countries. The phenomenon of student participation in decision-making at school is not new in other countries.

The policy debate over the status of student governors may cause

problems for education in South Africa. The view that student governors should not participate in matters involving the misconduct of teachers and interviewing applicants for teaching positions at schools is rejected by student governors. That they are inexperienced adolescents who do not have the ability to reflect on education in general is an accusation that needs to be explored more fully.

The controversial issue of student involvement, and the nature it should take, will be explored through an examination of student participation at Sunshine High School.

The election of student governors at Sunshine High School

Student governors at this school are elected by the SRC from amongst the members of the SRC. The present (1994) student governors were elected at the SRC camp in a holiday resort at the seaside. They were not directly elected by the student body as a whole. Asked if this was democratic, Student I said "it is democratic because in the SRC every class is represented and therefore every class had a candidate to be elected to the PTSA". So in this school, student governors are also members of the SRC.

Asked if they would volunteer in future to be student governors, Student I was quick to say "yes because when you are a member of the PTSA, you become clear about what is happening at school". This student governor expressed willingness and enthusiasm to serve his school and community, unlike parent and teacher

governors who were very reluctant to serve on the PTSA. Student II also voiced his willingness to serve on the PTSA saying he has been a member for the past three years. He has greater experience than parents and teachers in the PTSA.

The method of electing student governors seems to have been agreed upon by the student body. The student body elects the SRC. The SRC elects PTSA members. PTSA members report back to the SRC. The SRC reports back to the student body through class representatives on the SRC in various classes and not in a mass meeting. In the words of Student I, it is because it is "difficult to control mass meetings". Because of the same difficulty, the student body at Sunshine High School understands and gives a mandate to the SRC to elect student governors. The method of election may vary from one school to the other depending on a number of factors such as enrolment and the level of discipline in a given school.

When asked why they link the SRC with the PTSA, Student I answered:

We in the PTSA are just seven and in our point of view, we can't control the whole school, we can't voice somethings to the whole school, so we come to the SRC which has the class representatives and they further report to their various classes.

The functions of student governors will be discussed in the following section and the perception of other sectors of the participation of students.

The functioning of a student governor in meetings

Students also do not attend meetings regularly. According to the minutes dated 16 May 1990, the Student Committee "did not manage to meet" as students did not turn up for the meeting. Answering a question on attendance of meetings, Student I complained that they have a "big problem of attendance of meetings" even by student governors. Justifying the non-attendance of student governors, Student II said that sometimes there is an SRC meeting at the same time as the PTSA meeting and then a few student governors attend the PTSA meeting while others are in the SRC meeting. Though this could be seen as bad planning, it may also depend on the urgency of issues under discussion. The problems expressed by parents and teachers might also affect students. The the timing of the meetings, the distance from school, the nature of issues discussed, the mistrust and power struggle among the members of the PTSA are all factors that contribute to non-attendance.

In my observations, student governors are more vocal and articulate than parent and teacher governors. They appear confident and bargain from a position of strength. Students are empowered by their participation in student organisations and serving on community structures in the township. It was claimed by Student II when responding to a question on whether they feel intimidated by the presence of their teachers and prominent community leaders in their meetings,

I don't feel anything because I am used to talking to parents in the townships, I talk to teachers at school. I regard teachers as my parents so I am not afraid of anything.

Student I reiterated that "in the beginning you become afraid to

talk in front of the principal and teachers, as time goes, one opens up because you feel you want to say something". It seems over passage of time, student governors overcome their fears and get used to sharing ideas with other sectors of the PTSA.

Questioned about their confidence in their duties, Student II explained that student governors do not have problems. They get training on their expected functions by the SRC. "What we do, the SRC runs workshops for the seven students who are members of PTSA and tells them what to do". The same idea was confirmed by Student I, "They (SRC) gave us more information about what the PTSA is and how it works. But here at school, we do not get any information". They developed communication skills, and systematic presentation. They grew politically. The SRC builds capacity for the PTSA students, this empowers them for their task. The capacity building programmes need to be extended to parent and teacher governors.

On disciplinary issues involving misconduct of teachers and interviewing prospective teachers for vacancies at school, student governors demanded to be involved. Commenting on the issue of interviews, Student II expressed his concern that:

The appointment of teachers is crucial in that a vacancy may exist for a Mathematics teacher and a Xhosa teacher is appointed to the position because he/she is a friend or a relative of the principal or a member of staff. That teacher will be required to

teach mathematics and experience problems in class. So it is important for us to protect the interests of students when it comes to the appointment of teachers.

To the student governors at Sunshine High School, the PTSA brings

together three separate constituent groupings where representatives are answerable to their constituencies. Though they deny protecting other students at the PTSA meetings, they agree that they mitigate on behalf of students when a punishment is imposed on a student, citing an example of a student who was suspended for the last six months of a year and could not write the end of year examination.

Asked about mistrust among the PTSA members, students feel that although the PTSA is looking after the interests of everyone, there is an element of constituent interest protection. This leads to the undermining of the PTSA. In the words of Student II,

We have a problem in the PTSA, when discussing with teachers, they say we (students) should not undermine them. Even parents do that, when a student has done something wrong, the parents are not objective in their assessment of the case, they would say he/she must be punished whether wrong or right.

This suggests that there is a power struggle between the sectors of the PTSA. It was indicated by Teacher II that students dominate meetings and force their view-point until teachers and parents give in to students for the sake of progress and harmony at school. Teacher governors feel that students do not act in a rational manner. The parent governor's view about student governors and students in general is that they are undisciplined and they force their opinion to dominate. Parent II gave an example of students who would burn cars of teachers, lock up teachers in classrooms and spray them with water using a hosepipe. They also threaten parent governors who try to keep order and discipline at school. They intimidate parent governors. In that way, they weaken parental participation, and the student

voice becomes stronger.

The DET inspector reacted sharply to the issue of students sitting in a disciplinary committee on teacher misconduct saying "that is according to my view not right". The inspector's view arises out of his own orthodox traditional school of thought, that children should not discuss delicate issues with adults. The inspector echoed the view that students should be given observer status. His view is that generational domination and treating students as children. This is contrary to student's demand for full participation in decision-making. This could raise tension within the PTSA.

Student governors demanded full participation in all activities and issues that arise at school. However, it is becoming evident that the power distribution among the PTSA members at Sunshine High School is not equal. There are a number of factors that influence the uneven distribution of power. Access to information which favours teachers, level of education which is a disadvantage to parents, and training which is only received by students, are among the factors that cause an imbalance of bargaining power. That students intimidate parents and teachers needs to be ironed out in capacity building workshops. The unequal political power needs to be balanced through training programmes for the PTSAs.

The idea of student governors will take time to be fully accepted in the governance of schools. The problem is the tradition and

culture which is authoritative and paternal created by the hidden curriculum in the education system we have used for so many decades. It will take time to build the culture of talking, sharing ideas, to develop a critical mind, produce leadership that questions unjust policies, produces non-submissive servants and full participation in decision-making at all levels of policy-making, to build a sense of togetherness and belonging to a school.

The student voice in decision-making

It is important for both parents and teachers to trace the source of student involvement in the political struggle, to build an understanding of the present behaviour of students at school. We need to understand the involvement of students to protest and demand forcefully and militantly the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making in the arena of education. It appears that the establishment of PTSAs and taking seriously the student voice marks the beginning of yet another power struggle between the students, parents and teachers at school.

Students at Sunshine High School are a part of that history. They may still perceive teachers and parents as collaborators. Without justifying misbehaviour, students are better organised in their student organisations and are empowered by their involvement in community structures. They perceive their participation in school governance as a deserved right. They are protecting the gains they have made over years of contestation for a say in decision-

making on matters that regulate their everyday lives. However, students at Sunshine High School do not show evidence of taking responsibility, which goes along with the right to participate.

Governance at schools is democratised by involving the three PTSA sectors to govern schools. It appears that at Sunshine High School this democratic governance is ineffective. There is no balance in the three-legged pot. A mechanism to balance the three components of the PTSA is necessary. The balance could be achieved through facilitating an understanding of the purpose of democratic participation in decision-making.

Power sharing seems to be central to the problems of the PTSA. The relationships and functional dynamics within the PTSA centre around the concept of power and how it manifests itself. The bargaining power in the decision-making process is at the heart of this democratic governance structure at school. The next chapter explores the relationships and functional dynamics within the PTSA as influenced by the power relations among the three sectors of the PTSA.

CHAPTER 4

RELATIONSHIPS AND FUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS WITHIN THE PTSA

Introduction

The notion of power sharing is central to the functioning of the PTSA. The exploration of the relationships and functional dynamics within the PTSA will centre around the concept of power. Power will be used to mean to have influence on decision-making. The England and Wales literature is consulted in this regard because of the experiences and insights provided by that literature in school governance. In South Africa the emergence of the PTSA movement is a new development and therefore very little if any is written about the PTSA.

The involvement of students in school governance is a unique feature in South Africa. Very little is known about the involvement of students in school governance in other countries as well. The lack of South African literature in this regard forces one to look at the literature outside South Africa.

The case study of Sunshine High School has revealed that power sharing is central to the problems of PTSAs. The unequal distribution of power seems to be the main issue. The sources of power and how it is used determine the relationships and functional dynamics within the sectors of the PTSA.

The decision-making process brings micro-politics into play. Micro-politics would include the forging of relationships and the undeclared factors that come into play during the bargaining process, like the formation of coalitions and the use of power to influence decisions. The relationships that are built among the three interest groups of the PTSA is the issue that this section intends to look into.

The partnership that schools forge to build with the community is important, but the possibilities and problems of such a partnership need to be clarified in order to make sense of the decision-making process. Teachers and the principal as professionals and "insiders", parents as "lay" and "outsiders" and students "lay and insiders" need to find a way of working together to democratise school governance. The partnership between the "lay" and "professional" might cause problems for the smooth functioning of the PTSA. The relationship and partnership with students in governance needs special attention because students function quite differently from parents and teachers in an educational process. Bringing them to the decision-making table needs a careful process that will not undermine the learning process of the students at school.

Traditional generational domination may help to explain the interplay of power in the process of decision-making. Chronological age and a good sense of respect may explain the interplay of power. Parents demanding respect from students and students giving respect to parents during a decision-making

process, weakens the position of the student. The breaking down of generational relations during the period of political struggle since 1976 is central to the debate.

Another important person in the decision-making process is the principal. The principal is perceived as having more power at school than all other interest groups. His influence on decision-making at the PTSA meetings is crucial. The principal has constitutional powers to run the school. The PTSA might interfere with these powers and a power showdown may be inevitable. We thus need to explore the influence of the principal in decision-making. The UK literature seems to suggest that education should be left to the control of professionals. They know and understand how education should be run. Governing involves policy making. It needs insight and foresight on what suits the process of education. PTSAs are in that way problematic.

The following sections will explore the influence of power, the "lay" professional relationship, the relationship between the head-teacher and the PTSA, generational domination and the forging of partnerships between the school and community to explore the functional dynamics in the functioning of the PTSA.

Power and influence in decision-making

Power is conceived of by Weber as:

the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistance, and regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. (Hoyle, 1986:73)

This type of authoritative power is the one which the education authorities of DET used over African education. They carried out their own will despite the resistance from parents, students and teachers falling under their jurisdiction. Such power is authoritarian and undemocratic. The formation of PTSAs and their democratic decision-making process seeks to limit this type of power.

In my observation in meetings, though power relations were not immediately evident, students were vocal. They participated to a greater extent than I had assumed. My assumption was that because they are adolescent and inexperienced they would be shy to air their views in the presence of their teachers and prominent figures in the society. On the other hand, teachers were also participating equally well. The parents' voice was not strong and the principal left the debate to the PTSA members, playing a more neutral but reserved role.

Participants like parents, teachers and students in decision-making at school can be conceived of as political actors with their own needs, objectives and strategies to achieve those objectives. Bacharach (1988) argues that the decision-making process is the primary arena of political and educational conflict. Each subgroup can be expected to approach a decision with the objective of maximizing its specific interests or goals rather than the maximization of some general organisational objective. A group's efforts, that is, any sector of PTSA, to have their point of view reflected in the decision outcome

centres in large part around questions of power and influence. However to have one's viewpoint represented requires that others agree that your view should be considered; that is, you should have influence over the decision.

A school as an institution is conceived of by the community as a custodian of authority and teachers as bearers of authority because of their professional power. The students on the other hand use political power to contest the teacher's authority at school. Parents exercise the generational power to have authority at school. The interplay of these sources of power is important to explain how each sector uses power in the decision-making process at the PTSA meetings. More importantly, compromise and consensus should characterise the decision-making process. That will facilitate progress in realisation of the schools' needs. In the case of deadlocks, the power play comes to the fore. The nature of the issue under discussion determines which sector should use its power to gain an upper-hand in that particular issue. The misuse of such power may put the decision-making process in jeopardy.

Students in the Sunshine High School PTSA seem to misuse their power to have influence in shaping decisions at PTSA meetings. They are described by both parents and teachers as forceful and militant in the shaping of decisions. They shape decisions by informal or non-authoritative means, that is, influence. "Influence is a dynamic, tactical element and does not necessarily entail a superior-subordinate relationship" (Hoyle,

1986:75). However, to understand the influence of power in decision-making, we have to conceive of an educational organisation as a political system, both internally and in its external relationships. In educational organisations, constant tactical power struggles occur in an effort to obtain control over real decision-making or to influence the decisions. It is essential to accept the dynamics of power struggles to influence decision-making as integral to any organisational analysis.

A power struggle was evident at Sunshine High School as Teacher II said:

The main problem we experience at present is the student-teacher relationship. There is a feeling among the students that they are equal to teachers. They do not know their terrain.

The perception of students by this teacher is a superior-subordinate one, where students are expected to give in to whatever the teachers say. Because students do not give in to teachers, Teacher II adds that:

to be frank, we give in to students because they use other methods like toy-toying and sit-ins. So we feel we rather give in for the sake of progress.

Teachers get their power from training as professionals and access to information about educational matters. The control of information is a powerful source of power. Another source of teacher's power is structural, by virtue of being teachers and the perception of others that they have knowledge gives them respect.

It was noted that many teachers prefer not to be part of a decision-making body at this school. They complain about the

powers usurped by students. "Giving in" to students for the sake of progress is painful because it is neither consensus nor compromise. The three-legged pot seems to be limping with no balance of power in its three legs. The inequality in influencing decisions retards both progress in terms of empowerment and democracy in decision-making.

The traditional teacher-student authority relations have changed due to student empowerment during the political struggle in South Africa. No more do students take instructions from teachers without questioning. They use the same tactics they used to oppose the apartheid system of education to dominate decision-making at school governance meetings. They stay-away from classes, picket, sit-in and demonstrations to show their dissatisfaction.

Parents are also intimidated by students. Parent II said "if you are a member of PTSA and you are strong in debates and discussions at school, you are also not safe from these students". Elaborating on student militancy, Parent II added by telling a story of students who locked up teachers in a classroom and sprayed them with a hosepipe for not meeting their demands. Parent II confirmed that "students are running the school. Teachers are taking orders from students, e.g when students say they do not want a certain teacher, that teacher leaves the school".

In the interviews conducted, parents seem powerless. They do not

see their presence at school making any improvement. They are disillusioned by the misbehaviour and threats made to them by students. As the situation is at present, they perceive students as running the show at school. Parents say they need empowerment through training, and legal empowerment to strengthen their participation.

Students thus use coercion and influence and not rational debate to get the consent of other sectors over an issue under discussion. They protect the interest of students. They do not advance the interests of the total school. Students have a constituency to represent and to report back to. They see decision-making as a win-lose situation. They do not want to be seen by their constituency as weak losers who do not represent the aspirations of other students. They try to avoid being called collaborators with the teachers and parents. That puts further strain on the PTSA to resolve school problems peacefully because of sectoral interest protection.

The principal's authority and power is threatened by the collective decision-making of the PTSA. The principal's authority lies in the structural and constitutional powers that are vested in him.

However the student sector of the PTSA at Sunshine High School are usurping power to further their own interests. This was not the intention of the PTSA. In practice, a power struggle among the members of the PTSA at Sunshine High School has emerged. The

power struggle is caused by the mistrust that exists between the students and teachers. There is a structural conflict in the composition of the PTSA. Bennet and Wilkie (1973) contend that:

conflicts may occur within and between the three groups of participants in the school, pupils, teaching staff and also between groups inside the school and outside groups such as parents and inspectorate. (Bennet and Wilkie, 1973:462)

The conflict seems to lie in the conflicting conceptions of democracy and authority and the structural differences. Democracy advocates the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making at school. A school as an organisation has to be run by the principal who has that authority. The PTSA formulate school policies which are carried out by the principal and therefore the principal is accountable to the PTSA.

Structural and functional conflicts in the functioning of PTSAs are caused by unclear roles of each sector. There is a clear imbalance of power in the PTSA. The way power relations manifests is not publicly declared. It is in the way powers are used by any sector that one begins to understand that power. It could not be expected, given the composition of the PTSA, that the three constituent groups could have equal powers.

Parents are the weaker partner in this democratic coalition to control schools. They neither have professional nor structural power. They are not organised. They cannot keep abreast with the developments in educational sphere.

The imbalance in power brings about an imbalance in the three-

legged pot. It appears there is no easy way of striking the balance in the PTSA sectors. The implication is that domination of one sector over others will continue to exist. It means that the parent sector of the PTSA needs to be empowered through a programme of training. Parents who are lay in the educational field are expected to participate in educational matters.

The next section explores the relationship between the "lay" and the professionals in democratising school governance.

The "lay" professional relationship

The relationship between "lay" parents and students in the PTSA and professionals at school as it highlights the power imbalance and the influence on decision-making is explored.

Tipton (1989) states that teachers and educational administrators have proven knowledge of the field of education. They have been tried and tested through examination, appointment and promotion procedures. Those who wish to be parent governors have no such requirements placed upon them. In the major research work on school governing bodies, it has emerged that lay governors find many aspects of educational practice difficult to understand or do not have the confidence to involve themselves in professional matters (Bacon, 1978; Kogan, 1984 and Golby and Brigley, 1989).

Mansfield (1993) argues that parenting is not a job for which people are trained. It makes many parents feel insecure about

their role and lack confidence. No wonder that TI claims that "some parents feel inferior" when responding to an interview question on whether there is a mistrust between the PTSA members. The only requirement for the parents to become members of PTSA is that the parent should have a child at school.

Professional associations like subject committees, subject associations and professionalisation of vocation are formed in order to free vocations from "lay control" (Corwin, 1969: 214). The "lay" professional argument represents a challenge to the ideology of control by laymen and their administrative representatives. The professionalisation of any vocation will involve boundary disputes between laymen and the professionals. These boundary disputes, it should be noted, also infect the vocation itself, breaking it into segments or coalitions which compete among themselves. The power that is perceived of professionals at schools gets challenged and contested by lay people who come to govern with the professionals. It is one of the functional problems of PTSA. Professionals would not allow the interference of parents and students in curriculum and timetabling issues. Forging into a single unit professionals on the one hand and lay persons on the other hand, is meant for the public to have control over and safeguard public interests in public institutions. This contestation for representation seem to be problematic in the PTSA as a structure. It involves "lay" people and professionals who are jealous of their profession. There will be an imbalance of power where professionals will gain an upper hand in educational matters. The problem lies at the

very origins of PTSA. The aims of the PTSA, to democratise school governance brings in the control of lay people in educational matters.

The parent sector of the PTSA appear not ready to execute its duties. In the first instance, they do not attend meetings regularly at Sunshine High School. Secondly they are not sure of their legal powers and the scope of decision-making at school. The parents interviewed never read the constitution of the PTSA. They are never involved in a meaningful interaction with real school matters to develop their understanding of the operation of a school as an organisation. Parents are called in only when there is crisis. Similarly, parent governors in a study by Sallis (1993) in UK schools complain that their meetings are nothing but rubber-stamping exercises that they are not expected to question anything and it would be too late anyway. It would be rubber-stamping decisions that are made by the professionals and insiders. This is evident too at Sunshine High School.

The "lay"- professional relationship substantially limits the power of lay governors. Beatie (1993) claims that teachers are jealous of what they regard as their professional autonomy; if this leads them to claim total jurisdiction over the curriculum, "lay" people may be restricted to an entirely peripheral role in decisions which actually affect what children learn. Even if this is not so, it is evident that actual decisions will not normally be taken by parents alone or in the majority. The other possibility is that of decisions taken by the professionals even

before the meeting. These claims and possibilities limit the powers of "lay" governors to take decisions on professional matters.

The control of information as source of power is important for the professionals to enhance their position as professionals. The education acts, government circulars, notices and any other information from the government is controlled by the professionals at Sunshine High School. The interpretation of the contents are made by the professionals to the governors. This exercise puts the "lay" governors in an awkward position, that of accepting the contents without verification. It is an indication of the problems posed by the composition of the governing body that is complex and problematic like PTSA.

The student governors are also "lay". They are equally not conversant with the paper work and information from the government nor have the experience of educational matters. They contest participation as an interested party with a constituency but not enough knowledge nor can they articulate needs without means to achieve the needs. They only make decisions on the basis of political agendas and powers.

Black parents in South Africa have poor education, they were disenfranchised and discriminated against, which make them different from the lay governors in United Kingdom. They have difficulty in dealing with educational matters. They do not have

the same information as the professionals. As a result they rubber stamp the decisions made by professionals. These problems, highlighted by the UK literature, appear to plague PTSAs in South Africa, if Sunshine High School is a typical example.

The accusations and counter accusations among the members of the PTSA sow seeds of conflict. These put more strain on the PTSA to establish working relationship between the lay and the professionals. In this regard, the relationship between the principal and the PTSA is crucial. The principal is a professional charged with the duty to run a school, but has to share this task with the PTSA. The ability of the principal to maintain a balance of power and good relationship with the PTSA is thus explored.

The Relationship between the Headteacher and the PTSA

This section will explore the powers invested in the headteacher and how he/she uses these powers to influence decisions in the PTSA meetings. The powers of the headteacher and how he relates to the PTSA will be discussed from a review of research on the powers of the headteacher in England and Wales. The powers of the headteacher at Sunshine High School will then be compared with what this literature suggests about the use of power by headteachers to influence decisions at meetings. The source of the power and how that power is constituted will be traced.

According to Winston Churchill in his poem, "My Early Life", "Headmasters have powers at their disposal which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested with" (Hoyle, 1986: 73). Hoyle (1986) mentions four sources of power of the principal. The structural power that he/she gets from the office he/she holds. Personality power is derived from leadership qualities. Expertise power is derived from specialised knowledge or access to information, and opportunity power is derived from control of information. The principal at school has access to all these sources of power. What we have to ascertain is whether or how principals use these powers to influence the decisions in governors meetings. The lay governors have no access to these forms of power. The professionals have access to some of the forms of power and therefore, use that power to influence decision-making in PTSA meetings.

The influence of the headteacher is felt in many spheres of decision-making. Walter (1976) classifies the powers enjoyed by the headteacher under six broad headings, by defining the values for his school, determining curriculum, control of the internal organisation, he distributes the available money; he chooses his own staff and he has control over the media of communication. Some of these powers that are enjoyed by the principal are now shared with the PTSA and colleagues.

Wragg and Partington (1980) claim that poor relationships between the head and the governing body can affect the running of the whole school. They argue that the balance between the paid

professionals, hired to take frontline responsibility for running the school, and the governors, unpaid amateurs charged to show interest in the school in general, is perhaps a difficult one to strike.

The maintenance of good relations between the head and governors will improve the running of the school only if the governors agree to the principal's proposals in meetings. He has legal powers to run the school and the governors also have the right to participate in decision-making. Though the head is accountable to the governors, he has control over resources and access to valuable information. In this way, governors will have to try to make the head comfortable in his running of the school. When there is a conflict or misunderstanding between the head and governors, the head would ask the governors as Sallis (1993:28) puts it "who runs this school anyway" (Sallis, 1993:28)? Such questions are rare in the literature consulted, but they cannot be ruled out in schools where the culture and climate of the school is not positive.

The implication that the head runs the school and governors are rubber stamps is a problem. The power struggle between the head and the governors favours the head because of the sources of power from which he can draw to put his head above the governors.

Bacon (1978) in his study of the relationship between the headteacher and school governors in Sheffield, shows the two sides of a coin. At first headteachers were not happy with the

introduction of governors. They saw them as a lay group of people coming to threaten headteacher's autonomy and leadership role. But later the headteachers were happy to find out that governors appreciated the professional autonomy of teachers. Although this type of "clear understanding" was not, as we would expect, negotiated between two sets of equal partners, but tended to be mediated very much on the head's own terms. The headteacher dominates the governors.

Bacon (1978) in his Sheffield research found headteachers fearful of the reforms that were taking place in that city since they saw their job as a leader turning into that of a chief executive. But he also observed that governors' behaviour did not substantiate this anxiety and that they still felt that a head should be trusted to run a school. They were not keen to be involved in curriculum, financial affairs and so on. The headteacher retained the real power. Governing bodies may have increased power but the autonomy of the headteacher remains intact. The statement made by one teacher governor to Kogan that, "the head is in control (of the governing body) and even had effective control of the meeting" (Kogan, 1984:173) shows that the headteacher has more power.

The governing bodies would allow the head to have control because of a genuine belief that he knows the needs of the school better. He knows the personnel at school, he controls resources, he controls the information, he is the mouthpiece of the school, after all he is responsible for the implementation of the

decisions taken in a meeting with the governors.

By disseminating the information he wishes and by using the jargon to reinforce governors' difficulty in understanding many of the issues involved in educational matters, Kogan found that headteachers have no problem in maintaining the upper hand.

Thus according to the United Kingdom experience, despite increased powers of the school governors, the relationship between the head and the governors is dominated by the head because of the powers he has over others.

At Sunshine High School, the headteacher might be dominating relationships in that he calls the PTSA meeting whenever he deems it necessary. He does so at his own will. The PTSA itself does not have a programme and agenda for the meetings. The members depend on the principal. He disseminates the information and explains government policies. The professional knowledge he has could not be matched by the lay governors. As Sallis (1993) argues, heads and staff work full time in the school and no governor could match the detailed knowledge this involves. It is not realistic, nor would it be right, for governors to imagine that they could replace a professional in making day-to-day decisions about teaching techniques or the management of time, space, staff and equipment within the school. This is not their role. Their role is to formulate policies for the school and leave them to the professionals to implement. It is at this stage of policy implementation that the head and staff give meaning to

and interpret those policies. They also evaluate the policy and make amendments at implementation. In that way the views and ideas of the governors are further subjected to scrutiny.

The presence of the headteacher in governors' meetings has an influence on teacher governors. New (1993) claims that teacher governors would feel that the headteacher is representing the views of all the staff and that teacher governors do not oppose the viewpoint of the headteacher in governors' meetings and would be redundant. But in the decision-making process, the principal at Sunshine High School does not play a dominant role. He lets the members of PTSA debate and decide on issues discussed.

From the interviews conducted, both parents, students and teachers do not perceive their headteacher as exercising any influence over decisions at PTSA meetings. What he is doing does not conform to what the United Kingdom literature suggests about a headteacher's power and influence in decision-making. This difference may be caused by the professional role of the United Kingdom headteachers and the politicised context of South African schooling. The headteacher at Sunshine High School uses his power in management of the school. In the representation mode, he leaves the decisions to the PTSA members to take. "Our principal puts a case to the parents and let them decide on that issue" said Parent II.

When Teacher II was asked in an interview about the role of the principal in the PTSA meetings, he said, "The principal is said

to be an ex-officio member, but he represents teachers; there are government procedures that we do not know and he explains them to us all". Teacher II confirmed that "the principal does not take sides, he is neutral". When the student governors were asked in an interview whether the principal is controlling the meetings, they said: Student I "Yes he does sometimes, you know..." and Student II confirmed "You see sometimes, if there is a problem and the problem is coming from the students, the principal used to do that...".

Responding to a question on whether meetings are controlled by the headteacher, Parent I responded, "Our principal is meek, he does not use his powers to make a point accepted. He tries to reason with everyone". A principal who reasons with everyone is said to be democratic but there is an added danger of reasoning with ill informed people. The danger is in making uninformed choices and decisions that may be in conflict with policies. To be democratic does not necessarily mean to let every decision go through. The principal has to see to it that decisions taken can be implemented. The concept of democracy has its own limits in application.

A principal in a school has vested interests in the proceedings of a meeting because the outcome of that meeting will have a direct bearing on his management. He is the person together with staff who will be responsible for the implementation of the decisions taken in a PTSA meeting. So it is imperative that the principal should be active in discussions and he be part of

decisions taken. He is responsible for the implementation of decisions.

Parent governors and teacher governors at Sunshine High School perceive the principal as democratic and fair in PTSA meetings. The student governors see him as having an influence in decision-making. The difference in opinions about the perceived role of the principal in PTSA meetings is influenced by a number of factors. The principal is both a parent and a teacher. Parents and teachers understand him in those two perspectives. They accept his actions and contributions in the light of him being global in his contributions in meetings. Students on the other hand are aware of the alliance between teachers and parents as adults. Students perceive teachers and parents as against the students.

In the minutes consulted, the principal does not appear frequently. He seems to leave the decisions to be taken by the PTSA. That does not necessarily mean that he does not have subtle influence over decisions. He does not have an influence without actively dominating them.

A noticeable problem here is that there is no functional differentiation between the management mode and the representative mode in the functions of the PTSA at Sunshine High School. The management mode is the domain of the principal with the management team. They take day-to-day decisions at school. These decisions to a large extent affect academic work and

professional duties. It also entails the implementation of policies from both the government and the governing body. On the other hand, the representative mode is the domain of the PTSA. The PTSA debate policy matters that affect the school. They take decisions on policies that control and channel the activities of the whole school. They do not and are not responsible for the implementation of those policies.

Some functions do overlap and cause boundary disputes between the two modes at school. Clear boundaries and clear functions would eliminate any form of dispute. The PTSA seems not to be differentiating between representative functions and management functions.

Generational domination in the PTSA

It is traditional in Black societies that children and their mothers are not part of decision-making in a family unit. The father is perceived as wielding all the power. He takes decisions on behalf of the mother and children. This culture, though it is waning, is carried over to decisions taken in public institutions. Parents who are still holding to this tradition are present at Sunshine High School. Many students no longer accept that practice.

When student governors were asked in an interview about the scope