

**LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN
HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis the poor performance of learners in the vast majority of public schools in South Africa provided the impetus to study leadership practices in previously disadvantaged, highly successful schools. This research was to find out what these schools were doing in terms of how they led that contributed to them becoming highly successful. Three previously disadvantaged, highly successful schools were purposively selected with the aim of understanding their leadership practices in greater depth. While data was collected, analysed and interpreted for all three schools, due to the limitations of space, only two of the cases are presented in this thesis. A critical realist ontology, coupled with a qualitative approach and a multiple-case study research design with a variety of data generation methods were utilised as a means to examine questions regarding leadership practices. The data generation methods comprised journal writing by the principals, individual open-ended interviews, focus group interviews, observations (both formal and informal), transect walks around the schools, document analysis as well as a self-reflective journaling process. Four teacher leaders at each school from across the post levels were purposively chosen as participants at each of the schools. This was to provide a clearer understanding of how leadership was practised. To rise above the adversities experienced at their schools it was found that participants from across the post levels were resilient and collectively contributed to the leadership practice and this impacted on the overall success of their schools becoming highly functional. They made every endeavour to adopt and adapt legislated mandates and all aspects of leadership and management to engage in what best suited the contexts of their individual schools. Structural boundaries were broken to accommodate and engage with the expertise of all teachers. They therefore shattered the myth of the traditional 'heroic leader' paradigm and consequently achieved school-wide success. Once the structural boundaries were broken there emerged a more collaborative culture and the agents arose from being primary agents to that of being corporate agents. The principals from each of the schools emerged as powerful Social Actors who were instrumental in ensuring active participation in the leadership practice by all teachers. At the heart of all decisions that participants took were the learners. In this regard they were found to be embodied beings and every opportunity was grasped at to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Their roles as educators extended far beyond that of teaching and learning. They also forged various networks in order to improve their schools infrastructure and to meet the needs of their impoverished learners. What is recommended therefore, for previously disadvantaged schools to become highly functional is an engagement with the collective expertise of all teachers so as to achieve school wide success. At a theoretical level the study contributes by extending Grants Model of Teacher Leadership (2008a) which indicates that one of the prerequisites for teacher leadership is that of a collaborative culture. This study adds collaborative structures and agency to the notion of collaborative culture and has demonstrated that for leadership to be distributed the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties play a crucial role. From a critical and social realist perspective a Three Tier Model is offered to make meaning of leadership practices in previously disadvantaged, highly functional schools.

Keywords: leadership, management, leadership practices, previously disadvantaged, highly functional schools, distributed leadership, teacher leadership.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Description
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
CEPs	Cultural Emergent Properties
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CR	Critical Realism
DoE	Department of Education (National)
DP	Deputy Principal
DSG	Development Support Group
ELM	Educational Leadership and Management
EMS	Economic Management Science
HoD	Head of Department
ILST	Institution Level Support Team
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LO	Life Orientation
LST	Learner Support Team

M Ed	Master's in Education
PEPs	People/Agential Emergent Properties
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBA	School Based Assessment
SDT	Staff Development Team
SEPs	Structural Emergent Properties
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
SA	South Africa
TST	Teacher Support Team
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
SR	Social Realism

CHAPTER 1

THE STUDY IN CONTEXT

School-level conditions and school leadership, in particular, are key issues in efforts to change instruction. While new organisational structures and new leadership roles matter to instructional innovation, what seems most critical is how leadership practice is undertaken. Yet, the practice of school leadership has received limited attention in the research literature (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004, p.3).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a study of school leadership practice, or more accurately, leadership practices. Specifically, it is a study of the leadership practices of a select group of principals and teachers in three highly-functional, disadvantaged schools in South Africa. These schools were purposively selected because they are successful despite the many material, economic, social and cultural challenges that they face. By systematically documenting and analysing their distributed leadership practices, the study contributes to the field of educational leadership and management and advances the emancipatory project inherent in South Africa's Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996a).

I begin the thesis by providing the educational and socio-political context in which my study is situated. I do this through a discussion of the policy- practice divide between 1994 -2015. I then present a discussion on the study's focus and this is followed by my two research

questions. Thereafter, I sketch out my positionality as researcher. Finally, I outline how each chapter unfolds.

1.2 POLICY AND PRACTICE: 1994 – 2015, LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID

The dawn of the new democratic era in 1994 in South Africa was expected to “rapidly transform [the] South African society to achieve the goals that [had] been enunciated in the struggle for liberation and the new democratic constitution” (Pampallis & Motala, 2001, p.204). This laudable goal has yet to be achieved. Despite the policy call for democratic leadership practices in schools and the proliferation of a whole array of sophisticated policies to optimise democratic school structures, it has been established by researchers and critics that this has not happened. What has been found is that while most schools have transformed at a structural level, the majority have not been able to do so at the level of culture and practice.

The prominence that was historically given to “headship” and the “Great Man Theory” of leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2003) no longer resonates with policy values as espoused in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996a). These values include that of equal access, equality, democracy, equity and redress and, therefore, form the cornerstone of all legislation, policies, resolutions and reports in the education sphere. Legislation, therefore, had to be “reconceptualised at all levels of the education system to make way for democratic leadership and management styles” (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003, p.26). The key piece of legislation relevant to this study and stemming from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996a) is the South African

Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996b) which advocates a movement towards self-managing schools. The emphasis in this legislation is on the decentralisation of authority, the devolution of power and an engagement with collective leadership.

In view of these expectations schools could no longer be merely 'managed', as a new range of expertise was suddenly needed to lead a school. To coincide with this new way of leadership envisaged for schools, policymakers therefore began to align all policies along these lines. Consequently, there was an "evolution of leadership approaches which de-emphasise the individual leader, and stress group or team leadership" (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008, p.222). Interestingly, as Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson, & Pillay, (2000) also note, "policymakers began to place great faith in education and they saw it as a means of transforming and developing [the] South African society" (p.287). This was as a result of this new shift towards 'leadership' rather remaining with the status quo of 'management'.

This need to engage in collaborative styles of leadership was demonstrated by the introduction of democratic structures in schools, such as the School Management Team (SMT), the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Representative Council of Learners (RCL). This change was in accordance with the dictates of the South African Schools Act (1996b). Leadership, therefore, had to become a collective endeavour, rather than an individual one (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008), and the emphasis was consequently on the need to engage in democratic, invitational and participative ways.

In short, what became emphasised, after 1994, was that principals no longer had all the skills and expertise to lead and manage the magnitude of changes and policy expectations facing them. Naicker and Mestry (2011) are two of many education researchers who have come to

argue that principals of schools do not have a monopoly of wisdom or vision and that the involvement of all the staff members increases the level of expertise brought to bear on the problems (p. 55). This ‘shared’ or ‘collaborative’ approach to leadership has been theorised differently over the years, but, for the purposes of this thesis, I will be working closely with what the literature calls ‘distributed’ leadership. As ‘ways to lead’ forms the focus of Chapter 2, no more will be said about this at this point.

While the previous section has foregrounded the policy context post 1994, this context is of course embedded in a much broader historical process. South Africa’s colonial, and apartheid past has inevitably propagated a society of deep disparity, and social stratification based on race, class and gender (Wilkinson, 2014). This has impacted severely on learner performance – amongst countless other areas of society, in pernicious and lasting ways – but given the focus of this study, this discussion will limit itself to that of learner performance.

What has become clear is that, “with the exception of a wealthy minority – most South African learners cannot read, write and compute at grade-appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate” (Spaull, 2013a, p.1). The vast majority of schools in the country are not coping because there is a lack of fit between the various challenges experienced and the manner in which these schools are being led. This inability to cope has resulted in extremely poor learner performance (Spaull, 2013a; Wilkinson, 2014). In Spaull’s view (2013a), and that of Wilkinson (2014), (who is based in the UK and is writing for the South African context), the education system in South Africa is currently in a state of crisis and has failed dismally. From my own experience I cannot but help agree. Spaull (2013a) argues, for example, that “rather than being a ladder of social

mobility, the education system is propagating mechanisms favouring the status quo” (p.9). This is despite the numerous attempts made by the Department of Education (DoE) to modify the national curriculum and assessment policy, and to put various mechanisms in place to ensure that a quality education is being offered to learners.

Some of these mechanisms include that of the Integrated Quality Management System (Resolution 8 of 1998), the Foundations for Learning Campaign (2008) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), (2011). CAPS was an amendment of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Notwithstanding these laudable attempts, there remains a huge gap between policy and practice (Jansen, 2000; Mattson & Harley, 2002).

It is fair to say that the newly formed democratic government intended to equalise the system of education post 1994, and invested a great deal of time, money and effort to achieve a more equitable society. What has become clear, however, is that 21 years later there is still a distinct divide between the performing and underperforming schools and between rich and poor schools. It is argued that South Africa has two systems of education, one for the advantaged and the other for the disadvantaged (Spaull, 2013a). Whilst there are approximately 20% of South African schools (including the previously ‘ex-model C’ schools), which were formed by the apartheid government prior to 1994 with the hope of preserving the status quo of the ‘elite’ White schools which are performing well, there are around 80% of what Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007) calls ‘mainstream’ schools in the country that are underperforming (Spaull, 2013a; Wilkinson, 2014). The vast majority of black schools fall into the underperforming category and the future of learners within these schools is thus bleak indeed (Christie et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 2014) – the more so because

the greater majority of these schools are also to be found “in relatively poor socio-economic circumstances” (Christie et al., 2007, p.6).

Sadly and ironically, these previously disadvantaged schools still experience the same kind of discrimination as in the apartheid era (Spaull, 2013b). For instance, their infrastructure has not been improved upon and they still face challenges in terms of resources and large class sizes. The socio-economic problems plaguing these communities still exist and impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning (Spaull, 2013b; Taylor, 2006). Teachers within these schools are expected to overcome the challenges experienced, they are being held accountable and are being blamed for the poor learner performance (Christie et al., 2007).

This underperformance is well illustrated by the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results as well as by the Annual National Assessments (ANA) which tests numeracy and literacy in Grades 1-9. In 2014 the National matriculation pass rate for Mathematics was 36.6%, with only 53% of learners obtaining above 30% in Mathematics (Spaull, 2013a). It was also established that there were approximately 550,000 learners who had registered in grade 1 and who had either dropped out of school or who were discretely eliminated before writing their matriculation examinations (Spaull, 2013a). This clearly goes against the ideals of the South African National Congress (1995) which advocates that the “doors of learning should be opened to all learners and that education shall be compulsory, and equal for all children” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act No. 108 of 1996a, p.1). Learner performance in the ANA also leaves much to be desired. For example, in 2014, grade 9 learners achieved an 11 % pass rate in Mathematics and 48 % in

English Home Language (“Department of Basic Education, Report on the Annual National Assessment of 2014, Republic of South Africa, Education Summit, 2015”). In addition, the World Economic Forum ranked South Africa’s performance in Mathematics and Science in 2014 as being the lowest out of a total of 144 countries (Wilkinson, 2014).

South Africa’s performance in Mathematics and Science in 2014 has been established as being the lowest out of a total of 144 countries (Wilkinson, 2014). Further, in the “Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study” (TIMSS, 2011) which is conducted every four years, it was found that South Africa fared 47th out of 48 countries in the world in both Mathematics and Science. This has also been confirmed in the “Progress in International Reading Literacy Study” (PIRLS) (2011) in Grade 4 and reports which further highlight South Africa’s poor performance in literacy.

Further to this, the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 2000 and 2011 respectively tested the numeracy and literacy skills of Grade 6 learners in 14 African countries. South Africa came 10th in Literacy and 8th in Maths. The startling facts were that 25% of the learners were considered illiterate and 39% innumerate. These learners fared worse off than those from poorer countries such as Swaziland, Kenya and Namibia (SACMEQ, 2000; 2011).

The above information and statistics underscore the point made earlier that the gap between performing and underperforming schools has not yet been closed. More importantly, the vast majority of learners in the country are not receiving the quality education that is their right, despite the fact that South Africa is 21 years into democracy. This is especially since the current generation of school-going children must lead South Africa into a complex, highly

technologised and demanding global economy and environment, the intricacies of education they require is possibly one that has not yet even been considered. It is evident that the high expectations placed in education post 1994 have not been met. Regrettably, the problem has “not simply disappeared with the replacement of the apartheid government with a new democratic government” (Christie, 2010, p.284).

1.3 FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

Given the underperformance of the majority of mainstream schools in SA and the reliance on traditional forms of leadership (which exclude the leadership of teachers) highlighted above, the focus on the leadership practices in purposively selected, highly functioning disadvantaged schools referred to earlier, is I would argue, now justified. This study thus explored the leadership practices of the principal, HoD and two teachers at each of the schools, using a multiple case-study research design. For the first level of analysis, a teacher leadership lens and Grant’s (2008a, 2012) Model of Teacher Leadership were applied. The model effectively enabled me to determine what teacher leadership practices were evident in highly functional schools. At a second level of analysis, Archer’s (1995) work on structure, culture and agency was used to identify underlying mechanisms which could be said to enable or constrain these leadership practices. At an ontological level, Bhaskar’s (1975) critical realist philosophy serves as the under-labourer. This framing is discussed in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

1.4 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two key research questions underpin this study. They are:

- i. What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?
- ii. What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

1.5 RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

My interest in the field of educational leadership and management is largely due to my experience as a principal of a 'previously disadvantaged school'. As an Indian woman, I have been in the forefront of the struggle for democracy in South Africa since my university career began in 1977, and firmly believe that the rights of all human beings, irrespective of their status, have to be acknowledged and respected. During the apartheid era, I became aware of the manner in which powerful bureaucratic structures and the individuals who represented these structures could undermine the majority of the people under their control. Moreover, my experiences in the teaching profession have persuaded me that I cannot be the sole leader in my school in trying to manage the magnitude of changes taking place in education. This is the case because a range of expertise is required to run a school in these challenging times. My view, therefore, is that principals must become more flexible and adaptive and allow for greater involvement in leadership activities.

Having said that, it was indeed a challenge to bracket out my role of being a principal and move into that of a researcher on my visits to the schools in my study. Throughout the

research process I had to remind myself that I brought my own subjectivity (my personal values and expectations as a principal) to the phenomenon of leadership I was researching and, therefore, had to be alert to the dangers of this in my study. Following Merton (1972), I realised I was both an insider as well as an outsider in this research. As an insider (a school principal) I could identify with the challenges experienced by the principals in my study. However, I knew that I was an outsider to each school and so could make no assumptions about anything I might experience. As a consequence of my socio-historical positioning, context the experiences, knowledge, values, beliefs and traditions practised at my own school were completely different from that of the case study schools. I therefore tried to fit into the culture of the school so as to understand the world of the participants better (Williams, 2009, p.214) and to arrive at some conception of the truth.

In terms of critical realism, the researcher needs to get as close as possible to the truth so as to give an in-depth account of the reality that exists. My positionality as a researcher was thus in a constant state of flux (Prachi, 2006) and I had to be constantly aware of the need to monitor my subjectivity. Similar to what Prachi (2006) refers to as ‘currencies’, I too had to use various type of currencies so as to gain access into the schools. Thus, on entering the schools I endeavoured to understand the practices and routines of all teachers and tried to emulate them in their dressing, times of arrival and departure. I sat with them in the staff room and ate my lunch and I tried to get to know them better. I also became aware that the educators at the case study schools considered me to be ‘a more knowledgeable other’ (Henning, 2004) which was in view of my PHD studies as well as the fact that I was a principal of a school. The issue of power therefore came into play and I will engage with this in greater depth further on in this thesis.

1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE

As already discussed, Chapter 1 places the study in context and provides the background and rationale for the study. It also introduces the research questions and explains the purpose of the study.

In Chapter 2, the focus is on the literature reviewed on the topic of leadership practice. The emphasis is on the review of literature, both locally, nationally and internationally, that is linked to the main research problem and brings to light the scholarships, debates and discussions on the issue of leadership practices. As already indicated, there is a focus on the distributed leadership and teacher leadership literature.

Chapter 3 focuses on the philosophical and theoretical framework underpinning this study, namely, Bhaskar's (1975) critical realism and his notion of a 'layered ontology'. Further, Margaret Archer's (1995) Social Realist theory, in particular, the concepts of culture, structure and agency and that of analytical dualism as used in this study is discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology of a multiple case study research design, the data generation methods, sampling techniques, and the methods of analysis.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide a detailed analysis of what the data revealed about how leadership is practised at each of the research sites and contribute towards answers to the research questions. These findings clearly indicate that the unique context of each of the case study schools played a major role in determining how leadership was practised.

Chapter 7 compares the findings of two of the case studies in response to each of the two research questions.

Chapter 8 draws conclusions from the study, identifies the key contributions it has made to the field of Education Leadership and Management, recognises the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research.

I now move on to a discussion of leadership practices drawing on literature relevant to do so.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING THE LITERATURE ON LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, the context for the study was furnished. This chapter deepens and extends an engagement with ‘ways to lead’, through drawing on literature, both national and international, related directly to the two key questions of my study. To this end, reference is made to autocratic or ‘traditional’ forms of leadership in contrast to distributed leadership, and then more particularly, teacher leadership, where Grant’s (2008a, 2012) Model of Teacher Leadership is discussed. The chapter concludes with the crucial role of the principal in fostering a more distributive flow of leadership, followed by an outline of what the reader can expect in Chapter 3.

To remind the reader, the two research questions governing this research are:

- i. What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?
- ii. What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

2.2 A FOCUS ON HOW LEADERSHIP IS PRACTISED

Literature suggests that very little emphasis has been placed on *how* leadership is actually practised (Christie, 2010). Christie argues that if a greater focus is given to the ‘*how*’, then a

clearer picture will emerge of the contributions made by other kinds of leaders in a school, as opposed to only those in formal leadership positions. In support of this view, researchers such as Gunter (2005), Hallinger (2003), Harris (2004), Spillane et al., (2004), and Spillane (2006), all agree that more research must be undertaken in this field to understand how leadership is practised. Even though it is important to know *what* leaders do, it is however also imperative to know *how* and *why* they do it so as to gain deeper insights into practices of leadership. The same point is made by Heck and Hallinger (1999). They conducted research in America after identifying an important gap in the literature, namely, how very little interest there was in how school leaders endure those in-school conditions that foster successful schooling. As a result we know very little about the “how” of leadership and about how school leaders develop and sustain those conditions and processes believed necessary for innovation.

In addition, I found very little empirical research in the South African context, looking specifically at *how* leadership is practised in schools and at *how* leaders from the various post levels interact and contribute to change and transformation. Specifically, Grant’s (2010) study focused primarily on Post Level One classroom-based teacher leaders in South Africa, as did Naicker and Mestry’s (2011) research. Spillane et al., (2004) contend that, to understand the “how” of leadership, we need to observe the day-to-day practices of various leaders and not just that of the principal. Giving credence to the importance of the leadership practices (plural) as opposed to the individual leader, therefore, necessitates a closer understanding of the “how” of leadership. It is this research gap which this study addresses.

2.3 STUCK IN THE OLD PARADIGM OF AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

The literature reviewed has indicated that there are many schools in South Africa that are stuck in the old paradigm of autocratic, hierarchical, bureaucratic leadership practices with a weighted emphasis on ‘managing’ rather than ‘leading’. If one is to engage more fully with ‘leading’ in this thesis, what is often referred to also as, the ‘traditional’ way, then it is necessary to say a little more about it. Essentially ‘leadership’ here is understood by those formally appointed to school management positions that only they must lead and it is only they who have the capacity to do so (Harris, 2014). Along a similar line, there are those who believe that the success of a school can be ascribed to the “gallant acts of one or more leaders in an organisation and everyone and everything else are at best case in minor, supporting roles” (Spillane, 2006, p.3). In keeping with this discussion, Harris (2014), writing within the UK context, contends that many schools and districts are still steeped in using past models of leadership and she argues that they are committed to the seductive idea of the individual leader - the enigmatic leader or the all-powerful principal. In this era of continued change and demands placed on schools to become self-managing learning organisations (Department of Education, Task Team Report, 1996), this is certainly a restricted interpretation of leadership.

Engaging in bureaucratic leadership practices will not enable a school to become a self-managing learning organisation. One has to also consider that the disparities in previously disadvantaged South African schools, coupled with the mounting demands for better service delivery, requires that leadership roles are shared and that all those with areas of proficiency contribute to leading within a school. In this regard, Lambert (2005) emphasises that “the

days of the lonely instructional leader are over” (p.37), (see for example, Harley et al., 2000; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008, p.222).

A focus on the heroic leader as opposed to leadership that comes from all teachers, irrespective of their position in a school setting has, as first signalled above, become a worldwide concern and not just a local phenomenon . Yukl (2000), for instance, contends that in the “heroic leader paradigm, charismatic leaders and their gallant acts remain centre stage” (p.292). On this subject, Harris and Lambert (2003) have concluded that leadership in many schools in the United Kingdom (UK) are still associated with position or authority. Their research shows that in many schools one has to be a recognised leader within the organisation to make important decisions and take on leadership roles. What is clear, therefore, is that the “great man” theories of leadership which have dominated the 18th and 19th century (Burns, 1978; Culbertson, 1988), with the attention on management, still prevail in many schools across the globe today. Those in formal leadership positions must begin to recognise that the ‘single leader’ is no longer an adequate model by which to lead a school. In the light of this they need to change by inviting and developing more members of staff to ‘lead’. Unless this is done the crises in education are likely to emerge and/or continue in both the South African and global context.

The large numbers of schools in South Africa that are underperforming have the ability to change the manner in which they are being led. With the call for self-managing schools in South Africa; site-based management; the decentralisation of education; the magnitude of changes taking place in terms of modifying the curriculum since 1994; and the high expectations placed on schools and teachers to deliver in the classrooms requires that there

has to be an engagement with more democratic leadership practices . Rather than being stuck in the old paradigm of autocratic leadership practices, schools, therefore, need to engage with the wealth of expertise located within their institutions. Changing times therefore calls for changing trends. The policy call in South Africa to engage in more collaborative leadership practices has prompted a great deal of research interest in this field. This includes explorations into leadership practices such as shared leadership (Elmore, 2000), transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Prew, 2007), distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006) and teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

As said earlier, this study draws primarily on work done in relation to distributed and teacher leadership. This is because both distributed leadership and teacher leadership are conceptualised as group endeavours and the focus is on leadership practices. Further, leadership does not only come from those in formal positions (see for example Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2005; Spillane, 2006; and Spillane et al., 2004). In the following section, the discussion responds specifically to literature on distributed leadership, followed by a response to work done on teacher leadership. The relevance of both fields of inquiry to this study will become clear through these engagements.

2.4 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Many institutions worldwide are beginning to engage in more distributed forms of leadership. This is largely because engaging in distributed forms of leadership advocates participation and collaboration among all stakeholders. In reviewing the literature on distributed leadership from countries like the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, it is quite apparent that there are contesting definitions, and different perspectives and

understandings of the concept. According to Spillane (2006), different terms and definitions are used interchangeably, resulting in both conceptual confusion and an overlap. As there is no clear definition of distributed leadership, Harris and Spillane (2008) caution that there is a real danger that distributed leadership will simply be used as a ‘catch all’ term to describe any form of “devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice” (p.31). Whilst Harris and Spillane’s caution is acknowledged, I argue that at the core of all uses of ‘distributed leadership’ is the principle that *school leadership is not the preserve of one person and that the experience and expertise of all teachers/ qualified teaching staff should be seen as resources for leading*. This is the definition that frames this study.

Distributed leadership poses a serious challenge to the traditional, hierarchical and bureaucratic models of organisations because critically, it shifts the interest from individual position holders to broader collectives (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). When leadership is practised in this manner there is the realisation that “it is not the provenance of one individual. Rather it is a group of people who provide leadership in the school and by doing so provide support and inspiration to others” (Davies, 2009, p.2).

Leading researchers in the field are calling for more distributed forms of leadership as opposed to the focus on formal leaders and on merely managing a school. In this regard, Bush (2013) asserts that distributed leadership has now become “the normatively preferred leadership model of the 21st century” (p.543). Likewise, Harris (2013) conceives it to be a “major re-conceptualisation of leadership as [a] practice and contests conventional wisdom about the relationship between formal leadership and organisational performance” (p.545), and Coleman (2002) contends that when leadership is distributed it “resides not solely in the

individual at the top, but in every person at every level who in one way or another acts as a leader” (p.1). In justifying the relevance of practicing distributed leadership, Harris (2014) cites examples from across the world, including England, Malaysia, Australia, Wales and parts of Europe, where distributed leadership has become part of the educational policy make up. For instance, Harris (2014) has found that in Wales, distributed leadership has become part of the system-wide reform to effect meaningful school change.

The relevance of engaging with the skills of all teachers, irrespective of their position or role in the school is well justified. This is because, as fully established already, the challenges facing schools today requires the capabilities of all teachers so as to develop the capacity to overcome all the challenges experienced. Findings from the Naicker and Mestry’s (2011) study referred to earlier confirm this. They contend that in the “current times, the increasing demands of principalship and the complexities facing schools have led to the emergence of distributed forms of leadership” (p.99).

The idea of multiple leaders resonates with Spillane et al’s., (2004) assertion that leadership is not simply a function of what a school principal, or indeed any other individual or group of leaders, knows and does. Rather, it is about the activities engaged in by the leaders in their interaction with others, in particular contexts around specific tasks. This ‘*practices*’ aspect “refers to the day-to-day work of leadership, and focuses on interaction of the actors, artefacts, and the situation” (Spillane et al., 2004, p.93).

2.4.1 Distributed Leadership as a Theoretical Framing for This Study

Leading scholars and researchers, such as Grant (2010), Gronn (2000), Harris (2004), Spillane (2006) and Timperley (2005) view distributed leadership as a useful theoretical frame to understand how leadership is practised. For example, Gronn, (2000), believes that, as an analytical framework, distributed leadership is “a promising perspective which draws attention to the broader contextual, temporal and social dimensions of leadership” (p.257). In addition, van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), maintain that “distributed leadership provides a useful lens to make sense of leadership in a teamwork context” (p.226). They are of opinion that analysing leadership as a collective enterprise would enable the leadership practice to be reconfigured and reconceptualised so that teachers can develop their ability to work together. Putting the spotlight on *leadership practises* thus allows a clearer perspective of the contribution made by all ‘players’ to emerge.

Practicing distributed leadership in schools, therefore, means that leadership activities are spread and shared throughout the organisation (Harris, 2014). Extending this idea, Grant (2010) asserts that “distributed leadership, can be defined as a group-plus perspective and a practice perspective” (p.252). She maintains that the “more leadership is distributed, the greater the possibility for the take-up of teacher leadership in and beyond the classroom” (p.252).

When leadership is distributed, the focus falls on the expertise rather than on the individual. In this regard, Spillane (2006) provides an insightful understanding of how leadership unfolds in practise. This is the understanding of leadership that this study endorses. Spillane (2006) explains that distributed leadership is “first and foremost about leadership practice” (p.3) and

incorporates the “leader-plus” and the “practice” aspect which enables one to “examine who does what in the work of leadership” (p.13). Nevertheless, Spillane is of the understanding that that distributed leadership “isn’t just delegated leadership” (p.13), but encompasses teachers taking on leadership roles without being told to do so.

Besides the contention by Spillane (2006) that distributed leadership cannot be delegated his description of distributed leadership as a practice is important. This is since it opens a space to consider that there are no fixed leaders and that leadership changes according to the skill needed. When I talk of ‘*the leadership practice*’ in the context of this study, therefore, I am referring to the *totality of ‘leading’* which comprises teachers working together on collaborative inquiry or in planning a particular activity or various activities and where they give their input and share ideas. These kinds of interactions and meetings are not led by those in formal leadership position only, but from those with the expertise (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Leadership can, therefore, be stretched across the social and situational contexts of the organisation and the tasks are accomplished through the interactions and actions of multiple leaders (Spillane et al., 2004). The situation will thus determine the type of leadership practices and the leader-follower interaction will differ in each school and for each situation.

Consistent with this view, Woods, Bennett, Harvey and Wise (2004) identify three distinct elements of distributed leadership, namely: It is viewed as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals; it suggests an openness of the boundaries of leadership; and, it involves concertive action. In the context of my study therefore, I tried to uncover how the participants interacted with each other and who took the lead. I tried to explore whether leaders from all levels participated according to their skills. I tried to establish whether there

was an openness of the boundaries of leadership practices or were they confined to those in formal leadership positions only.

2.4.2 Distributed Leadership, Context and Power

In trying to distribute leadership, consideration must be given to the context within which leadership is distributed. For instance, Spillane (2006) illustrates that distributed leadership can take the following forms. Firstly, leadership is distributed through a formal and informal design where leaders structure leadership roles through negotiation and discussion. Secondly, it is distributed over a period by default, where leadership is lacking in certain areas and those with the leadership ability recognise it and fill it. And thirdly, it is distributed through a crisis when individuals suddenly find themselves working together to avert the crisis. What is highlighted, therefore, is that there will be challenges experienced.

One of the main challenges is the issues of power as it often requires that formal leaders let go of the pre-conceived notion that they are the designated leaders. On the other hand, it also involves informal leaders being in a position to accept and cope with leadership roles. On this subject, Harris (2014) warns that distributed leadership must not be viewed as being in opposition to top-down models. This is an important consideration for my study especially bearing in mind South Africa's apartheid education prior to 1994, and the fact that the current education system still has all the features of a hierarchical bureaucratic model.

Whilst Spillane's (2006) ideas constitute a 'grounding' for distributed leadership, a more nuanced characterisation of distributed leadership is offered by Gunter (2005). She articulates that distributed leadership consist of "power sources and interactions" (p.51) rather

than just the act of performing the task. She strongly believes that if one wants to understand how leadership is distributed, then one must look beyond the skills, knowledge and tasks that the person is doing to the “location and exercise of power” (Gunter, 2005, p.51).

In considering the issues of power that characterise distributed leadership, Gunter (2005) identifies leadership as being authorised, dispersed or democratic. Grant (2010), however, provides a more nuanced engagement with Gunter’s thoughts on power through her work in the South African context. Instead of viewing the characterisations independently of one another, Grant argues that they should be viewed sequentially and she develops them as a graded theoretical framing (Grant, 2010). In particular, she argues for the place of ‘authorised distributed leadership’ at this point in history in our South African schools. In many schools in South Africa, it has to be acknowledged that the principal does indeed still hold the power and delegates leadership roles to educators. Teachers accept this and whatever duties are delegated to them, because they believe that it is legitimate and that the principal is the head of the institution and must be respected. Instead of dismissing this characterisation because it lacks an ‘emergent’ property, it is better seen in many cases, as a necessary and appropriate point of departure to what, in time, will or could become dispersed and/or democratic forms of distributed leadership.

When leadership is ‘purely’ dispersed (in Gunter’s terms, 2005), there is no force or struggle and work is done without the formal workings of a hierarchy. Here “distribution is accepted through the legitimacy of the differentiated knowledge and skills of those who do the work” (Gunter, 2005, p.52). The focus is on promoting the private interests of individuals either through their own actions or through a collective action and is a bottom-up approach. Thirdly,

democratic distributed leadership engages with organisational values and goals and teachers willingly take on leadership roles. In this scenario, there are negotiations, discussions and a willingness to share expertise. Leadership should be democratically distributed in South Africa because it aligns itself with the values of the South African Constitution. Research, (see for example, Grant, 2010; Gunter, 2005; Hallinger, 2003; Spillane, 2006; Spillane et al., 2004) shows, however, that this is not happening in many schools. This could be ascribed to the fact that teachers in most schools have been subjected to the entrenched beliefs of the apartheid government prior to 1994 to willingly take on additional leadership roles, and for formal leaders to let go of their power. The reality of how leadership is distributed is an important aspect of this study.

Whilst Gunter (2005) makes us aware of the various forms of distributed leadership and the power dynamics involved, she does not explain what takes place when teachers are involved in their leadership tasks. As much as it is imperative to understand who is in control and whether leadership is authorised, dispersed or democratic, it is also important to understand what happens in the schools when distributed leadership is practised. This study provides a window into practices of leadership that those interested in change and progress can draw on to improve their own existing conditions and practices.

Similar to Gunter's (2005) argument that distributed leadership could take various forms, Spillane (2006) argues that distributed leadership cannot be conceived as being automatically collaborative. He also contends that a distributed take on leadership can allow for democratic *or* autocratic leadership where leadership is forced and delegated. This study accepts this, because the reality for the majority of school principals, especially in South Africa, is that

they do often have to use their power to get teachers to take on extra leadership roles. In this regard, Gronn (2000) talks about leadership as being an accommodation between distributed and individual, and thus a combination of mixed leadership patterns. In short, what these researchers are essentially saying is that engaging in dispersed or democratic distributed leadership involves much more than just educators collaborating with one another. Rather, what emerges is that teachers interact and learn from one another (Muijs & Harris, 2007) and they are engaged in various emergent, task-focused roles (Gronn, 2000) and work together as communities.

Notwithstanding the various contested meanings of distributed leadership, including the important consideration of the power dynamics involved, what has been established is that there are various benefits to engaging in distributed practices of leadership.

2.4.3 Benefits of Distributed Leadership

Research findings indicate that by distributing leadership opportunities to those who possess the skill and know-how, there is, therefore, a broader set of key stakeholders in schools who are engaging in leading (see for example Barth, 1996; Grant, 2010; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2013; Harris and Lambert, 2003; and Spillane 2006). This could be because there are more and more institutions who are realising that when leadership is distributed it leads to teamwork, a shared vision, collaboration, interdependence, synergy and a great deal of learning and empowering (Senge, 2000; Covey, 2004). When teachers irrespective of their post levels take the lead, there is a pool of resources available and all teachers become committed towards contributing towards the upliftment of a school (Muijs & Harris, 2003). When viewed in this manner leadership therefore, does not come from the principal alone but

rather it is spread and dispersed among all stakeholders. This in turns opens up the way for all forms of social, intellectual and other forms of human capital within the schools to be utilised and developed (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Muijs & Harris, 2003). With a strong leadership team the crisis in a large number of schools can be overcome and the continuous changes in education can be embraced and meaningfully managed.

The inherent value of distributing leadership to those with the skill has thus been confirmed by numerous studies. A study conducted by Steyn and Squelch (1997) into teacher involvement in leadership activities, for example, revealed that principals emphasised the benefits of engaging teachers in collegial relations. They concluded that when teachers are made to feel part of the school they are involved in leadership roles and this inspires them to work harder and in becoming more accountable. Also, these teachers became happier and more content when they had a greater say in matters that affected them and felt part of the school team. These findings cohere with that of van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) on principals' perceptions of what team management entailed. In their study, Post Level One teacher leaders participated actively in leadership roles which resulted in them becoming empowered through teamwork and this motivated them to make valuable contributions to the team. Further to this, the study found that "leadership practices that involve distribution of responsibility are more likely to succeed than those which cling to traditional 'heroic' leadership approaches" (p.227).

Further, Chen's (2007) study of the perceptions of how principals distribute leadership, further demonstrates the benefits of distributing leadership. His study has revealed that when leadership is distributed, there is the opportunity for both leaders and followers to be

able to participate and unite in a common purpose. Therefore, for leadership to be successful much consideration and planning must go into how it is actually enacted in practice (Harris, 2014) and built into the fabric of school life (Spillane, 2006).

Whilst there are many benefits to engaging in distributed leadership there are also many constraints when attempting to engage teachers in the leadership practices. These were also important considerations for this study as attempts were made to uncover what the underlying mechanisms were that constrained the leadership practice in schools.

2.4.4 Factors That Constrain the Take Up of Distributed Leadership

Despite the groundswell of current research demonstrating the benefits of distributed leadership, what is also emphasised is that there are factors that hinder, limit and challenge leadership from being distributed (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). One of the most significant barriers is that principals often refuse to let go of the power vested in them by virtue of their position (Grant, 2010; Naicker & Mestry, 2011). Apart from this, many principals in South African studies, are fearful that things might go wrong and that they would have to answer to the Department of Education. This argument is confirmed by a study carried out by Ngcobo and Tikly (2010). Their research exemplified that many principals may be holding onto to power, because of their own past experiences and cultural norms, together with the legacy of apartheid education policy. It has been found that there were “fundamental tensions surrounding principal’s understanding of their leadership roles in a team setting” (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008, p.221). Additionally, van der Mescht and Tyala found that principals experience tension between a desire to hold on and a desire to let go of the control that they have over teachers.

Grant's (2010) seminal study into teacher leadership in the South African context also revealed that a large number of schools still associate leadership with headship. She explains how "the power remains concentrated at the centre of the practice and is exercised by the school management team or the principal" (p.301). This type of leadership practice is not in tandem with the policy prescripts of a democratic country. The research findings of Grant also resonate with that of Naicker and Mestry's (2011) findings at selected schools in Soweto, South Africa. Naicker's and Mestry's (2011) study found that engaging in autocratic leadership practices presents powerful barriers to a distributed leadership practice. In the rigid, hierarchical structure of schools, power and decision-making remained in the sphere of the principal and SMT (p.102).

There is also the fear that letting go of their power may result in a failure of the team to deliver. Consistent with this argument, MacBeath, Oduro and Waterhouse (2004) quote a principal saying that "in the end I am the one who is accountable, the one whose neck is on the line as it were. So I delegate much leadership, but my intuitive style is somehow benevolent dictatorship" (p.353). What many principals try to do, therefore, is to create the impression that they are engaging in co-operative leadership practices but instead are holding onto their power. This has been acknowledged in a study undertaken by Prew (2007). It was established that many principals, under the facade of transformational leadership, still hold on to their power. They have the vision and mission statements in place, but pretend to be sharing leadership. The principals display controlling tendencies and offer limited access to decision-making tendencies to staff members.

The impact of authoritarian leadership styles by formal leaders have also been examined by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991). They confirm that limited access to decision-making by informal leaders has contributed to the potential of informal leaders as being largely untapped. Reasons could be that these informal leaders work in isolation, are often subjected to years of unproductive and alienating experiences and are not exposed to working as a team. They also state that when the responsibility of running the school is “left solely in the hands of the principal and other SMT members, it overloads them thus resulting in incorrect and frequently imposed solutions” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p.20). Consequently, many principals become helpless and are unsure of how to deal with the situation and those teachers with the capability in particular fields are being stifled, because many strategies alienate teachers from participating in reform. Just as there are principals who are reluctant to share leadership and let go of the power, there are also many teachers who are reluctant or fearful to take on additional leadership roles (Harris & Lambert, 2003). This is due to the fact that the desire to stay safe is more powerful than the excitement of change or risk taking.

If one considers the full extent of distributed leadership, then an engagement with the concept of “teacher leadership” in its own right is the next logical “field” to explore. This is because distributed leadership and teacher leadership are inextricably linked, and when leadership is distributed, teacher leadership emerges (Pillay, 2008). Thus, teacher leadership is but one manifestation of a distributed leadership framing, suggesting a more inclusive model (Harris, 2013). In addition Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin & Fullan, (2004) claim that teacher leadership embraces the core philosophy of distributed leadership, because it is based on lateral, networked and fluid forms of leadership in schools. Thus, the phenomenon of teacher leadership will be discussed next.

2.5 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

In this study, the concept of teacher leadership has been given prominence and priority because when leadership is distributed it leads to the interaction of teachers from across the continuum of the school. In South Africa, the practice of teacher leadership is also consistent with the ideals of our country and is implicit in various legislation. This includes legislation such as the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996b) which highlights the need for a more inclusive leadership style. Furthermore, *The Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications in South Africa* (See Republic of South Africa, 2008) expects teachers to engage in the decision making processes as well as to engage in team teaching with other colleagues (p.10). According to this policy, teachers are expected to work as extended professionals who fulfil a role of leader, manager and administrator.

The need to engage with the potential of all teachers as a means of being able to meet the challenges facing schools has gained popularity as there is the realisation of its inherent value. In this regard, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) believe that “teachers who are leaders, lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teachers, learners and leaders, and influence others towards improved educational practice” (p.5). Besides, they believe that “within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change” (p.2). The latent abilities of all teachers within a school must be tapped into so that it would benefit the school as a learning organisation and enhance participation in the leadership practice to be strengthened. This is the definition of teacher leadership that will guide this study.

2.5.1 Teacher Leadership not being Given the Attention it deserves

The literature reviewed both nationally and internationally, however, stresses that teacher leadership is not given the attention it deserves. This is despite the realisation of its inherent value in contributing towards effecting meaningful change and of being able to address the challenges experienced. This is because “the bureaucratic, hierarchical nature of schools often conflicted with the collegial nature of the reforms that teacher leadership was designed to bring about” (Liebermann & Miller, 2004, p.17). In this regard, Harris and Muijs (2005) draw attention to the fact that “while there is clear management support for teacher leadership, and taking initiative is encouraged, involvement in decision-making tends to be limited to middle management” (p.109). Researchers such as Barth (1996), Blasé and Blasé (2001), Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), and Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann (2002) have all come to similar conclusions. These conclusions also coincide with various South African researchers. For example, a survey of 1055 teachers, conducted by Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley and Somaroo (2010), revealed that teacher leadership was restricted rather than emergent. Further, that although there was some evidence of teacher leadership in curricular and extra-curricular activities, that “teacher leadership in relation to school-wide and community issues was almost non-existent” (p.402). In this study, the SMT was perceived as the main impediment to teacher leadership because “they felt the full weight of their accountability and, consequently, were unwilling to redistribute power to teachers in case the task was inadequately performed” (Grant et al., 2010, p.415). This finding has also been confirmed in studies undertaken by Khumalo (2008), Ntuzela (2008), Rajagopaul (2007) and Singh (2007).

In addition to this, a study embarked on by Grant (2010) on teacher leadership analysed how teacher leadership was understood and practised by educators in the South African mainstream schooling context. The conclusions show that “there was little distribution of leadership with power concentrated in the hands of the principal or SMT” (p.280). Consequently, Grant recommends that “power should not remain solely at the centre but should be distributed within the practice of leadership in accordance with the movement of teachers from the periphery to a more central position” (p.281). She also stresses that “schools do not have to put up with autocratic principals who show negativity to teachers” (Grant, 2010, p.282) and that principals need to be challenged to find creative ways to lead and manage schools.

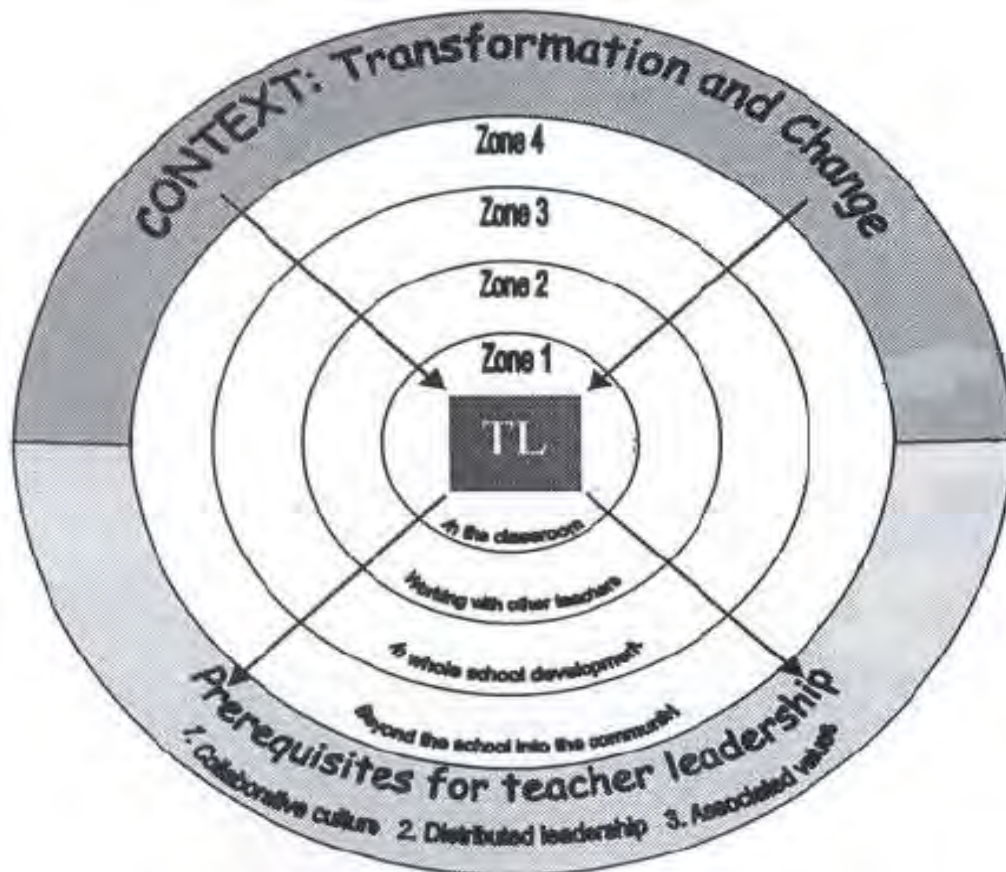
In this study, as said earlier, Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership was used, at the first level of analysis, to analyse *teacher leadership practices in the case study schools* (i.e. in response to my first research question). The use of the model provided the framework and heuristic tool to analyse where teacher leadership is happening, what roles are practised and the indicators that could be considered as evidence of these roles. Through the use of the model I was able to effectively determine what teacher leadership practices were evident and it laid the foundation for me to get to the underlying mechanisms. The model was also appropriate to use as it was conceptualised whilst undertaking research in the South African context. Below, Grant’s model is explained in detail.

2.5.2 Grant’s Model of Teacher Leadership (2008a/2012)

Within the model there are four areas or zones which are used to describe the practices of teacher leadership in terms of “the places where teacher leaders are most likely to lead and

the roles they are most likely to take up” (Grant, 2012, p.55). In the discussion that follows, each of the roles within the four zones is then further expanded to include some indicators of leadership. The initial model (see

Figure 1) was devised in 2008a and revised in 2012 to include the roles and indicators within the four zones. The discussion of the model of teacher leadership as well as the zones, roles and indicators as used in this study is presented in *Figure 2*.



TEACHER LEADERSHIP

First level of analysis: Four Zones	Second level of analysis: Six Roles
Zone 1 In the classroom	One: Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching
Zone 2 Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities	Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers Four: Participating in performance evaluation of teachers
Zone 3 Outside the classroom in whole school development	Five: Organizing and leading peer reviews of school practice Six: Participating in school level decision-making
Zone 4 Between neighbouring schools in the community	Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers

Figure 1: Model of Teacher Leadership (Grant, 2008a) with Zones and Roles

Zones	Roles	Indicators
1.	1. Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching in the classroom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. centrality of expert practice (including appropriate teaching and assessment strategies and expert knowledge) 2. keep abreast of new developments (attendance at workshops & further study) for own professional development 3. design of learning activities and improvisation/appropriate use of resources 4. processes of record keeping and reflective practice 5. engagement in classroom action research 6. maintain effective classroom discipline and meaningful relationship with learners (evidence of pastoral care role) 7. take initiative and engage in autonomous decision-making to make change happen in classroom to benefit of learners
2.	2. Providing curriculum development knowledge (in own school)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. joint curriculum development (core and extra/co curricular) 2. team teaching 3. take initiative in subject committee meetings 4. work to contextualise curriculum for own particular school 5. attend DOE curriculum workshops and take new learning, with critique, back to school staff 6. extra/co curricular coordination (e.g. sports, cultural activities etc)
2.	3. Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers (in own school)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. forge close relationships and build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills and confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust and transparency
2.	4. Participating in performance evaluation of teachers (in own school)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. engage in IQMS activities such as peer assessment (involvement in development support groups) 2. informal peer assessment activities 3. moderation of assessment tasks 4. reflections on core and co/extra curricular activities
3.	5. Organising and leading peer reviews of school practice (in own school)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organisational diagnosis (Audit – SWOT) and dealing with the change process (School Development Planning) 2. whole school evaluation processes 3. school based action research 4. mediating role (informal mediation as well as union representation) 5. school practices including fundraising, policy development, staff development, professional development initiatives etc)
3.	6. Participating in school level decision-making (in own school)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. awareness of and non-partisan to micropolitics of school (work with integrity, trust and transparency) 2. participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development and have a sense of ownership 3. problem identification and resolution 4. conflict resolution and communication skills 5. school-based planning and decision-making
4.	2. Providing curriculum development knowledge(across schools into community)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. joint curriculum development (core and extra/co curricular) 2. liaise with and empower parents about curriculum issues (parent meetings, visits, communication – written or verbal) 3. liaise with and empower the SGB about curriculum issues (SGB meetings, workshops, training –influencing of agendas) 4. networking at circuit/district/regional/provincial level through committee or cluster meeting involvement
4.	3. Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers (across schools into community)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. forge close relationships and build rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place 2. staff development initiatives 3. peer coaching 4. mentoring role of teacher leaders (including induction) 5. building skills and confidence in others 6. work with integrity, trust and transparency

Figure 2: Presentation of the 2012 Model of Teacher Leadership with the addition of Indicators

Although the principals in this study have all been considered as teacher leaders whose job descriptions require that they engage in classroom teaching, it is also essential to understand that the principal plays a huge role in determining participation in leadership practices.

2.6 THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN ENABLING PARTICIPATION IN THE LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Compelling evidence highlights that a school principal's role is essential to ensure that leadership is participatory (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Hallinger, 2003). Barth (1996) too, emphasises the critical role of the principal in leading the way. He accentuates that an environment must be created where everybody is teaching and everybody is learning simultaneously. The principal within this community occupies a central place, not as the headmaster but as the head learner, a leader of leaders, who models the behaviours for learners and teachers to emulate. What has to be recognised is that principals possess positional power and play an important role in determining participation (Harris, 2008).

Studies have confirmed the benefits when principals work closely with all teachers within a school. For example, Prew's (2007), principals who embraced change were open, confident and inclusive and were more effective in transforming their schools. Principals in the study focused on developing systems of accountability and responsibility and fostered a collaborative culture. They were prepared to share leadership roles according to the aptitude of the teachers and to look for ways to involve the reticent or the opposed rather than just a few favourites.

In order to transform, schools principals need to change their mind sets of how leadership should unfold. There has to be a move away from the perception that old authoritarian leadership styles of leading a school are still congruent with current trends in leadership. In line with this discussion, a study carried out by Ash and Persall (2000) endorses that principals must change the way that schools are led and engage in more egalitarian leadership practices. To manage this, they recommend that principals must develop the capacity to take risks, empower others, be able to demonstrate good communication dexterity and be personally responsible and accountable for all activities of the school. To ensure that this is actually put into practice, Leithwood et al's., (2004) study exemplifies that principals need to fill three important roles to create the ideal environment for learners to excel. This includes setting direction, redesigning the organisation and developing people.

In accentuating the crucial role of the principal in promoting teacher leadership, one has to also *simultaneously hold on to the premise that the principal is not the only leader*. It has to be said that, because of their positional power, principals have the responsibility to unleash the leadership capacity of all other teachers. In this regard, Harris and Lambert (2003) are of the view that the most effective principals “generate the capacity for improvement through investing in the development of others, by distributing leadership within the organisation” (p. 3). Sharing leadership, therefore, involves the principal promoting involvement and learning in as many parts of the school as possible (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). The role of the formal leader is, therefore, crucial in holding the “pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship” (Harris, 2004, p.14) and in releasing the leadership capability across the organisation whenever it is needed. In this regard, Grant (2010) argues that the more

leadership is distributed, the greater the opportunities for teachers to lead beyond their classrooms.

Whilst principals have the responsibility in making sure that leadership is distributed, it is necessary that the vision and goals of all teachers are aligned so that they will readily take on leadership roles. In this regard, the Mendez-Morse (1992) study into effective leadership emphasises that the central role of a highly skilled principal is to foster a sense of shared vision on improving teaching and learning. Principals who work closely with all other teachers delegate responsibility to educators who have the conviction and support needed to get the job done. It is up to those in formal leadership positions, therefore, to “harness, focus, liberate, empower and align that leadership towards common purposes and, in so doing, to grow, to release and to focus its capacity” (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p.xvii). In view of the crucial role of the principal, it is vital that they believe in the concept of sharing leadership, understand the policies and legislation surrounding democratic leadership practices and create a conducive and enabling environment. He or she must be willing and able to empower and build capacity among all staff members (Pillay, 2008).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the following key issues which this study will address: firstly, it has been highlighted by scholars like Christie (2010) and Harris (2014) that there are very few studies focusing on *how* leadership is actually practised. As a direct response to this gap in the research literature, this study focuses on *how* leadership is practised. Secondly, it has been established that there has been great prominence placed on management rather than on leadership in schools, despite the fact that schools need visionary leaders in this climate of

change. In light of this finding, the attention given to management will, therefore, be relegated to the background in this study and the focus will be on leadership. Thirdly, there has historically been a great deal of research interest in the individual heroic leader, rather than on using the abilities of all possible leaders. Because of this, research findings have not portrayed the contributions of all teachers at schools but rather have ascribed the success of schools to individual, heroic leaders. This study, consequently, sets out to explore how teacher leaders from the various post levels interact and contribute to the leadership practice.

Having discussed the substantive literature pertinent to this study, I now move onto a discussion on Critical Realism and Social Realism as the ontological and theoretical framing of the study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMING OF THE STUDY: ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I engaged with distributed leadership as the substantive theory for my study. In addition, I discussed Grant's (2008a/2012) model of teacher leadership which I used as an analytical tool and which assisted me to understand, describe and explain what teacher leadership practices were prevalent at the case study schools. In so doing, I was able to answer the first of my research questions. However, neither my substantive theory nor the model provided the tools to investigate the causal mechanisms that enabled or constrained these leadership practices (my second research question). The need to investigate deeper, therefore, necessitated the use of more conceptual tools so as to engage as a critical realist rather than as relativist researcher. Thus, I drew on the critical realist ontology of Bhaskar (1975) and aspects from Archer's (1995) social realist theory to achieve a layered and in depth understanding of the phenomenon I was studying. The purpose of this chapter is then to present a few key tenets of Bhaskar's (1975) basic critical realism that I drew on in my study and then present aspects that I used from Archer's (1995) social realist theory.

I think it is important to say at the outset, that working within, and from a critical and social realist position, has presented serious ontological and epistemological challenges to me. This is despite the deep resonances between critical realism and my own world views. Margaret Archer's social realist theorising of 'the social' too, and in particular the Morphogenetic

Approach (Archer, 1995) is enormously complex. Whilst I have spent the past six years immersing myself in the complexity of her thinking and theory, I am very conscious of not yet having a sufficiently sophisticated grasp of these to do full justice to her work. This includes my ability to be able to apply the full range of concepts, processes and lenses that her work provides for a thorough analysis of the ‘social systems’ represented by my case studies. Namely, how the emergent properties of structure, culture and agency causally influence each other to function as mechanisms at the level of the real to produce the events and experiences of leadership practices presented in this thesis. Having said this, I am still of the belief that what is presented here offers new insights into how ‘the practices of leading’ at highly-functional, disadvantaged schools can be better understood.

The chapter unfolds as follows: Firstly, I discuss the philosophical underpinnings to the study which is basic critical realism advocated by Bhaskar (1975). In this section I focus on the critical realists claim to a stratified layered ontology, a claim to an independent reality, the concept of emergence, and the critical realist’s project of emancipation. Secondly, I show how Bhaskar’s critical realist philosophy serves as an under-labourer to Archer’s social realist theory. I discuss Archer’s use of the concepts of structure, culture and agency as well as that of analytical dualism.

3.2 BHASKAR’S CRITICAL REALISM AS THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERLABOURER TO THIS STUDY

Bhaskar (1975) is one of the main protagonists of the philosophy of critical realism, which has its focus on ontology. Due to the fact that social realism has its roots in critical realism, I feel it necessary to discuss critical realism prior to the discussion of social realism. This

discussion will provide the reader with a clear understanding of how my philosophical stance is linked to my meta-theory. Bhaskar was a contemporary philosopher of science and the social sciences who advocated rational enquiry, both scientific and philosophical, against positivist and the relativism of postmodern challenges (Collier, 1994). He is generally acknowledged as the 'father' of critical realism, which is a movement in philosophy and the human sciences, and is a specific form of realism, which is non-positivistic with a focus on emergence and ontological realism. It does not claim any specific substantive theory but is regarded as a philosophical tradition based on reality and it acts as an under-labourer for both the natural and the social sciences (Sayer, 2000). As mentioned above, in my study it acts as an under-labourer to Archer's social realism. Basic critical realism evolved out of and was an elision of Bhaskar's philosophy of 'Transcendental Realism' as a general theory of science and from his theory of 'Critical Naturalism' as a special theory of social science (Carlsson, 2007, p.4). Gradually theorists began to elide both transcendental realism and critical naturalism and began to refer to the hybrid as critical realism.

This theory appealed to me because it links to my own beliefs of how I view the world. Just as how critical realism focuses on ontological depth, I too am of the inherent belief that there is a deeper, more profound reality that prevails in terms of how things happen in the world. For me too, there is a reality separate from my own, which can be known albeit only partially and often 'fallibly'. What follows is a discussion of the main components of critical realism.

3.2.1 A Distinction between Ontology and Epistemology and a Claim to an Independent Reality

An important consideration when applying Bhaskar's (1975) philosophy is the prominence ascribed to that of ontology as opposed to epistemology. In this philosophy, the focus is on ontology and of 'being' in the world and the central belief is that the social world is pre-constructed for any human being. Therefore, in critical realism there is a marked distinction between epistemology (which is a theory of knowledge of the world) and ontology (which is a theory of being). This is in contrast to constructionists and positivists who tend to collapse the two (Archer, 1995). Critical realists espouse that there is an external reality that exists (an ontological claim), which is independent of our conceptions of it (an epistemological claim) (Bhaskar, 1975). There is therefore a switch from "epistemology to ontology and within ontology a switch from events to mechanisms" (Danermark, et al., 2002, p.5).

As a theory of 'being', the essential question that critical realists ask is: "what properties do societies and people possess that might make them possible objects for knowledge?" (Bhaskar, 1975, p.13). In line with this, Danermark et al., (2002) suggest that "this ontological question must be the starting point for a philosophy of reality and not the epistemological question of how knowledge is possible" (p.5). Like Bhaskar, Fairclough (2005) also warns that those adopting a critical realist perspective of reality must avoid the 'epistemic fallacy' of confusing the nature of reality with our knowledge of reality. Scholars adopting this philosophy would be unable to unearth what the generative mechanisms are of the phenomenon being investigated without probing deeply to discover the reality. A researcher adopting this philosophy cannot, therefore, accept at face value what is being said,

observed or provided in interviews, observations or in documents as the ultimate truth. Rather, the data generated must be used to probe deeply to unravel the best possible interpretation of the 'real' that is under study. This theory of being includes as "real entities the properties of the social world, especially the reasons and accounts that people use or offer, to direct or affect social or individual behaviour or change" (Swann & Pratt, 1999, p.70). The socially constructed characteristics of the social world do not preclude there being aspects of it which human beings have no or restricted or misguided awareness of (Danermark et al., 2002).

To reiterate, for critical realists, there is an independent reality that exists and this reality is independent of our human experience of it (Case, 2013) and our knowledge of the world is therefore fallible and theory-laden (Sayer, 2000). In the words of Danermark et al., (2002) there "exists both an external world independently of human consciousness and at the same time a dimension which includes our socially determined knowledge about reality" (p.6). Therefore, critical realists hold the belief that we can never claim to know the world fully, and that our knowledge of the world is corrigible (Archer, 1995; Collier, 1994). Researchers therefore need to offer the best possible explanation of the phenomenon being studied as our theories and notions of this object constitute our knowledge of it. By so doing, social change can be initiated. Therefore, we cannot take the world at face value but must adopt what Bhaskar refers to as 'objective critique' which would move us beyond observation to unearth the mechanisms that are known at any particular time in society (Sayer, 2000). In this regard, Case (2013) argues that this explanation must also encompass "what could have happened, and what could not have happened" (p.39). In order to get to this reality the researcher needs to delve to the deep ontological layer of the real to understand and explain the reality that is

portrayed at the level of the actual and the empirical. Thus, Bhaskar proposes a stratified layered ontology (1975) and it is to this discussion I now turn.

3.2.2 A Stratified Layered Ontology

Bhaskar (1978, p.56) provides us with an ‘ontological map’ to describe and explain three domains or levels of reality, namely, the level of the ‘empirical’, the level of the ‘actual’ and the level of the ‘real’ (Figure 3). This stratified ontology or layering assists the researcher to uncover the underlying generative mechanisms at the level of the real which give rise to events at the level of the actual and to experiences at the level of the empirical (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998). This conviction includes the claim that the reality that prevails and which can be analysed is called the intransitive object (at the level of the real). In the physical and natural sciences, this ‘intransitive’ level of the real is constituted by the physical world and so it is easy to see that we humans cannot change it. However, ‘intransitivity’ in the social world has to be argued for quite clearly. In contrast, the transitive dimension is socially determined and changeable in both the natural and the social sciences (Bhaskar, 1975). The three levels (domains of reality) are illustrated as follows:

A differentiated reality / depth ontology

Empirical – experiences

Actual – events

Real- underlying, generative mechanisms

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

Bhaskar (1998: 41)

Figure 3: Bhaskar’s Layered Ontology of Critical Realism

What follows is an explanation of the three levels.

3.2.2.1 The Level of the Empirical

The first domain of reality is at the level of the empirical (see *Figure 3*) and is “that which we can apprehend through sense data” (Vorster, 2010). This is the transitive layer and is concerned with what is experienced or observed by our senses, either directly or indirectly. This layer is concerned with people’s experiences. This is because people’s reasons and accounts are the most basic evidence available to us (Bhaskar, 1975).

According to Sayer (2000), the empirical “provides only limited and mediated takes” (p.53) on the real and understanding reality at this level is superficial. Bhaskar (1975) refers to the empirical world as ‘the epistemic fallacy’ because he argues that our experience of the empirical world has the effect of reducing the three domains to a single one. In contrast, critical realists are of the view that reality is layered and “consists of objects with powers and mechanisms, differing in quality, which are often not directly observable within the

empirical domain” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.25). Critical realism therefore, is not based on an empiricist ontology but instead there has to be a probing to the deeper ontological layers because the aim of critical realism is not to reduce the real to the actual and the actual to the empirical (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998). The next layer is also on a transitive dimension and is the level of the actual.

3.2.2.2 The Level of the Actual

Relations and mechanisms at the level of the real produce behaviours and events in the social world that are apparent at the level of the actual and are what happens when the real is activated (see *Figure 3*). These mechanisms include, for example, laws, beliefs, attitudes, cultural principles, rules, ideology, and discourses, prejudices, which are constantly operating beneath the surface and bringing new forms of events and experiences into reality. This then results in the emergence of phenomena in the domain of the actual (Bhaskar, 1975). The actual, which is a transitive domain of reality (that is, changing, depending on historical and social contexts) consists of events which happen whether we experience them or not (Bhaskar, 1975). Therefore, the researcher needs to move beyond the level of the actual to understand what the mechanisms are at the level of the real that impact on the topic being studied at the level of the actual and the empirical.

3.2.2.3 The Level of the Real

The reality that exists and which we can analyse at the intransitive level of the real will give an account of why things are the way they are at the level of the actual and the level of the empirical (see *Figure 3*). The level of the real is the deepest dimension “where generative mechanisms can be found and it is what distinguishes critical realism from other forms of

realism” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.21). Its manifesto is to use the reasons and accounts people give us (Swann & Pratt, 1999) as a basis to work out and understand what the structures and mechanisms are that influence what is happening in the world of the people. The mechanisms are real even though they cannot be observed. We can speculate about these mechanisms but they are not something of which we have certain knowledge. Bhaskar (1975) is of the opinion that we will only be able to understand and so change the social world if we identify the structures and cultures at work that generate those events and discourses that operate at the level of the real. Once identified, then the agents who are emergent beings can bring about change to the social system. This is because of the inherent belief that things do not happen by chance or without a reason and behind events there are powers that influence them and a deeper reality that prevails (Danermark et al., 2002).

3.2.3 An Emphasis on Emergence

Emergence is when something new comes into being as a result of the interaction of two things. In critical realism there is the acceptance that the world is structured, differentiated, stratified and changing and great emphasis is placed on the concept of emergence (Archer, 1995; Sayer, 2000). Thus, when people interact within, or on a particular social structure, a new *sui generis* social practice may emerge that is irreducible to the sum of its parts and has its own properties and powers (Archer, 1995). Since, Bhaskar’s ontological realism is based on emergence this implies that the world is an open system. An open system is depicted as a system where “generative mechanisms operate in combination with each other; the more mechanisms involved, the more difficult to anticipate the outcome” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.206). Even though our beliefs of reality change, there are core structures and mechanisms

that make up reality which are comparatively enduring, and the aim of realist research is to develop a better understanding of these enduring mechanisms and structures. In order to get to the reality, Bhaskar (1975) argues that people's reasons and accounts are the most basic evidence available to us for deciding anything about the social world. We may have knowledge that we can use as a basis to work out and understand the underlying powers that influence what is happening in the world of the participants. By getting to understand what the reality is, transformation in terms of the phenomenon being studied could be effected thus leading to emancipation and change.

3.2.4 A Claim to Emancipation

Central to Bhaskar's (1975) philosophy, therefore, is human emancipation and being serious about the world. Thus, Bhaskar talks about "reclaiming reality by eliminating the prejudices, errors, unsupported claims, and philosophical false trails that have covered or disguised reality for us" (Swann & Pratt, 1999, p.68). For Bhaskar, the use of this reclaimed reality through ontological objectivity is the only basis for emancipatory social practice. This can only be accomplished through interpreting what is going on and, in the process, reclaim reality which can then lead to human emancipation. Bhaskar contends that we will only be able to understand and change the social world if we can ascertain the mechanisms at work that generate those special interests. I therefore, took my cue from Bhaskar and consequently, set out to ascertain what the mechanisms were that impacted on the leadership practices located within the two purposively selected, highly functional disadvantaged schools presented in this thesis. I have tried in this study, to establish the mechanisms which enabled

a move to more distributed forms of leadership to emerge than in other disadvantaged schools.

The emancipatory project of this philosophy is important to me. I want to add to the body of knowledge as to how previously disadvantaged schools can improve the manner in which they are led in order to play an active role in the pursuit of 'equal education for all'. Similar to other critical realists, and in the words of Sayer, I am committed to "changing unsatisfactory or oppressive realities" (Sayer, 2000, p.120). However, Bhaskar's (1975) philosophy accepts that we live in a complex world where the past and the present determine the future and that things are fluid and changing all the time. There can, therefore, be "no idealistic or utopian future but rather a careful sense of small possibilities for change and progress" (Case, 2013, p.5).

The search for 'small possibilities for change and progress' in this critical realist study, and as noted earlier, required more than Bhaskar's philosophy and so it was to Margaret Archer that I turned. Archer's work draws on the basic tenets of critical realism and takes Bhaskar's philosophy into the social realm. The next section engages with Archer's social realism and shows how (see *Figure 4* below) Bhaskar's theory of critical realism acted as an under-labourer to Archer's (1995) Social Realist Theory.

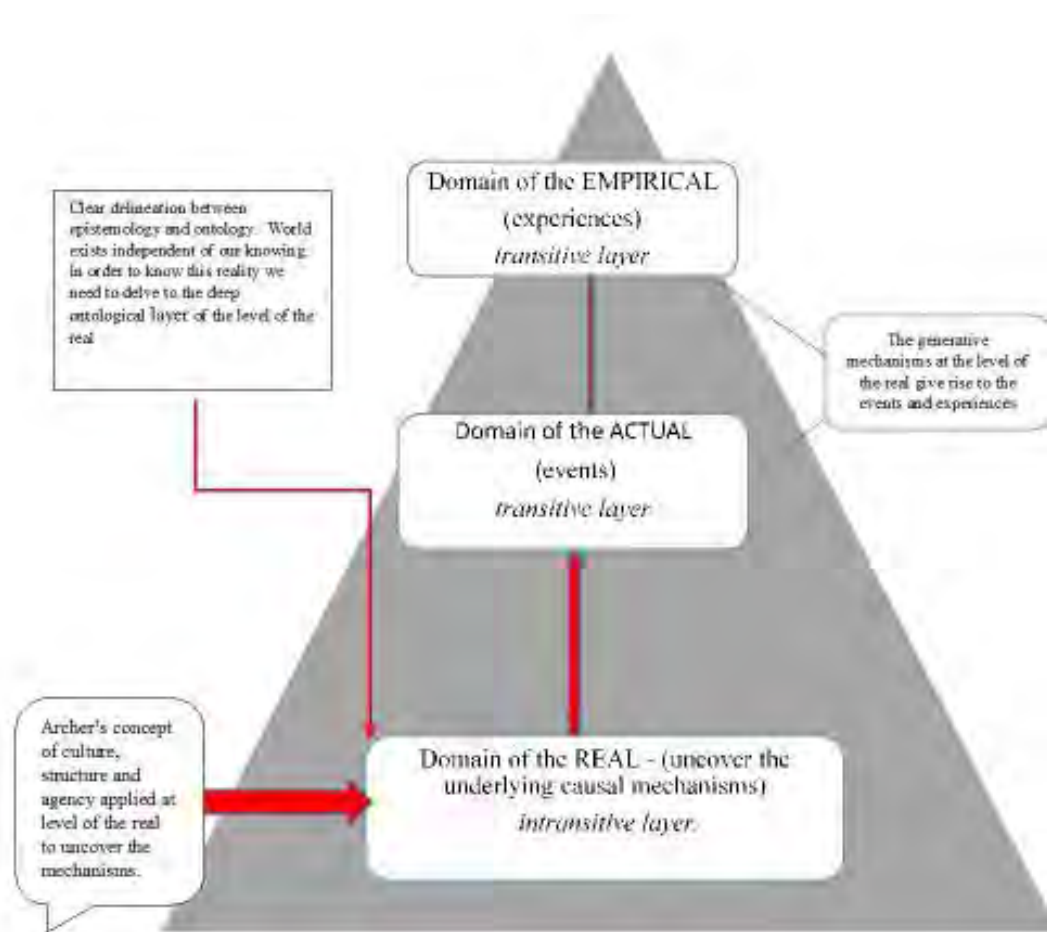


Figure 4: Bhaskar's (1975) Critical Realist Ontology Serving as an Underlabourer to Archer's (1995) Social Realist Theory

3.3 SOCIAL REALISM

Archer (1995) understands society to be made up of structural, cultural and agential properties with necessary and internal relationships to each other. As a critical realist, she stresses the fallibility and open-ended nature of our knowledge, and claims that there are “things” in the natural and social world which are independent of our knowledge or descriptions of them (Archer, 1995). Like Bhaskar, Archer is also of the opinion that social

theory has to be useful and functional both in theory and in practice with a transformational agenda. She also believes that in order, to bring about social change we need to be reflexive so that we think more and more about what is to be done to improve society (Vorster, 2010). To become reflexive, Archer argues that we have to analyse the social order today as a relationally contested organisation and see where we can effect change. Engaging in this meta-theory, therefore, enables the researcher to be reflexive and to reflect critically on the topic being investigated. Consequently, research from this perspective must be about investigating and identifying “relationships and non-relationships, respectively, between what we experience, what actually happens, and the mechanisms that produce the events in the world” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.21). In order to understand the relations, attempts must therefore be made to understand what the underlying structural, cultural and agential enablements and constraints are.

3.3.1 Defining Archer’s Key Concepts of Structure, Culture and Agency

Structure, in terms of social realism, is understood to comprise social institutions, social practices, roles and positions and it refers to the ‘parts’, which is in contrast to the ‘people’ (Archer, 1995). Archer contends that society precedes the individual and that people do not create society for it is already made and that they are born into a pre-structured context. In terms of this study, I use ‘structure’ to refer to the roles, positions, rules and policies that relate to school leadership practices. In terms of roles and positions, structures include all formal positions and informal leadership roles. These roles and positions in this study have been represented by those such as the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Department, Post Level 1 teachers, Chairpersons of Subject Committees and Staff Representatives. The rules

and policies as structures include the vision and mission statement, the school code of conduct including the legislation relating to leadership.

From a social realist perspective, culture refers to the “language, knowledge, beliefs, theories, semiotic patterns, conceptual schemes, signification systems, and socio-symbolics” (Archer et al., 1998, p.504) prevalent within an institution. These exist within a particular situation and occur in rational association to each other. Culture develops in the form of ideas, beliefs, values and rules in a system. It too is stratified and has emergent properties which is present independently of whether people (in the present) are aware of them, believe in them or agree with them (Quinn, 2006). In terms of this study ‘culture’ refers to the beliefs, values, norms, symbols, rituals and traditions of the schools that constituted their respective ‘cultures’ and from which, together with the ‘structures’ in place, evoked the leadership practices observed at the schools. It is important to remember, however, that both structure and culture can only be activated by the agents in the environment.

The concept of ‘agency’ in social realism relates to the human ability to act, manipulate or influence a situation (Archer, 1995) and the concept is always used in the plural. Agents stand for the ‘people’ in the socio-cultural system into which they are born or enter into, and who operate within a particular structural or cultural system (ibid). In this study, the focus is on the agent’s ability to act within the school context within which they find themselves.

To continue, agents have emergent properties and are defined as collectives sharing the same life-chances. (Archer, 1995). Thus, the stratified social subject is described by Archer as follows: At birth we are primary agents and become enmeshed in society’s structural and cultural properties and immediately acquire the properties of the socio-cultural system into

which we are born or enter into. Many agents may remain as primary agents because they do not transform themselves and hence lack a say in cultural or structural modelling (Quinn, 2006). On the other hand, there are primary agents who, in the pursuit of change, use their emergent powers to become Corporate Agents. Corporate Agents, according to Archer (1995) are those who develop their agency to work with others and in so doing are able to transform themselves and become Corporate Agents (ibid). What happens is that through the influence of social interaction, there is the emergence of new Corporate Agents who bring with them innovative ideas which, as a result, leads to structural elaboration. Corporate Agents work together and they may empower other primary agents to become Corporate Agents. These agents can express to others what they want, and organise themselves in order to get it. They can engage in intensive feats to restructure or retain the structural and cultural mechanisms depending on their goals (ibid).

Regarding the relationship between resources and the bargaining position of agents, Archer (1995) has the following to say: First, agents with low access to resources will be in the weakest bargaining position and will remain as primary agents as they have not developed the capacity to interact with each other; second, agents with differential access to the various resources will be in a stronger bargaining position and would become Corporate Agents. When agents begin to work together there is a discontinuity between one agent and what happens instead is the development of a number of Corporate Agents (ibid). Third, agents with high access to all resources will be in the best bargaining position and they could become powerful Social Actors. These Social Actors work on their own and properly exist in the singular. They alone meet the strict criteria for possessing a unique identity. These Actors acquire their social identities from the way in which they personify the roles they choose to

occupy. What array of roles that is open to them at any given time, strongly condition who may become an actor and acquire a social identity. Actors may have the ability to work on their own and manipulate situations for their own interest or they may work with others to bring about positive change because of their powerful identity (ibid). The term ‘agent’, ‘actor’ and ‘person’ all have emergent powers and are irreducible to one another and must be discussed and analysed separately (Vorster, 2010).

3.3.2 Analytical Dualism: Non-conflation of Structure, Culture and Agency

For purposes of analysis, Archer (1995) rejects conflation and stresses *analytical dualism* by which she means the non-conflation of structure, culture and agency. The ‘parts’ (structure and culture) and the ‘people’ (the agents) are irreducible to each other because both are essential to social life, possess distinct features, are comparatively autonomous from one another and must not be elided into each other (Quinn, 2006). This implies that, in analysis, the different strata are separable by definition due to the properties and powers which belong to each of them and whose emergence from one another justifies their differentiation (Archer, 1995). Within any social system one would find that the properties of structure, culture and agency all operate in tandem with each other. However, Archer explicates that the researcher must engage in analytical dualism when analysing and trying to establish the emergent properties. She contends that we will be unable to do justice to our explanations of what we examine unless, for the sake of analysis, we think of society’s cultures and structures (parts) as separate from the agents (people). However, this does not imply that they are ontologically or philosophically separate entities (p.158). This is temporary and all three have

to be understood independently and then the interplay between them needs to be studied for the reality of 'the social' to be better understood.

The task of the researcher must be to recognise and identify the 'mediating entities', that is, the 'social practices' in terms of the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties that emerge. In trying to uncover what the underlying emergent properties were in the structural, cultural and agential domains of my leadership study, I focused on the following: In the structural domain the focus was on the roles, positions, rules and policies. In the cultural domain the focus was on the beliefs, values, norms, symbols, rituals and traditions. Finally, in the agential domain the focus was on the agent's ability to act and initiate activities, through participation in the leadership practice. Once the mechanisms are identified the interplay between them needed to be studied.

3.3.3 Structural, Cultural and Agential Emergent Properties

In this study it was important to engage in analytical dualism to get to what the underlying generative mechanisms were that led to the leadership practices in each school. It was also important to understand the complex interplay of these mechanisms. This is because society (and in this study, each school can be constructed as a microcosmic society) comes to assume or grows into a particular form because of this interplay. This happens through the interaction of structure, culture and agency at the level of the real. At the level of the real, mechanisms act autonomously, with or against each other and ultimately manifest in actual events.

Properties at the systemic level consequently lay the basis for the situations in which later generations (Archer et al., 1998) of agents find themselves, and they confer vested interests on persons according to the positions they hold. This situation is not of their making, but it is the context that conditions the actions of these agents. Social agents, in turn, are able to have an influence on social conditions within the restraints and enablements presented through their vested interests, bargaining power and material conditions (Archer et al., 1998). These agents have the power to elaborate upon the existing structures and cultures or to constrain them (ibid). According to Carter and New (2004), “people choose what they do, but they make their choices from a structurally and culturally generated range of options” (p.6). This is due to the fact social realists are of the view that society as an open system exists with both structural and cultural properties, whether people are aware of these properties or not or without them doing anything about it. People in turn have emergent properties and powers (PEPs) and are capable of resisting the structural and cultural emergent properties in unpredictable ways because of their inborn talents, powers, vested interests and creativeness that they as human beings possess. The mode of operation therefore, is that the agents are the mediators of the parts, and they shape the situations in which they find themselves in (Archer, 1995).

Just as how agency can bring about social and cultural transformation, both culture and structure are concurrently accountable for the systematic transforming of social agency itself. Archer et al., (1998) expounds that the ‘social self’ is viewed as an emergent identity and this does not take place in a single movement but it involves several moves in order to give a full account of the emergence of the stratified social subject. The social self slowly develops emergent powers as capacity is built and becomes confident and begins to work with others.

In this study, the concept of structure, culture and agency each with its own properties was used as a guiding framework to understand what the underlying causal mechanisms were that either enabled or constrained the leadership practice. These mechanisms, in turn, determined how leadership was practised. Whilst the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties impact on each other and are linked, the one may be more dominant than the other in determining how leadership is practised. Since Archer (1995) maintains that each of the emergent properties must be analysed separately, I consequently discuss each one separately. What is distinguishing about the social realist approach is that it grants the existence of people's emergent properties (PEPs) and also the reality of structural emergent properties (SEPs) and cultural emergent properties (CEPs) (Archer et al., 1998, p.255).

3.3.3.1 Structural Emergent Properties (SEPs)

Structural emergent properties will depend primarily on material resources, both physical and human (Danermark et al., 2002). The different strata that make up the structures are understood to have their own emergent properties and “set of internally related objects” (Danermark et al., 2002, p.47). These structures are understood to be stratified, ontologically preceding and autonomous from people who function within them. For example, a person may hold the position of deputy principal and with the role goes a job description but this position is independent of the person. Social roles therefore have structural emergent powers and these roles are “necessarily and internally related” (Archer, 1995, p.22) to others (e.g. principal/teacher and teacher/learner) and to material requirements (e.g. mentor and trained mentee). Structures are considered to have emergent properties whose emergence depends on the actions of previous generations. For example, the pre-existing structures may not be

conducive to enabling a phenomenon from taking place. There is also a distinction between the role itself and the personal qualities the agent brings to the role. The personal qualities may include the agent's skills or incompetence, dedication or laziness they bring to the role. Archer (1995) maintains that "a person occupying a particular role acquires vested interests with it and is both constrained and enabled by the structures do's and don'ts in conjunction with the penalties and promotions which encourage compliance" (p.187).

3.3.3.2 Cultural Emergent Properties (CEPs)

The cultural system, like the structural system, is anterior to the agents and is as a result of the ideas and belief systems of the past agents. Agents enter into a pre-existing cultural system. The cultural emergent properties (CEPS) would be as a result of the institution's beliefs, values, norms, symbols, rituals and traditions. For example, in many schools in South Africa there may be a mind-set that male leaders are more efficient than female leaders. Educators may be comfortable with this and there will be a preservation of the cultural system. However, there could be some who are opposed to this view and they may challenge this belief system and take strategic action according to their vested interest and the amount of material power they possess to either change or preserve the existing belief system. A key contemplation is that, although culture precedes agents, the agents in turn have their own emergent properties to elaborate upon the current system to either enable or constrain events from unfolding in a particular manner (Archer, 1995). The agents within an institution can, therefore, shape the cultural context in which they find themselves in. An important consideration is that agents do not work in isolation and other agents can either work with

them as Corporate Agents or they can constrain them from acting in a particular way (Archer, 1995).

Thus, although it is necessary to engage in analytical dualism for the purpose of analysis, it is imperative to understand that structure, culture and agency do not operate independently of each other in the world. Agents play a key role in shaping the cultural and structural domains so as to effect evocative change.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have deliberated upon critical realism as the philosophical basis to my study and reflected upon the basic tenets of this philosophy that being on ontology as opposed to epistemology, a stratified layered ontology, an independent reality, on emergence, and on emancipation and the value of engaging in a critical realist philosophy in educational research. Additionally, the relevance of applying Archer's (1995) Social realist metatheory to the study is discussed. Important concepts pertaining to the metatheory, which incorporated that of analytical dualism and the concepts of structure, culture and agency as applied to this study have been elaborated upon. Further, I deliberate upon the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties. What follows in Chapter 4 are the insights into the research design and methodology that this study employed.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As established in the Abstract to this thesis, this study is a qualitative inquiry undertaken within a critical realist framework, so my purpose was ‘to explain processes and their underlying mechanisms’ (Vorster, 2010, p.110). When I commenced with this study and had to consider issues of methodology and research design more rigorously, I came to realise that my initial ideas would really only serve as a guide. I took my cue from Maxwell (2012) who suggests that one’s actual research design should unfold during the research process rather than relying on an exclusively prescriptive model as to how the research should be done. Furthermore, Danermark et al., (2002) assert that “critical realism does not claim to develop a new method for social science and what it offers is guidelines for social science research and starting points” (p.73). I therefore explored numerous methods and approaches before deciding on a multiple case study research design. Maxwell (2012) advises from a critical realist perspective that research designs are the real parts of people’s meanings, motives and understandings which have consequences for how the research is conducted and the actions taken by the researcher. He adds that this may differ substantially from what was planned and “even from what the researcher thinks is happening” (p.71). Thus, the research design used in this study became more meaningful when I started to plan and modify it according to what was happening and not as something abstract taken from a textbook.

4.2 MULTIPLE CASE STUDY AS METHODOLOGY

I engaged in a multiple case study research design, where three schools were initially chosen. Yin (1984) defines a case study methodology as an “empirical inquiry, investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between [the] phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident” (p.23). It is an in-depth, systematic, intensive qualitative inquiry and involves examining, interpreting and understanding a phenomenon’s uniqueness (Stake, 1995). Stake points out that “case studies are expected to catch the particularity and the complexity of a case thus coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (ibid, p.xi). In addition, Rule and John (2011) explain that case studies vary in size and shape and “can provide rich insights into particular situations, events, organisations, classrooms or even persons” (p.1). Furthermore, these studies are generally time and context bound and are studies of a bounded system (Henning, 2004). The researcher sets the parameters of the case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and the units of analysis will direct the boundaries within an integrated system. This was an appropriate methodology to use because of critical realism’s depth or layered ontology and how this can be known through ‘the people’s’ experiences and perceptions. Each of my schools, therefore, as a ‘case’ provided a ‘site of causality’ for me to access.

A significant consideration for this study was the type of case study to use. Although various types of case studies exist, such as single cases, embedded cases, multiple cases and comparative cases (Yin, 2003), I opted to use a multiple case study research design where three research sites were chosen. Each school was treated as a single case, and constituted a ‘most likely’ context for answers to my research questions. The conclusions of each of the

cases contributed to this research study as a whole (Rule & John, 2011), but can also be understood to generate ‘case knowledge’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001) which other researchers and practitioners can draw on in the future. Thus, using three research sites with a variety of data sources strengthened this research by enabling me to get an intensive, in-depth and greater understanding and insight into the leadership practices of highly-functional, disadvantaged schools. This was achieved through being in the field observing, interviewing, collecting information and analysing data. It is important to signal here that while three case studies were undertaken, such was the volume of data and related analysis, that only two of the case studies have been included in this thesis. Had the third been included (that of Eholo Primary School), this thesis would have far exceeded the recommended length. This third case study, however, has been retained and will constitute the basis of additional publications emanating from this thesis.

There are critiques of case study methodology, mostly argued along the lines that “it lacks reliability and that another researcher researching the same phenomenon might come to a differing conclusion” (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p.159). However, a critical realist does not need to leap to the defence of their explanations of the world since ‘explanatory adequacy’ is the ultimate goal. Nevertheless, even when employing this approach, issues of ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘validity’ are important as with all research studies, and so with this in mind, I opted to collect data from three sites to study the leadership practices in greater depth and to cross-check information by using various data sources. Many researchers, for example Smith, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), argue that the conclusions derived from case study research are the weakest and cannot be reliable or generalised. This is because the focus is on a limited number of cases or a dependence on a single case. However, Maree

(2007) and Rule and John (2011) refute this and argue that the use of case studies is rather intended to get a greater insight and understanding of the dynamics of a specific situation. Maree (ibid) argues that there is an acceptance of a single case and that “a metaphor often used in the social sciences is that a well-selected case constitutes the dewdrop in which the world is reflected” (p.76). In view of the arguments levelled against the use of a case study methodology, I strengthened the credibility of my study by opting to broaden the unit of analysis to three schools. In line with an engagement with depth ontology (from the empirical to the real), the use of a multiple case methodology enabled me to collect rich and detailed data, within a bounded system to probe the all three levels of the reality I was studying.

4.2.1 Sampling and Selection

In order to understand how leadership was practised in highly-functional, previously disadvantaged schools, I had to have specific criteria to identify the schools. To identify the schools, I first identified the principals for reasons given in Chapter 2 i.e. that in essence the principal is key to the transformation process (see also Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Pillay, 2008; Prew, 2007). In addition, it is also because Archer (1995) suggests that we need key agents (the people) to enable the structures and cultures (the parts) to work.

To choose my primary participants, that is, the principals I went through a pre-selection screening process and engaged in purposive sampling to select them. Purposive sampling, according to Rule and John (2011), is “where people selected as research participants are deliberately chosen because of their suitability in advancing the purpose of the research” (p.64). I chose the principals from the cohort of 2010 students who graduated in the

Advanced Certificate in Education – School Leadership (ACE-SL) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The following criteria were used when looking at the portfolios for the highly functional schools and principals: The principal's ability to effectively lead and manage their schools in terms of distributing leadership and empowering others to lead; effective staff development programmes; the types of mentoring and induction programmes in place; and the learner and educator performance, including the general ethos and culture of the school. After much deliberation, I scaled down my choice to three schools.

The reason for choosing principals who had completed the ACE-SL is that the programme is aimed at “empowering school leaders to lead and manage schools effectively in a time of great change, challenge and opportunity” (“Department of Education”, 2008, p.1, Cited in ACE document) In addition, it has a transformational agenda and is directed at cultivating school leaders who “apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to school leadership and management within the vision of democratic transformation” (“Department of Education”, 2008, p.1, Cited in ACE document). The chosen principals had to have the relevant knowledge, interest and experience in leadership practices. It has been criticised that choosing principals who performed well on the ACE-SL was no indication of how they would actually perform at their schools. I consequently interviewed their lecturer, who had interacted closely with them for three years and who had spent a considerable amount of time mentoring and guiding them and had visited their schools on numerous occasions. I decided to choose the schools based on the ACE-SL and on the evidence collected in the programme to indicate the successful schools, especially in relation to school leadership. The selection was primarily based on the school-based portfolios and the achievement of the individual principals in the programme. Each participant had to have achieved 75% or more in their

overall performance. Such results indicate their applied competence, namely their ability to apply what they have learnt in practice. Selecting schools from the ACE-SL also had sound socio-political foundations, since it has been initiated nationally by the Department of Education to ensure that their vision for a transformation of leadership practices is achieved.

Figure 5 is a map locating the area in which the three case study schools were located.



Figure 5: Location of the Three Schools in South Africa in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal

During the preparation for choosing the principals as well as the three highly functional, previously disadvantaged schools, a meeting was held with two lecturers involved in the ACE-SL for principals, from UKZN, to clearly set the selection criteria. These criteria

included gender, the type of school (functional and atypical), the principals' proficiency in writing and speaking English, the schools' location, and highly-motivated candidates who were likely to agree to participate. During this pre-selection screening, I chose seven principals, explained the nature of the research to them and sought their informed consent to look at their portfolios (I also sought permission from the Head of School at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, since the portfolios were the property of the university, (Appendix I), and to observe them at their schools before making my final decision. Through visiting these schools, reading the portfolios I was given, and the reflections of the seven 'pre' selected group, together with studying the documents, handouts and articles about the schools in their portfolios, I was able to select the final three principals and their schools.

Aside from the principal, three other participants were chosen from each of the research sites, namely, the Head of Department (HOD) or the Deputy Principal (DP) and two Post Level One teachers. In this study all four participants at each of the schools are also considered to be *teacher leaders* as they are all expected to engage in classroom teaching (see: the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 [Act No. 76 of 1998], Section 3). More importantly, choosing participants from across all post levels enabled me to derive a holistic understanding of *how leadership is practised*.

Having selected the primary participants (the principals), the secondary participants "representing the population into which the case falls" (Rule & John, 2011, p.13) included the HoD or the DP. Three HoD's were chosen from this post level as two of the schools did not have a DP and at the third school, the HoD, rather than the DP, opted to participate in the research process. They were invited to participate in consultation and negotiation with the

school principal. Finally, two Post Level One teacher leaders were chosen per school in consultation and negotiation with the principal and through perusing minutes of staff and subject committee meetings, documents pertaining to leadership practices and the schools' duty rosters. The choice was based on those whom the principals constructed as being actively involved in leadership practices. I invited the teacher leaders, identified as those who lead within and beyond their classrooms (Grant, 2008a; 2012), to participate.

Pseudonyms (see *Table 1*) were used for the case study schools and participants. In addition, the first letter for each of the participants represented their post level. For example, all the principal's names started with a P. I also indicate the Chapters that focus on the respective case study schools.

Table 1: Pseudonyms for the Three Case Study Schools and the Participants

Research Sites	Wembibona (Chapter 5)	Combined Ithemba Primary (Chapter 6)	Ehola Primary (not included in thesis)
Principal	Philani	Petronella	Phumsile
HODs	Hlumi	Hosipho	Hlengiwe
Level One Educator	Twali	Thandiwe	Thuli
Level One Educator	Thandi	Thembisile	Thabisile

The three case study schools are located in low socio-economic areas in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The names of each of the case study schools were carefully chosen by me to try and encapsulate in one word what they stood for. I named the three schools as follows: Wembibona, meaning 'to take the lead'; Ithemba meaning 'hope' and Eholahle meaning, 'leading'. The schools, if the reader remembers, are classified as previously disadvantaged, as they continue to suffer from the same degree of limited resources and poor infrastructure as they had under the Apartheid government. What follows is a discussion of two of the three schools which form the focus of this study, extracted mainly from photographs taken during the observation process, the transect walk, the principals' journals as well as from my own self-reflective journal (see Methods of Data Generation for discussions on the various data sources). As already mentioned, I elected to include only two of the three schools in the thesis due to the limitations of space.

4.2.2 Wembibona Combined School

This school is situated inland of KwaZulu-Natal, approximately 25 km off the N3 highway between Pinetown and Pietermaritzburg (see Figure 5). Before 1994, there was a lot of violence and many political uprisings in the vicinity of the school as black groupings fought for dominance in black communities. The area was consistently considered high risk. The area is a low-socio economic area with poorly constructed homes made from concrete blocks. These blocks are hollow, of a cheaper quality and unlike solid bricks, which are more enduring and long lasting, crumble very easily. There is also a high unemployment rate which is mirrored in the area of the other case study school. Wembibona is fenced, with a security guard permanently on duty. When I visited the school, the buildings had been recently

renovated and there is a flower garden in front of the main reception area with neatly laid-out gardens. The principal, Philani is a male who had been at the school for 12 years. He was promoted to the school as HOD, DP and then to that of principal. There were approximately 1,171 learners (during the time of the data generation process) with 36 Post Level One educators and seven management members. A transect walk around the school with the principal revealed that the classrooms were neat and had a positive learning environment with a stimulating atmosphere through charts and learning resources. Although the classrooms hold 60 learners or more, desks are well-arranged and learners are actively involved in learning. They sit in groups to maximise the use of the floor space and to share textbooks.

The school has vegetable gardens maintained by the learners but it has no sports field so learners have to be taken to the local sports field to participate in the various codes of sports. Further, there is a well-established computer room due to the fund raising efforts of the teachers. In addition, it has a library that was established through the initiatives of teachers on the Library Committee. I observed that the educators were all dressed in formal attire and conducted themselves in a professional manner. They were punctual and there were few cases of teacher absenteeism.

4.2.3 Ithemba Primary School

This school is located on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, about 15 km off the N2 highway between Durban and Umhlanga Rocks (see Figure 5). There were approximately 400 learners (during the data generation process) with eight educators, two newly appointed HODs and the principal. The principal, Petronella is a female and was appointed at the school as a principal, 11 years ago. Prior to this appointment, she was a Mathematics Subject

Advisor, employed at the Department of Education. This school is also located in a low-socio economic area with untarred roads. The buildings are extremely old and made of hollow, concrete blocks similar to Wembibona. Prior to the data generation process the buildings were vandalised and parts of the HODs' offices and the staffroom were burnt down by vandals in the area. There was, therefore, no place for teachers to converge and have their lunch. The area is also considered a high risk area as there are robberies that take place by people from the neighbourhood. What serves as security for the school is a recently installed fence with electric gates. This was due to the fund raising efforts of the teachers and learners. In addition, a library has also been set up due to the initiative of the Library Committee. However, learners did not have access to computers. There is a well-maintained vegetable garden, initiated by a few teachers and the vegetables are sold to the officials of the school feeding scheme and the money generated is used to renovate the school. There are also no sport fields and learners are taken to the local sports ground to participate in athletics, netball and soccer. During the transect walk around the school, I observed how maximum use was made of the classroom space and learners sat in groups and shared resources.

During the observation process I also noticed that educators were always punctual and formally dressed. However, only the principal and a HoD have a vehicle and the rest of the educators commute via public transport. Learners were also immaculately dressed in the regulation school uniform, and punctual. It is also evident that the parents and the School Governing Body play an active role in the affairs of the school. For example, they run the tuck shop and, as part of the school's feeding scheme, prepare the meals for the learners. It was also found that the school had employed the services of a few former learners to assist in covering all the textbooks and library books. Parents also made visits to teachers concerning

their children's performance. For example, it was observed that they attended the International Literacy Day Function and the 67 Minutes Mandela Day Initiative. The Mandela Day initiative began on Nelson Mandela's 90 birthday where he called on the world to continue with his work. The 18th of July has now been officially declared by the United Nations as a day to commemorate Nelson Mandela. On this day, people throughout the world are urged to engage in 67 minutes of community work.

4.2.4 Gaining Access to Research Sites

Before commencing the study and gaining access to the schools, permission in the form of signed declaration letters was obtained from the relevant gatekeepers, including the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix J), the DoE (Appendix B) and from the participants (Appendix E). All participants, that is the principals (Appendix H), the Head of Departments (Appendix I) and the Post Level One Educators (Appendix O) were informed via a letter.

It was crucial that I became immersed in the life of the school because I wanted to get to know as much as was possible about the leadership practices that occurred there. In trying to build rapport, familiarise myself with the contexts of the schools and develop trust, I took my cue from Anderson and Arsenault (1998) who suggest that researchers become familiar with the research site prior to entering it. They further suggest that the researcher tries to get to know: the hierarchical structures prevalent within the site; the power dynamics; the names of the participants; the most appropriate way of communicating with respondents; and significant practices such as their dress code.

With this in mind, I visited the research sites prior to the data generation process to familiarise myself with the surroundings and the participants. During the actual data generation process, I spent time in the field trying to familiarise myself with the day to day running of each school, spending time in the staffroom and getting acquainted with the staff. Whilst doing this I was constantly thinking into how what I was observing, listening to, reading and so on, could be understood in terms of ‘causality’. So, for example, when attending a morning assembly or a meeting, which is an ‘event’ at the level of the ‘actual’, I would ponder on what generative mechanisms would be uncovered through my data analysis process as giving rise to an event like this. What causal powers in what school structures and relationships would result in what effect? I therefore tried to fit closely with the ethos of each school by arriving at school with the educators; following their dress code; attending all assemblies, meetings and gatherings (*events* in critical realists terms); and eating my lunch with them in the staffroom. I also walked around during intervals to engage in friendly conversations with the learners and educators.

4.3 METHODS OF DATA GENERATION

The table below provides a summary of the data generation process. This is followed by an expanded discussion on each activity involved. The process began in August 2011 and continued until July 2012. Contact with the schools was maintained after the data generation process for any information that was still needed.

Table 2: The Data Generation Process

Number	Activity
1	Guided reflective journal writing by the primary participants (principals) over a three month period. Started at the beginning and ended at the end of the data generation process (August 2011- October 2011).
2	First individual, open-ended interview with participants during the first observation phase (August 2011)
3	Observations of leadership practices for two weeks per school (Phase 1). A transect walk around the school with the principal was also undertaken before the start of the first round of interviews. Transect walks were taken during the data generation process with the other participants (August 2011).
4	Documentary evidence of leadership practices was generated throughout the research process (August 2011- July 2012).
5	One focus group interview with each of the participants which was based on my observations during the end of (Phase 2, October, 2011).

6	Observation of leadership practices for two weeks per school (Phase 2, October 2011-November 2011).
7	Second individual open-ended interviews during the second observation process (Phase 2, November, 2011).
8	My own reflective journal consisting of photographs and reflexive notes which were entered each day (August 2011 – July 2012).

4.3.1 Guided Journal Writing Process for Principals

Since the principals were the primary participants in the study, each was given a journal with guided questions to complete (Appendix, K). This process took place throughout the research process. To reiterate, structures and cultures pre-exist agents (Archer, 1995). I therefore had to understand the structures and cultures that were in place prior to the research process and went back to when each of the principals were appointed to their posts. All three were appointed to their posts at more or less the same time. Each of the journal entries had a particular focus and guided questions concerning their leadership life histories and their understanding and experiences of their leadership practices. Since great demands were placed on their time, I realised that principals needed extra time and their own space to reflect on their practices and add details that they may have left out or forgotten during the interviews. In line with this, Bell (1999) contends that personal journals can be written in a non-threatening environment and provide valuable information about the participants' work patterns and activities. Furthermore, Walliman (2005) claims that journals are more

advantageous than interviews and observations, as they suit those who prefer to express their thoughts in writing rather than being interviewed or observed. However, for me, the journal writing process gave me an opportunity to gain greater insight into the interview and observation processes. This process spanned over two months but I did check and monitor progress, and constantly motivate the participants to keep going. There was also the temptation for the principals to complete journals at one sitting which I had to persuade them not to do. It was mainly through the journals that I was able to elicit their leadership life histories and the contexts in which they worked.

4.3.2 Open Ended Interviews

The use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews (Appendices H, N, M and O) enabled me to engage in direct, verbal interaction with participants to extract rich, in-depth, first-hand and “nuanced descriptions” of how they viewed their social world and leadership practices (Plummer, 1983). The interviews allowed me to get the rich data that I was trying to access and was thus an appropriate data collecting method. Participants were interviewed separately, since each would interpret the case in their own way and, therefore, describe it differently. Eliciting diverse perspectives gave me access to multiple realities and differing viewpoints, descriptions and opinions. The interview process thus offered an “insider perspective” (Plummer, 1983) of leadership practices at the empirical level (of Bhaskar’s layered ontology).

When I started the interviews, I realised that the manner in which the interview process would unfold depended on my interview techniques and how I, as researcher, would “travel and wander” (Henning, 2004, p.70) with the participants. Henning (2004) reminds us of the

“discourse of personal interviewing” (p.58) and argues that good questioning and prompting techniques are important to gain trust and to get the participants to talk freely and openly. This guided me during the interview process and I was, therefore, mindful of how I posed my questions. Henning also suggests that the participant should feel empowered and a dialogic form of interview should be used where the researcher and the participant become research partners. I consequently started the interview process by congratulating the participants on the work they were doing and the contributions that they were making to their schools. I also considered the skilful use of a gentle, relaxed tone of voice; the avoidance of judgemental phrasing; and I started with easier questions (Bergman, 2008). I bore in mind that participants might only disclose what they wanted me to know and highlight certain aspects of their leadership practices while leaving out important details. This could result in a ‘discursive vacuum’ in the data and, in turn, lead to a superficial analysis process (Henning, 2005). Aware that I would have no control over what participants chose to reveal to me, I nevertheless established as safe and friendly a collegial environment as I could. Through listening and showing a personal interest, I am confident that I managed to gain their trust.

But aside from choosing not to *reveal* certain information, the interviewing process does of course also involve “memory-work where the participants have to think and reflect on their life experiences, their emotions and their opinions” (Henning, 2004, p.59). Participants may thus not remember to disclose everything they know. To counteract this I tried to be alert and used cues and probes to help jog their memories. When they went off track, I subtly redirected the questions. I furthermore corroborated the participants’ responses using the observation schedule, what other participants said and the various documents, all of which were independent of their own words and thoughts.

Despite the fact that Seidman (1991) contends that a series of in-depth interviews is required to collect data, I only conducted two interviews per participants. This was because I had access to various other data sources. As a researcher and co-constructer of what the participants said, I tried to capture their experiences while analysing their ideas, experiences and assumptions. The interview process was shaped by assessing whether information obtained surrounding the topics would help answer my research questions. I consequently directed the flow of the discussion and focused selectively on the salient ideas, themes and responses I needed (Henning, 2005). This involved “the act of thinking, tuning in to decision-making and focusing on the primary intent of the work” (Clough, 2002, p.8). I therefore created space for the participants to be flexible and talk openly and unrestrainedly on issues surrounding leadership practices. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I read the transcripts carefully after each interview to ensure that I had quality data. Where relevant, I then noted additional questions that I needed to ask during the next interview.

4.3.3 Observations

For me, the observation process was one of the most valuable data sources when conducting my research. Strydom (2007) explains that observing participants is a typical qualitative approach to collect data and it cannot be reduced to figures. I spent one month at each school to gain first-hand experience of the daily, lived experiences of the participants (Strydom, 2007). This was a time consuming exercise as much time was needed to become absorbed in the culture of each school and to get to know the participants. It also required a lot of discipline, sensitivity, objectivity and concentration to record accurately. Nevertheless, the advantage of engaging in observations was that I became part of the research and was able to

acquire direct, first-hand information of the leadership practices prevalent at the schools and used this information in my quest to uncover what the enabling and constraining mechanisms were.

The observation process involved observation of various events at the level of the actual, as indicated in Chapter 3. Sometimes the observation process was identified as formal whilst at other times they were informal. Observation of formal events included: one staff meeting, one management meeting, two subject committee meetings; observations during breaks; a transect walk around the school with participants; and observing assemblies. The informal aspect included spending time in the staff room, walking around during the breaks, and spending time with participants as well as other teachers. A structured observation sheet (Appendix L) was devised to direct me to the focus on leadership practices. During the process, detailed field notes were compiled. The main focus of the observations was on the interactions of leaders and the activities that they were engaged in. Gillham (2000) warns that this kind of research can be highly selective and fallible, as situations change and participants may modify their behaviour while being observed. With some level of confidence, I was able to cross check the findings with the data that arose from the individual and focus group interviews as well as the other data sources. Even so, I retained the awareness that I could not gain knowledge of everything that was occurring.

4.3.4 Transect Walks

A transect walk is a data generation tool which is normally conducted at the beginning of the data generation process and involves the researcher walking around with key informants to observe and talk about certain landmarks (Rule & John, 2011). The process is meant to

gather information of the location of the phenomenon being studied and where the phenomenon investigated is in relation to its environment. In the context of this study, it was done so as to get a good understanding of the layout and infrastructure of each school, the state of buildings, gardens and so on. I chose to first undertake the transect walk with the principals as key informants and my attention was drawn to what each principal considered important. Once this initial walk was over, I undertook various other transect walks with the other participants. They pointed out “issues of importance, concern, or pride while explaining the history and the impact of various landmarks and developments in their lives and their immediate contexts” (Rule & John, 2011, p.69). These walks with the other participants also proved valuable, because I was able to extract a great deal of information from them and also what they considered to be important.

4.3.5 Document Analysis

Collecting and analysing documents relevant to the case proved to be another important data source. McCulloch (2004) fittingly explains that our identities are defined by the documents around us, because they are “produced by individuals, and they shed light on personal and private attitudes, aspirations and ambitions” (p.101). Once the research commenced, I collected documents that were of relevance to my case. The documents included the schools’ vision and mission statements and service commitment charters; photographs; memos; videos of school functions; handouts; letters; minutes of staff meetings and learning area committee meetings; school magazines; brochures; newspaper articles; and a parent notice. These documents were labelled and filed separately for easy access.

The process of analysing the documents involved reading ‘between the lines’ for the meanings and deeper purposes in the documents (McCulloch, 2004). In this regard, McEwan and McEwan (2003) state that a document “can fill in some of the missing data pieces or it can raise a host of new questions regarding the accuracy of observation[s] and interpretations” (p.82). In line with this, Rule and John (2011) suggest that the researcher start with document analysis, because it can give them a good sense of the case and provide valuable questions to ask in the interviews. This was why I started collecting documents at the beginning of the research process and after studying them, I took my cue from some of the documents to draw up my interview questions.

The advantages of collecting and analysing documents relevant to leadership practices at the schools, was that I was able to get first-hand information and documentary proof of who took the lead in the various activities. I also cross-checked this information through the observation process as well as through the interview process. Furthermore, the process helped to jog the participants’ memories which gave them the chance to add information and to clarify issues in the interviews. In addition, I was able to check whether what I observed, heard in the interviews and found in the documents corresponded. In trying to collect documents relevant to the case, I experienced difficulties with one of the research sites (Ithemba Primary) as they did not have many documents. Most of the documents pertaining to the history of the school were not made available to the principal when she took up her appointment. In addition, part of the HoD’s offices where documents were originally lodged, was burnt down prior to the data generation process. This forced me to persuade teachers *not* involved in the research process to assist me in retrieving the relevant information which fortunately they kindly did. However, at Wembibona Combined, all teachers were expected

to keep a portfolio of evidence and this was of great advantage to me. This therefore made the document collection process much easier.

4.3.6 Focus Group Interviews

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), focus group interviews are “unique and important formations of collective inquiry where theory, research, pedagogy, and politics converge” (p.888). These interviews are open-ended, in a group setting, with carefully planned interview questions and they take the form of informal discussions whereby participants discuss important aspects pertaining to the phenomenon being studied. Unlike the other data generation methods, this method discloses what is important to individual participants and the group setting tries to create a synergistic environment for a deeper, more insightful discussion (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). One focus group interview (Appendix K) with all four of the participants per research site was conducted and the duration of the interview was approximately 1 hour. The focus group interview proved to be a reliable data source and it was at these interviews that the issue of leadership practices was discussed in depth and different viewpoints, opinions, attitudes, understandings and feelings on the topic were obtained. I was also able to obtain first-hand information of the power dynamics at play.

There were various issues that I had to consider during the interview process. Firstly, I had to ensure that the questions were well-sequenced and that there was a conversational flow and a smooth transition from one question to the next. Secondly, I had to work out the dynamics of how to direct and control the flow of the discussion and how to skilfully manage the group. Thirdly, I realised that I needed to be sensitive to the needs of the individual participants, make them comfortable and ensure that the conversations were not dominated by one

individual. Fourthly, the focus had to be on how the different leaders interacted with each other, the power dynamics at play, the respect that they afforded each other and the kind of synergy that flowed between them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005)

When I first met with the participants, I briefed them on the purpose of the interview and explained what I hoped we would achieve together. In addition, opportunities were provided for them to ask questions and clarify issues. I carefully observed how the participants interacted with each other and who dominated the interview process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For example, at one of the research sites, I perceived the easy going relationship between the participants and it was difficult to identify the formal leaders. On the other hand, at the other site I became aware of possible tension between participants and this was a cue for me to probe more deeply and to pick up on this during the individual interviews so as to try to understand this tension in greater depth. Furthermore, it helped that I verified information during and after each interview to ensure content and construct validity. Data obtained was compared to what the participants said in the individual interviews and wrote in their journals (principals only) about their leadership practices.

4.3.7 Researcher's Self-reflective Journal

A self-reflective journal is the researcher's personal space where he or she spends time critically reflecting on the research journey and on the phenomenon being studied (Ortlipp, 2008). The researcher makes note of the choices they made, reasons and areas that need to be changed or improved upon (ibid). I decided to keep a self-reflective journal to reflect on the data generation process, the research sites and the participants. Initially the self-reflective journal was intended for my own personal use but I soon realised that it was a very useful

additional data source as I had reflected upon my feelings, thoughts, and actions as well as the actions of the participants. The self-reflective journal proved invaluable as it contained useful notes, reflections, photographs as well as important considerations for me to bear in mind during the data generation process. At the end of each day, I made notes of important observations, considerations and events and made suggestions I should bear in mind. I also took photographs of defining moments and processed and stuck them into my journal with notes alongside each photograph. The journaling process also assisted me in vividly recalling what had transpired during the data generation process as there was a year in between the data generation process and the data analysis process.

Some of the challenges experienced were that journal writing is a time consuming process as much time went into reflections, the writing process and the processing of photographs. The researcher has to be disciplined and ensure that time is set aside each day to reflect and record information.

4.4 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Once the data was collected, I posed the first very broad question in the first level analysis for each school viz. “What does the case mean?” (Rule & John, 2011, p.75). The data thus had to be prepared, analysed and interpreted and patterns of meaning had to be found so as to answer the research questions. This involved constructing rich, detailed descriptions, identifying categories to generate explanations of causality evident in the case, (Rule & John, 2011). The first step was to sort the data.

4.4.1 Sorting the Data

Mindful that I had generated large amounts of data from multiple sources across three sites, I sorted, categorised, labelled and stored the data for easy retrieval. The data of each research site was placed in physical files for easy access. The interviews were transcribed and prepared for analysis. The analysis commenced once the data was transcribed and the transcriptions were checked against the recorded data. Due to time constraints and the volume of data collected, I enlisted the help of an accredited transcriber to assist with the transcriptions. After each transcription was completed, I listened to the voice recordings against the transcribed data and made certain that the transcriptions were accurate.

4.4.2 Analysing the Data

The data analysis took place in two stages in response to my two research questions viz.

1. What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?
2. What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

In Stage 1, I attempted to answer this question: *What teacher leadership practices are evident at the case study schools?* I used Grant's (2008a, 2012) Model of Teacher Leadership as an analytical tool for this first level of analysis. I used the categorising and connecting strategies of Maxwell (2012) to code, categorise and connect my data. This method of data analysis is based on the distinction between similarity and contiguity (Maxwell, 2012, p.109).

Similarity and contiguity are basically two different kinds of relationships between things, neither of which can be assimilated to the other (Maxwell, 2012, p.109). I commenced with the analysis of my data by highlighting the events that took place and the experiences as expressed by the participants. I then applied coding techniques to the relevant and significant data by coding, labelling and grouping the categories that were similar. According to Rule and John (2011), coding is an important part of data analysis and requires the researcher to label and highlight the different themes. They argue that “coding requires intelligent, analytic and systematic decisions about what the data is saying” (Rule & John, 2011, p.77). The segments or codes were then continually examined and compared, both within and between categories (Maxwell, 2012, p.111). This was time consuming, due to the amount of data collected. The process required intense concentration and an “open awareness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2005, p.338).

The data was coded, categorised and connected according to Grant’s (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership (see Chapter 2). In other words, I analysed the data in terms of zones (Z), roles (R) and Indicators (I) for each of the case study schools and in response to my first research question. I had the opportunity to use Grant’s (2006) Model of Teacher Leadership in my Masters dissertation (Pillay, 2008) and the modified model (2012) in this study. Whilst the modified model was especially a useful analytical tool for the South African context, I have found that the zones within the model have too many roles and indicators. In a study of such a magnitude as this, I found many overlaps and, by the time I began analysing the data from the third school, I was convinced that some of the roles and indicators could be merged.

Although the first step provided a clear indication of the leadership practices at the schools, I needed to do much more analysis in terms of structure, culture and agency if I was to arrive at a plausible explanation of the underlying causal mechanisms leading to these practices (and not others). This additional level of analysis is critical to social realist research because, as Danermark et al. (2002) warn us, if we do not uncover participants' reality, "we suffer a great risk of incorporating flawed ideas and ideological delusions into social science theory formation, thus legitimizing it as science at the same time as the understanding of reality remains distorted" (p.41).

In Stage 2, therefore, I engaged in analytical dualism (Archer, 1995) in an attempt to uncover structures, cultures and agential mechanisms at the level of the real which gave rise to the events and experiences of leadership practices at the level of the actual and the empirical.

I began this stage with the process of 'reduction' which is effectively what all qualitative researchers do when moving towards a more fine-grained analysis of data viz. to take from what has been coded, categorised and connected (Maxwell, 2012), and begin to make decisions around what needed to be kept and/or discarded in order to answer my second research question. I began another form of coding to do this i.e. using: S (structure), C (culture), or A (agents) to indicate the structures, cultures and agents that could be understood to be at the transitive levels.

I then identified the main underlying causal cultural, structural and agential mechanisms that, from my reasoned and informed position, had the greatest influence on the leadership practices at the actual and the empirical levels.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When collecting and examining documents of the school, I wanted to guarantee that confidentiality was not breached, harm would not come to any individual, the privacy of the individual was protected, and informed consent was obtained (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). In line with this, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) recommend that participants must be seen as subjects in need of protection during the research process and I therefore tried to guarantee their anonymity. I thus obtained ethical clearance from the university's Higher Degrees Committee (Appendix A) and informed consent (Appendix E) from the participants, the School Governing Bodies (Appendix C), the DoE (Appendix B) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix I). The purpose of the research and the procedures to be followed were discussed with the participants and they were made aware that participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the process at any time. Furthermore, confidentiality of the participants' identities and the case study schools were ensured through the use of pseudonyms.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was imperative to be as unobtrusive as possible while generating the data, I found that I sometimes had to abandon my researcher identity and become immersed in the schools' activities. For example, a principal asked me to accompany her to a class to observe a lesson. I was aware that this could compromise the validity process but agreeing to this helped to build a good relationship and trust with staff members who, in turn, co-operated and became willing participants. It was also during these activities that I uncovered a great deal of information. To this end, Gillham (2000) proved quite right in saying that, "people will disclose a great deal if they feel they can trust" the researcher (p.53).

I also tried to ensure validity of the data collected. In finalising the transcripts of the interviews as data, I had to ensure that I captured exactly what was said. I thus used an eclectic approach through “member checks” and constantly consulted with the participants and requested that they read the transcripts to make sure that what they said was accurately transcribed. When considering the issues of power, I was aware of my positionality as the researcher and of the issues of bias and judgement. This was because the participants might have been under the impression that I already had a “rich, eclectic and well-articulated conceptual framework and set of values” (Geelan, 2003, p.7). Consequently, it was important that I worked at building a good relationship with the participants.

4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Every attempt was made to ensure trustworthiness of the research process. The concept of trustworthiness has been offered as an alternative to reliability and validity used in quantitative research by Lincoln and Guba (Rule & John, 2011). I attempted to achieve trustworthiness of the data through an ongoing, interactive process involving continuous reflection and reflexivity and subsequently making adjustments to the research design. I made notes in my reflective journal on a daily basis and this helped me to remember valuable information during the analysis process. It was also essential that I presented my ideas to the school and research communities to obtain new insights and suggestions to prove the study’s credibility. A learned colleague in the field of Educational Leadership and Management and in Critical and Social Realism also read my thesis for coherence and made valuable suggestions and comments. Through the process of being reflexive the title as well as the research questions were carefully considered and I refined it as I proceeded along the journey.

I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) key criteria to ensure trustworthiness of my research process, namely: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity and generalisability), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity). What follows is an explanation of how I used these four constructs.

Credibility is an alternative to internal validity and is used to show that every step was taken to ensure that a true reflection is portrayed of the phenomenon being studied. In this study the phenomenon studied was leadership practices. The following steps were taken to ensure the credibility of how I tried to uncover how leadership was practised at the case study schools. Firstly, I used a case study research design and used three research sites so as to ensure that sufficient data was generated to study leadership practices within a bounded system. The data generating methods (observations, open-ended interviews, focus group interviews, transect walks, journal writing by the primary participants as well as a self-reflective journal) including the data analysis methods (coding, categorising, connecting strategies, and reduction) are widely used in critical and social realism research. Secondly, the use of a variety of data sources enabled me to successfully triangulate my studies. I was able to cross-check information derived from the individual interviews with that of the focus group interviews, the observation process as well from documents. Thirdly, using a multiple case research design enabled me to collect sufficient data to be able to uncover the causal mechanisms that either enabled or constrained the leadership practice.

Transferability refers to the extent to which a case study has recorded the fullness and essence of the case reality (Rule & John, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that for a study to be trustworthy in terms of transferability, sufficient data must be provided of the context of

fieldwork. There are many debates about the issue of whether case studies can be generalised due to the uniqueness of each case (Rule & John, 2011). I argue that undertaking case studies is not whether it can be generalised or not but rather the focus is on a particular phenomenon and the aim is to understand the particularity of the case (Stake, 1995), and as said earlier, offers ‘case knowledge’ to other researchers and practitioners. The rich thick data provided by a multiple case study research design could enable the reader to determine the level of transferability based on the findings and conclusions. For example, there may be many similar structural, cultural and agential properties prevalent at other disadvantaged schools.

Dependability is seen as an alternate to reliability and “its focus is on methodological rigour and coherence towards generating findings and case accounts which the research community can accept with confidence” (Rule & John, 2011, p.107). The researcher explains why the design and methods chosen were the best possible ones after having tried out various other methods. To further add credibility to my study, I engaged with a multiple case study research design, a cross case analysis and used a variety of data gathering methods to triangulate my study and ensure trustworthiness. This guaranteed that multiple sources of information were used to get a rich, in-depth and thorough understanding of the case which helped me look at the leadership practices from several “vantage points” (Maxwell, 2012, p.74). I also tried various data analysis methods before finally deciding on fitness for purpose. In addition, at times, I had to “adjust my actions to make the design more relevant and productive” (Maxwell, 2012, p.74). In doing this, I took my cue from Maxwell (2012) who contends that undertaking research is an ongoing, interactive process and is a much better fit for qualitative research.

Confirmability is an alternative to objectivity which is widely used in quantitative research. In this study I have stated my positionality as researcher as being both an outsider as well as an insider to the research. I have also made it known that in my role as a female principal that my own beliefs and values are most likely to come out in this study. I have correspondingly conformed to all ethical issues so as to ensure trustworthiness of the research process.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the qualitative approach which this study adopts, my research design and methodology, including the strengths and the dilemmas that I encountered to ensure that my research was valid, sound and justifiable. It was impossible to stick to the original design and I therefore portrayed what transpired as the research process unfolded. Through extensive reading, engaging with other PhD students, attending workshops and seminars, presenting parts of my work to the research community, and constantly consulting with my supervisors, I grew as a PhD student and began to look at my research design anew. I realised that a research design is not something out of a textbook, but is something exclusive to one's own research topic and questions. In the next two chapters, I present the analysis of the data of each of the two case study schools retained for this thesis. I begin in Chapter 5 with Wembibona Combined School.

CHAPTER 5

ENACTING LEADERSHIP: THE CASE OF WEMBIBONA COMBINED SCHOOL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is in two parts. Part One is purely descriptive in nature and presents the results of my first level of analysis conducted on the data related to Wembibona Combined School, using Grant's (2008, 2012) Model of Teacher Leadership (as explained in Chapter 1). This first part effectively contributes to answering Research Question 1 i.e. What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

To remind the reader, Wembibona is a pseudonym and an isiZulu word meaning 'recognised', and the following pseudonyms have been used to refer to the participants: Teacher 1, Thandi; Teacher 2, Twali; Principal, Philani and HOD, Hlumi. Throughout the chapter, I provide cross references to my data sources. To facilitate reading, the following codes have been used to indicate the different data sources: Self-Reflective Journal (SRJ), Participants Interview (I), Principal's Journal (PJ), Focus Group Interview (FGI), Observation Schedule (OS) and Document File (DF).

Part Two of this chapter works to respond to Research Question 2: What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

5.2. PART ONE: TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES EVIDENT AT WEMBIBONA COMBINED SCHOOL

As discussed in the second and fourth chapters of this thesis, Grant's model refers to four zones of teacher leadership. What follows is a presentation of data analysed according to the four zones, and the roles and indicators within this model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2012). The presentation of the order of the indicators for each of the four zones and the roles, range from the strongest to the weakest that the teacher leaders led in. This is to provide a rich picture of the extent to which participants contributed to each of the roles within the designated zones. For the sake of brevity, I shall henceforth refer to the model as 'this model'. I begin with a discussion of teacher leadership within the first zone at Wembibona Combined School.

5.2.1 Zone 1: Leading Within the Classroom

According to the model, there is only one role associated with this zone. I now discuss the enactment of leadership in this zone, using the indicators as an organising framework. In this zone, all of the participants at Wembibona Primary led strongly.

5.2.1.1 Role 1: Continuing to Teach and Improve One's Own Teaching

All four participants were highly qualified and were continuously upgrading themselves, thus making every endeavour to keep in line with new developments (indicator 2). This enabled them to derive a great deal of 'academic capital' as follows: Hlumi completed a Diploma in Education, a Diploma as well as an Advanced Certificate in Library Education, a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed) as well as a B.Ed Honours degree, a Master's Degree (M.Ed), (I,

p.1) and a certificate in Library Education. At the time of the interview she indicated that she was in the process of pursuing her doctoral studies (I, p.2). Similarly, Twali completed her Teachers Diploma, a Diploma in Accounting and Bookkeeping, a Diploma in Information Technology and at the time of her interview she was completing her Bachelor of Accounting Degree (I, p.3). Thandi, had a Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA), a Higher Diploma in Education, a B.Ed Honours, a Diploma in Computer Studies, a further Diploma in Guidance and Counselling and was studying for a Diploma in Project management (I, p.3). Philani had a Senior Primary Diploma in Education, a BA, a BA Honours as well as an Advanced Certificate in School Leadership and Management (ACE), (DF, p.1186). These academic qualifications were enhanced by a whole array of workshops and seminars which these staff members had attended. Their ongoing professional development activities indicated that they were well-endowed with a wealth of salient knowledge that was pooled to collectively make valuable contributions to the leadership practices of their school.

Concerted efforts were made by the participants in the design of creative learning activities and in the improvisation of resources (indicator 3). Hlumi, for instance, indicated how she introduced what she had learnt through participation in the SMILE project, which was initiated by the Joint Education Trust (a Non-governmental organisation) to improve the state of English in South African Schools (I, p.3). Further evidence was forthcoming when Twali explained how she devised strategies to identify and assist the slow learners in her class (I, p.27). She persisted in working with them during breaks and after school and motivated and inspired them with praise and stars so as to try to get them on par with the other learners in her class (I, p.27).

Participants proved to be exemplary classroom practitioners in the area of expert practice (indicator 1), and engaged in autonomous decision-making to make change happen for the benefit of learners (indicator 7). Evidence of their expert practice was illustrated when Thandi received the Provincial Teacher of the Year Award and was placed third nationally. This award recognises excellence in primary school teaching (DF, p.28) and is bestowed on teachers for their dedication, creativity and effectiveness in the classroom. In addition Twali, Hlumi and Thandi had previously won the National Award for Excellence in Team Teaching initiated by the Department of Education to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These educators were found to have used “*innovative teaching methods to enhance learner skills and talents and construct learning environments that were appropriately contextualised and inspirational, respecting the individual needs of their learners*” (DF, p.104). Twali also received awards for excellence in classroom teaching from her school (DF, p.21) as well from her district (DF, p.22) and Hlumi had received the best performing educator award at district level (DF, p.39). To ensure that they were updated with all aspects of the curriculum, participants opted to join the Classroom Reinforcement and Teacher Training Programme (DF, p.30,37). This programme initiated by the Joint Education Trust, assisted participants in improving their learners’ linguistic and cognitive skills (DF, p.30,37). Thandi indicated that the programme taught them to be creative and to use innovative teaching and learning strategies, to adapt to change and to make decisions appropriate to suit the needs of their learners (FGI, p.10). This was confirmed during the transect walk around the school where I observed their innovative classrooms and teaching aids (SRJ, p.72- 73 photographs).

Participants were very strong in the area of maintaining a good standard of record keeping and engaging in reflective practice (indicator 4). This reinforced their expert practice. During

my observation of the Staff Development Teams' (SDT) discussion of teacher record books (OS, p.7-8), I observed how high the participants had scored in this area (OS, p.7). Hlumi scored highly because the team was of the opinion that she spent a great amount of time and effort planning and preparing her lessons in terms of content-related pedagogy (OS, p.7). Likewise, Twalis's assessment file showed that she had used a range of assessment techniques with well-designed assessment criteria and had obtained a high score (OS, p.8). The team noted that comprehensive records of learner progress and achievements were kept and that at the end of each of the lessons plans there were indications of on-going reflections.

Effective, innovative, value-driven strategies were utilised to ensure good classroom discipline (indicator 6). To achieve this ideal, those teachers who disciplined their learners with care, and who used the most innovative discipline strategies, were presented with certificates at the end of the year Awards Ceremony. Hlumi's outstanding ability was evident when she received a certificate for using creative discipline strategies in her classroom (SRJ, p.89). To maximise positive impact on her learners, she described how she took the lead in becoming the learners' role model by being punctual in class, well prepared for her lessons, by keeping learners purposely engaged and by using innovative teaching resources such as a data projector (I, p.10). In addition, she was consistent with praise and encouragement and enforced sanctions on those who were late, absent and who had defaulted with their homework. During the transect walk (SRJ, p.89), I observed that participants' classrooms had the school code of conduct, a basic set of rules and regulations displayed for learners to follow, as well as a list of duties and responsibilities assigned to various learners (SRJ, p.71-73). In addition, Twali had used behaviour modification charts and gave stars to learners for their dress code, behaviour, homework and work performance (SRJ, p.16). Thandi, on the

other hand, explained that by collaboratively drawing up the classroom rules with the learners and by rotating the classroom duties and the class monitors, learners began to own the process and felt a sense of importance (SRJ, p.16).

The data generated in the zone of leading within the classroom was, therefore, replete with evidence showing that the four participants excelled at keeping abreast of new knowledge. None, however, engaged in classroom action research (indicator 5).

5.2.2 Zone 2: Leading Beyond the Classroom in Assisting Colleagues at Their Own School

Participants excelled in this zone by taking the lead in assisting their colleagues at their own school. What follows is a discussion of the three roles and the indicators within this zone of the model that participants led in.

5.2.2.1 Role 2: Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge within one's Own School

To keep abreast of new knowledge, every effort was made for teachers to attend curriculum workshops held by the Department of Education (DoE). They in turn took new learning, with critique, back to their staff (indicator 5). Coupled with this, they engaged in joint curriculum development in both core, extra and co-curricular activities (indicator 1) and worked collectively to contextualise the curriculum for their own particular school (indicator 4). This then emphasised the “centrality of context” (Grant, 2010, p.245). A close look at the staff meeting minutes indicated that all subject chairpersons were given slots at the meetings to report on their subjects, workshops attended, as well as on recent developments and changes in their subjects (DF, p.137-138). During a staff meeting, for example, Twali was given a slot

to report on a lesson planning workshop which she attended (DF, p.14). Similarly, Thandi explained that she and Hlumi attended a series of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) workshops (FGI, p.10) and in turn workshopped this to the staff.

There was also a special slot set aside at meetings and at workshops for debates and reflection around issues of the curriculum. This indicated that much thought had gone into the implementation process. As is evidenced in the following excerpt, Twali articulated how, after she conducted the workshop on lesson planning, they “*sat down and discussed issues. Even though it was a directive from the department, we just did not implement like it is, we read the circular together and then we discussed all the issues,*” (I, p.8). Philani also explained how educators who had attended different subject committee meetings came with different ideas and so they would sit as a staff, workshop what they had learnt and come up with a solution suitable to their school (I, p.7). This discussion indicated that the emphasis was on the ‘joint interactions’ and on the ‘activities’ (Spillane et al., 2004) which included debates, discussions, inputs and reflections that participants were engaged in, which constituted the leadership practices.

The discussions thus far indicates that “teachers need the time and the opportunity to share and expose their classroom practices so that there is a transfer and distribution of expertise within the school” (Harris, 2004, p.33). Moreover, the manner in which all teachers were relied upon for input, resonates with Harris’s (2013) view that leadership is a powerful and important force for change. She maintains that it is important to nurture, grow and develop broad based leadership capacity in schools. The focus at Wembibona Combined School, according to the evidence presented, was not about what individual leaders brought to the

leadership practice, but rather on the 'routines and tools' (Spillane, 2006) such as the discussions, debates, suggestions, and the reflections which enhanced and contributed to leadership practices.

To further strengthen teachers' curriculum and assessment knowledge in their specialised fields, participants took the lead in subject committee meetings to empower their colleagues (indicator 3). The policy of the school was that Level One Educators had to take the lead in subject committee meetings by being the chairpersons. For instance, Hlumi postulated that although her task as Head of Department (HoD) was to provide curriculum support and to monitor the work of the educators, it was the Level One Educator who took the lead in subject committee meetings (I, p.6). A good example was that in the Life Orientation (LO) subject committee, Twali "*was the convenor and she chaired all meetings whilst another educator acted as the minute secretary*" (SRJ, p.63). She mentioned that as chairperson of the LO subject committee, she "*conducted a skills audit and would choose educators who were knowledgeable and skilled in certain issues to conduct workshops and to mentor those who were new in teaching LO*" (I, p.10). Philani further indicated that each of the subject committees had to collaboratively "*draw up the subject policy and action plan so as to guide educators on how to plan, teach and assess learners*" (PJ, p.9). The data thus revealed that teachers with the skill and expertise were given the opportunity to contribute to the leadership practice. The manner in which participants took the lead indicated that they "*contributed to a community of teacher leaders by influencing others to improve their educational practice*" (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p.36).

Participants were also proficient in assisting their colleagues in the area of extra and co-curricular coordination (indicator 6). To highlight a few examples; Twali was the Sports Coordinator and she worked closely with the sports committee to plan and coordinate all sporting activities. She coached teachers in charge of netball and used the expertise within the various sports committees to develop educators. The data revealed that the netball teams had won many accolades, both locally and provincially, under Twali's guidance and supervision (SRJ, p.76; DF, p.102). In addition, Twali and the soccer committee invited reputable national soccer clubs like Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates to scout for talent at her school and to coach teachers and train boys to become national soccer players (SRJ, p.77; DF, p.72-75).

In a similar manner, Hlumi was instrumental in introducing the Girl Guide Movement, the Boy Scouts' Movement as well as the Scholar Patrol Project (SRJ, p.93). Confirmation of how she motivated her team was demonstrated when the whole team enthusiastically agreed to camp with the newly formed Boy Scouts Movement in order to teach them survival skills (I, p.84). Thandi, who was the Excursions Coordinator, also worked closely with her team to plan exciting educational excursions. After each trip she would congratulate her team members and they evaluated the trip so as to improve on the next one (SRJ, p.90). What is more, as the chairperson of the English subject committee, she initiated programmes such as inter-class debates and speech contests. All members of the English committee, in turn, participated actively in the Grade 10 speech contest (OS, p.7) which was held after school. At one of the competitions, I observed that one of the teachers acted as chairperson, two of the committee members served as adjudicators whilst another printed and handed out certificates to the winners (OS, p.7). It became obvious that the focus was not on the individual leader

but on the collective interactions amongst the various leaders which equated to leadership (Harris, 2008).

What became perceptible was that participants were very strong in this role in which they assisted their colleagues within their school in terms of curriculum development. They were, however, not as strong in the area of team teaching (indicator 2).

5.2.2.2 Role 3: Leading In-Service Education and Assisting Other Teachers within one's Own School

In the area of staff-development initiatives, it was evident that the participants occupied a leading role and that they were very strong in this area (indicator 2). To highlight a few examples; Hlumi who was the Head of Department in charge of Technology, and who was highly qualified in teaching Computer Education, designed a Computer Outreach Programme (DF, p.193) for her staff during the holidays. She enlisted the assistance of Thandi who had a diploma in Computer Education and worked closely with the Durban Institute of Technology (DF, p.193). She also reported how she came up with the idea of offering extra tuition to learners who needed assistance in “*Maths, Natural Science and Technology*” (I, p.10). Another example was when Philani conducted a series of staff development workshops, on the control of school assets which included textbooks and science and sporting equipment (DF, p.122). Clearly, the emphasis was not on the heroic leader but rather on the specialised skills and expertise of a collective group of teachers (Spillane et al., 2004).

Participants were extremely proficient in the mentoring and induction programme at the school (indicator 4). Philani explained that the SMT, as well as those with “*the expertise and experience in the required field*” (PJ, p.13; DF, p.75-76), was chosen to mentor and induct

teachers. The school had a well-planned mentoring and induction policy (DF, p.75-76) to induct and mentor all novice teachers as well as those who were newly promoted. Thandi, for instance, who was a seasoned English teacher, and the chairperson of the English subject committee, acted as mentor to new teachers in the English department (DF, p.10). Twali, on the other hand, was the chairperson of the Life Orientation subject committee and she, together with a few seasoned educators, acted as mentors to the newly appointed educators in the LO department (SRJ, p.73-77). She was also proficient in coaching sport and took the lead in demonstrating the skills required to assess learners during physical education lessons (SRJ, p.77; DF, p.72-75). The mentoring programme coincided with the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) appraisal programme and all educators were assigned to work with a peer (indicator 3, PJ, p.3). Thandi, who was new to teaching LO, chose Twali as her peer to assist her in planning, preparing and in the teaching of LO (SRJ, p.77). During the transect walk I observed Twali coaching Thandi and offering suggestions to her during the LO lesson (SRJ, p.72- 73). What was highlighted was that leadership was stretched (Spillane, 2006) over multiple leaders depending on the skill that was required.

Confirmation, after analysis of the data, showed that close working relationships were forged between the participants and the other teachers (indicator 1). This happened both formally and on an informal basis. To cite an example, during informal observations in the staffroom, the table at which I sat was shared by Hlumi, Thandi and teachers from the English department. I observed that they were often engaged in *“preparing their lessons and assessments as well as selecting learner-support material for their learning area”* (OS, p.62). During another informal observation, I noticed how Twali explained to her colleagues what lesson she was preparing and the teaching aids that she was going to use (OS, p.63). In

addition, whilst observing a management meeting in progress, I discerned that members were calm, relaxed, and open as they shared ideas and information. There was a strong bond that existed between them (SRJ, p.73). Duties were assigned to them according to their strengths and in areas which they were passionate about. The manner in which educators worked closely together was in line with Wenger's (1998) view on Communities of Practice where members within these communities are practitioners with a common interest and who possess a shared repertoire of experiences, skills, knowledge and levels of expertise.

There was a high priority attached to building skills and confidence in others (indicator 5) at Wembibona Combined School. This coincided with the mentoring programme. To illustrate, Philani noted that there were eight school management team members and retorted that *"everyone gets an opportunity to lead, and chair the meeting"* (PJ, p.7). He was of the opinion that this helped in refining their skills and confidence (PJ, p.7). Philani's view on the importance of empowering all teachers was aptly summed up in the following extract where he stated that *"I don't put myself on top, I work with them. I talk to them – all of them and I understand all of them. I assign duties to them according to their capabilities, according to their skills, all of them"* (I, p.15). This claim was confirmed during my observation of a management meeting (OS, p.1-2). I noted that Hlumi convened the meeting and each of the management members had the opportunity to give feedback on what was happening in their respective departments (OS, p.1).

Likewise, when Twali convened the staff meeting to brief educators about the Open Day, she also drew on the expertise of her team members to report to staff on aspects that they were in charge of (SRJ, p.78). Further to this, she related how she empowered teachers within her

committee by allowing them to attend sports meetings and workshops and how this boosted their confidence (I, p.10). Another example was when Thandi explained how her role as chairperson of excursions was made much easier as each of the committee members were delegated duties “*so that everybody feels part and parcel of that committee and at the end of the day all are accountable*” (I, p.5). The focus was, therefore, on those who led, and on who empowered and capacitated other staff rather than on the formal leaders (Harris, 2008). In addition, expertise came from different teachers and in the joint interactions and leadership was stretched over multiple leaders (Spillane, 2006).

Affording all teachers the opportunity to participate in the leadership practice, conduct workshops and giving them the opportunity to share their ideas and furnish input in meetings, meant that participants worked with integrity, trust and transparency (indicator 6).

5.2.2.3 Role 4: Participating in Performance Evaluation

Evidence in the data suggested that participants contributed actively to performance appraisal of their colleagues. The IQMS process was taken seriously at Wembibona Combined School (indicator 1) and participants were strong in this aspect of the zone where they took the lead in contributing to the professional development of their colleagues. Thandi, who was the chairperson of the Staff Development Team (SDT), together with the other members, coordinated the time tables for the various classroom visits. The SDT met with the various Development Support Teams (DSG) to discuss each teachers IQMS scores. They examined educator files, visited their classrooms, observed lessons, and planned staff development programmes (OS, p.10; DF, p.56). The SDT collated scores and oversaw the appraisal and moderation process. The time table that was drawn up, together with the SDT, was dutifully

followed (OS, p10). Whenever there were DoE meetings or workshops attended in terms of IQMS, Thandi and the Staff Development Team (SDT) planned staff-developmental workshops for all staff members (PJ, p.13). Individual staff needs, according to the Personal Growth Plans (PGPs) of each of the educators, were also considered for the workshops and those teachers with the skills and expertise conducted these developmental workshops (OS, p.10; PJ, p.14). Hlumi intimated how she acted on the needs of the Technology educators and conducted a series of computer workshops to help teachers to improve their skills in using the computer and in teaching the subject (I, p.5). Further, an 'alternatives to corporal punishment workshop' was conducted by Philani to assist teachers in dealing with the behavioural problems of learners experienced during their lessons times (PJ, p.14).

Apart from the formal peer-mentoring programmes, there were also informal peer-assessment activities (indicator 2) that took place and participants were very effective in this area. I observed how there was a continuous stream of teachers to the staffroom during their free times. They met to plan their lessons and to discuss and assess each other's work (SRJ, p.62). Yet another example was that whilst visiting Thandi's class, I noticed that, her peer, Twali, was also present. She complimented her, offered suggestions to Thandi on how to improve her lessons and on how to involve learners in the lesson (SRJ, p.73).

It was evident that there was pervasive, structured, reflection that took place in respect of core and co and extra-curricular activities (indicator 4). To embody this, Thandi cited an example of how the planned excursion to Cape Town went well because her team had reflected on the previous year's trip and had reviewed the challenges experienced (I, p.5). She further explained how she got her committee together and they would discuss issues and

she would ask questions like “*what do you think must be done? How should we organise this event?*” (I, p.6). Further to this, minutes of staff, management and subject committee meetings revealed that ongoing reflection took place at the end of each of the meetings. Another example was that at the end of a staff meeting, educators reflected that the assemblies took too long and that valuable instructional time was being lost. The music committee was asked to review the amount of time spent by the choir during the assembly (DF, p.146). Engaging in reflective practice meant that the opinions of others in the committee were considered and not just those of the chairperson or others in formal leadership position. What was illuminated was that there was an engagement with multiple leaders who had proficiency and knowledge and this surpassed what individual leaders possessed or knew (Harris, 2008).

A high priority was afforded to assessment tasks which were moderated by the chairpersons of the various subject committees (indicator 3). This, therefore, demonstrated that those with the knowledge and subject expertise participated in the process. To point out, Thandi was the chairperson of the English committee and she was in charge of moderating English assessment tasks. I observed how she drew a particular teacher’s attention to the fact that the marks in the marking memorandum were not broken down and she guided him on how it ought to be done. Likewise, Twali was in charge of moderating all LO assessment tasks (OS, p.7). Whilst moderating a teacher’s LO assessment task, she called for her marking memorandum and her assessment sheet (OS, p.7). My findings lend support to the claim that participants were extended professionals and that there was an “openness of boundaries of leadership” (Gunter, 2005, p.51) and those teachers with the subject expertise were involved in the moderation process.

What emerged from the various data sources was that participants were very effective in assisting their colleagues within their school in terms of curriculum support and taking the lead in in-service training. However, there were no indications that they participated in team teaching (indicator 2).

5.2.3 Zone 3: Involvement in Whole School Development in Issues Such as Vision Building and Policy Development

In the zone of whole school development, there are two roles and the data yielded convincing evidence that participants used their skill and proficiency to excel in this zone within the model. The manner in which leadership unfolded at Wembibona Combined School is aptly portrayed by Spillane et al.'s (2004) claim that leadership occurs in the joint interaction of the leader, follower and the situations.

5.2.3.1 Role 5: Organising and Leading Peer Reviews of School Practice within One's Own School

At the core of promoting active participation in whole school development, strong evidence emerged to indicate that there was a great deal of teamwork (indicator 6). Engaging in teamwork meant that more educators were able to contribute to the leadership practice. Evidence of the effectiveness of teamwork was demonstrated when Hlumi, Twali, Thandi and two other educators had won both the Provincial and National Award for Excellence in Team Teaching (DF, p.102 & 104). The key reason for them having won was that "*the team was found to cascade learning to colleagues*" (DF, p.104). Being recognised for their outstanding ability to work as a team could be ascribed to the fact that the policy of the school was that no

one individual was allowed to take a decision on his or her own. Even though there was a chairperson and a HoD, there had to be teamwork which involved joint decision-making and the collective efforts of all members. Minutes of staff meetings and management meetings reflected that there was no one person that dominated any meeting. For example, the minutes of one staff meeting revealed that there were 12 teachers who were each given a slot to give input on various issues pertaining to whole school development (DF, p.56). Yet another example of teamwork was the Open-Day Programme where Twali was the coordinator and different educators were slotted into the programme to recite the prayer, welcome the guests and introduce the guest speaker (SRJ, p.86). This kind of synergy and interdependence reinforced the African-centred principles of *Ubuntu* which emphasises interconnectedness amongst people with the focus on its core values of humanness, caring, sharing, respect and compassion (Msila, 2008).

Participants were also instrumental in taking the lead into organisational diagnosis and in dealing with the change process (indicator 1). The Institution Level Support Team (ILST), spearheaded by Philani as chairperson and which comprised the Whole School Evaluation Team (indicator 2) led by Hlumi, the Learner Support Team, led by Twali, and the Educator Support Team led by Thandi took the lead in initiating change (DF, p.3). Members of the various sub-committees organised, designed and developed programmes for improvement and came up with the school development plan (DF, p.70). As chairperson of the ILST, Philani indicated that he ensured that the ILST sub-structures were fully functional and that mechanisms were in place to ensure that change and growth took place (PJ, p.11). He emphasised that “*strategic planning took place continuously and as a team we identify our weaknesses through the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis*

and the Whole School Evaluation process” (PJ, p.14; DF, p.73). The process then led to identifying the “*development programs that were needed to capacitate staff and other stakeholders with leadership skills*” (PJ, p.14). Clearly, engaging in strategic planning meant that there were discussions, reflection and input from various stakeholders in the decision-making processes.

The active engagement of the WSE, the LST and TST meant that there was participation taking place in terms of fundraising, policy development, staff development and professional development initiatives (indicator 5). To ensure that these initiatives were translated into action, those teachers with the skill, knowledge and expertise spearheaded the various change initiatives and projects (DF, p.3). This was confirmed by Philani when he stated that “*we consider the capabilities, interest, and expertise of staff when educators lead projects and change initiatives*” (PJ, p.16). For example, Hlumi who had a good rapport with parents, and who had experience in fundraising, was selected to be in charge of the fundraising committee. She indicated how she planned fundraising events with fun activities for learners and parents (I, p.12; DF, p.102). Similarly, Twali possessed a great deal of financial knowledge and thus conducted workshops on financial management for the School Management Team members (SMT) and the School Finance Committee.

What made matters easy, in terms of staff relations, was that all participants as well as the other teachers were all affiliated to the same Teacher Union and they were passionate about union matters (indicator 4). This dedication was made clear during informal observations. To elucidate, the staff room was often abuzz with teachers discussing union matters (OS, p.16). There were no real signs that there was any formal mediation process taking place but

what was apparent was that the Teacher's Union had a positive influence on staff members. To demonstrate, Twali was the Union Representative as well as the Gender Convenor at the school and she was actively involved in conducting site meetings as well as giving feedback to the staff and taking mandates from them to the union (OS, p.20). She indicated how she planned the World Aids Day celebration and the 67 Minutes Mandela Day celebration at her school (I, p.16). These two projects were initiated by her Teacher Union and she, in turn, organised the event at her school together with the Schools Site Committee.

Participants were very strong in this role within the model and they contributed to whole school development, union matters and in the IQMS process. They were weak however, in the area of school based action research (indicator 3).

5.2.3.2 Role 6: School Level Decision-making within One's Own School

There was confirmation in the data that participants engaged in participative leadership (indicator 2) where teachers felt that they were a part of the change or development process and had a sense of ownership of the school. What was evident was that the principles of *Ubuntu* were infused into the leadership practice which included aspects such as respect and the sharing of ideas (Msila, 2008) within their teams. Twali explained that it was impossible for one person to run the school and to monitor everything on his or her own and they therefore ensured that all members in their committees were allocated duties and involved in decision-making (I, p.10). She substantiated this claim by indicating that the convenor for each of the committees had to be a Post Level One Educator. According to her, this exposed the Post Level One Educator "*to the leadership roles and the convenor is helping, is working hand in hand with the HoD*" (I, p.10). As chairperson of the sports committee, she had to

work with the school's sports committee and could not make any decisions on her own. Each of the members of the committee was given a duty and they had to ensure that the duty was successfully completed (SRJ, p.86). Teachers, within each of the committees, had a role to play and it was mandatory that they had to perform their duties to their optimum. Twali further indicated how everybody who is "*part and parcel of a committee is involved, so that at the end of the day you can all be accountable*" (I, p.5). It was discernible that teachers participated actively in the leadership practice and their "extraordinary leadership capabilities" (Barth, 1996) were being utilised.

Participants contributed a great deal to intensive school-based planning and decision-making (indicator 5). This then indicated that the leadership potential that existed within the school was utilised (Harris & Lambert, 2003) and that there was a high degree of social cohesion amongst staff members (Harris, 2014). Philani indicated how "*all stakeholders should be involved in the policy formulation process and in decision-making processes*" (DF, p.160). Policies that were formulated and decisions that were taken were collaboratively formulated, and all those with the expertise in the respective fields gave their input. This process ensured that there was ownership and transparency in the policy formulation process (PJ, p.12). Thandi indicated that all decisions that were taken by her committee had to be discussed with the members and she explained that "*I am not autocratic, I don't come to them and say, okay, as the convenor this is what I want to be done*". She mentioned that as "*a convenor you have to welcome each and everyone's ideas, it is not your idea and after all ideas have been put on the table and then everybody agrees on them*" (I, p.6). The manner in which teachers were involved in the decision-making processes resonates with the findings of Leithwood (1992)

where it was found that when teachers share in decision-making with leaders, they become committed to the decision.

It was noticeable that in the area of problem identification and resolution (indicator 3), participants worked collectively to come up with solutions. The regular management, staff and subject committee meetings and the discussions, debates, reflections and planning around issues indicated that there was consensus around issues and little room for conflict (DF, p.13-63; minutes of various meetings). Staff members were consulted on issues, thus ensuring that there was consensus and disagreements were amicably resolved (DF, p.13-63). Problems were identified through the various ILST support teams (DF, p.3). These teams, spearheaded by the four participants, engaged in strategic planning after conducting an analysis of the problems that the school experienced in the various areas of whole school development. For example, Thandi had made great inroads together with the IQMS team to conduct a series of workshops on the *Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS, Resolution 1 of 2003)* and the Foundations for Learning Campaign (DF, p.121)

Identifying problems and resolving them through consensus and through clear guidelines meant that conflict resolution was amicably handled through perseverance and good communication skills (indicator 4). For example, Twali who was the site steward for her Teacher's Union, indicated that problems were resolved easily as there were clear lines of communication, and those teachers who erred in any way were counselled and given the necessary sanctions where necessary (I, p.16). She demonstrated how she listened carefully to problems that teachers discussed and they looked for creative ways to solve these problems (I, p.16). Another example was when Hlumi indicated in a management meeting that two

teachers did not attend the Saturday parent meeting. It was decided at the meeting that the teachers should give a written explanation for their non-compliance, and then the necessary sanctions were to be decided upon (OS, p.11). In this regard, Philani advised Hlumi to listen carefully to what they had to say before passing judgement (OS, p.11). This then reflected that there was a great deal of discussion and listening to different perspectives, thus ensuring that problems were resolved after careful consideration.

Participants worked with trust, integrity and transparency and they were not deterred by any micro-politics at the school (indicator 1). Even though there were teachers who were being sanctioned for non-compliance, they were silent on issues and continued with their work. In this regard participants took the lead in bringing the staff together, in consulting with the various members in their committees and, through proper communication skills, managed to get their team members to work closely with each other in an atmosphere of trust.

Thus it can be seen that participants were very strong in this sixth role within the model and they took the lead in in-service education. It can be argued, therefore, that the participants consciously created the space and opportunities for leadership to flourish and they tapped into the leadership potential that existed in their school and within their various committees so that it could be utilised for the benefit of other teachers (Harris, 2008).

5.2.4 Zone 4: Extending Beyond the School to Lead in Community Life and Cross-school Networking

In the zone of extending themselves beyond the school there are two roles within the model and participants were proficient in this zone. They worked closely with parents and teachers

in their community (role 2) and they also led effectively in role 3 by forging strong links and networking with teachers from other schools.

5.2.4.1 Role 2: Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge in Cross-school Activities

Participants were in the forefront in terms of liaising with and empowering the School Governing Body (SGB) about curriculum issues (indicator 3). To illustrate, regular SGB meetings were held and Philani, Twali and Hlumi served on the SGB. Twali served as SGB secretary and Hlumi as staff representative. Both Twali and Hlumi kept the SGB informed of issues relating to the curriculum changes, assessment, examinations, etc. They also provided feedback on curriculum meetings and workshops which had been attended (DF, p.15). Philani emphasised that whenever the SGB was invited to capacity building workshops relating to the curriculum, he encouraged members to attend and accompanied them (I, p.12).

The school's vision to empower parents about curriculum issues was high on the list of priorities (indicator 2). Participants played a significant part in relation to this priority. This vision was accomplished through adopting a School Parental Involvement Policy (DF, p.128) which was the brainchild of Thandi. In the policy, teachers pledged to "*provide parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure learner progress and expectations for learner progress and performance*" (DF, p.194). Parents were also kept informed about curriculum news via regular newsletters, grade and phase meetings, and the school's open-day programme, as well as through parental intervention programmes (DF, p.106). Hlumi, for example, gave feedback about the Grade 9 meeting held over a recent weekend (OS, p.1; DF, p.193).

Participants also networked with colleagues at circuit, district, regional and provincial levels through committee or cluster meeting involvement (indicator 4). What emerged was that the focus was on extra and co-curricular activities rather than on matters of the curriculum. In Twali's case these included organising sporting events, co-ordinating the local branch of SADTU and organising events in her capacity as Gender Convenor. What became clear was that the leadership practice was extended to other schools thus indicating that it was "broad-based, dynamic, shared, diffuse and responsive" (Harris, 2008, p.152) and it was according to the contours of expertise (Spillane, 2006).

Within this role of the model, participants led very strongly in the area of providing curriculum knowledge to the SGB, parents and with teachers of other schools. They were weak, however, in terms of providing curriculum knowledge at learning area meetings (indicator 1).

5.2.4.2 Role 3: Leading in Service Education and Other Teachers in Cross-school Activities

Participants also led strongly in this area where they were engaged in staff development initiatives with other schools (indicator 2). To cite an example, Twali indicated how she had organised the school's soccer tournament involving two neighbouring schools. Besides playing soccer, learners recited poems, sang and were involved in drama activities (SRJ, p.85). Twali communicated closely with the coordinators from the neighbouring schools and taught them how to organise the event by paying close attention to important details. She mentored (indicator 4) and coached (indicator 3) them on how to coordinate the event and in this way managed to build their skills and confidence (indicator 5) (SRJ, p.86). Hlumi also

organised computer lessons for schools in her circuit (DF, p.70 & 91). The programme was held during the holidays over a three week period (SRJ, p.91) and was meant to build skills and confidence amongst Technology Teachers. Evidence of her outstanding ability in conducting these workshops was confirmed in a letter sent by the District Technology Subject Advisor to Thulani. In the letter he acknowledged that Hlumi “*has brought honour because as a lead teacher she has played a vital role in training 400 teachers in the training programme for the District and 1200 teachers in the Coastal Cluster*” (DF, p.152; letter from District Technology Advisor). Philani also worked closely with principals in his circuit (DF, p.154) and together they planned and conducted various workshops. He communicated how he conducted a workshop to guide and mentor principals on how to engage in strategic planning (DF, p.170).

Working closely with individual teachers whilst engaging in the various staff development initiatives meant that close relationships and rapport was built through which mutual learning took place (indicator 1). This meant that participants worked with integrity, trust and transparency (indicator 6). The manner, in which participants led both within and beyond their classrooms, resonates with Pounder’s (2006) contention that teacher leaders have the freedom and ability to transform the educational landscape beyond their classroom. This involved participants in the process of mentoring, coaching and developing teachers’ skills.

5.3 PART TWO: STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND AGENTIAL EMERGENT PROPERTIES THAT ENABLED OR CONSTRAINED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AT WEMIBONA COMBINED SCHOOL

To answer the second research question, attempts were made to identify what underlying causal generative mechanisms, in terms of the Structural (SEPs), Cultural (CEPs) and Agential Emergent Properties (PEPs). This was to establish whether they had either enabled or constrained the emergence of leadership practices at the actual and empirical levels (Danermark et al., 2002, p.206). To do this I engaged with Archer's (1995) concept of analytical dualism. The pertinent question I constantly bore in mind when applying Archer's theory was: "How must the world be - in terms of underlying generative mechanisms – for our observations in the actual and empirical to make sense?" (Case, 2013, p.139). To remind the reader the participants in the study included the two Level One Teachers, Twali and Thandi, the HoD, Hlumi, and the Principal Philani.

It is important to remember that the emergent powers and properties of structures, cultures and agents can interact and influence one another, often without even an agent or agents having awareness of it. But this emergence and influence are continuous and produce new (but irreducible to any former) properties and powers. In this way, SEPs come into being able to influence the values, beliefs, ideas and so on of agents, thereby changing their CEPs and the way in which they may then exert their personal powers and properties (their PEPs) in response to structures - and CEPs. But as Archer reminds us, 'all structural influences (i.e. the generative powers of SEPs and CEPs) "*are mediated to people by shaping the situations in which they find themselves*" (1995, p.196) [emphasis in original]. In other words, while

‘agents are the only efficient causes in social life’ (ibid, p.195), the situations and CEPs which agents confront at the social level, are never of their own making but pre-date their entry into them. Thus, it is always the interface of structure, culture and agency that critical and social realist research focuses on because that is where emergent properties and powers are exercised and where change does or does not begin, depending on the action of agents involved.

Bearing this in mind, the role of principal that Philani (the principal at Wembibona) held can be understood as a structure, as can Wembibona Combined School – as an ‘institutional structure’. As structures, the *role* and the ‘*institution*’ pre-dated Philani’s entry to Wembibona, and as ‘structures are irreducible to people’ (ibid, p.71), we cannot conflate the role of HoD, DP, principal, or ‘the school’, with Philani but must look at the interface between Philani as ‘agent’, the school, and now his principalship as ‘structures’. This is in order to identify the causal influences of the power and properties that led to Philani changing leadership practices to what they were at the time of this study, at a school in which he had been, in one way or another contributing to ‘leading’ for 12 years.

Perhaps one very interesting point to note is that the manner in which the school was led and managed *prior* to 2002 when Philani became principal, was premised upon the ideology of the colonial, apartheid government where schools were bureaucratically controlled in terms of decision-making processes. Philani explained how “*the past principal was a traditional principal and I came with another dimension of leading in terms of involving the teachers in decision-making*” (I., p.3). One can wonder immediately at the strength of structural and cultural conditioning at Wembibona during the years prior to Philani becoming principal that

precluded him from exercising any agential/ personal emergent properties and powers to confront such a ‘non-distributive’ form of leadership, despite clearly holding beliefs and values contrary to those of the ‘past principal’. Yet Archer (1995) says that:

...emergent structures represent objective limitations upon the situations and settings which agents can encounter. Thus what is ‘logged’ within the register of the cultural system defines the doctrines, theories, beliefs etc. in existence and thus circumscribes that which impinge upon agents as their ideational environment. Objectively, it delimits that which can be reproduced, re-formulated, rejected or transformed (p.196/7).

I would argue that this offers a very plausible explanation for Philani’s ‘passivity’ towards change during the previous principal’s reign given the oppressive, racist, socio-political climate of the time. In terms of forms of ‘agents’ (as described in Chapter 2), we could also describe Philani at this stage of his career as, perhaps, still a ‘Primary Agent’.

Hlumi underscored Philani’s view of the past principal saying “*he was always telling people what to do and did not distribute leadership*” (I, p.5). She further made known that “*he was in the old way of leading. He was the only person who chaired the meetings*” (I, p.5). From this it is possible to deduce that the former principal did not exercise his personal emergent properties to mediate the influence of the SEPs and CEPs inherent to the ‘management’ (rather than ‘leadership’) role he held, but submitted to them. We can speculate that this was the result of the fact that he had no desire to confront existing norms and hierarchies (other established structures) and ideologies (cultures), or he was comfortable within these and had no need to change anything. In addition, consideration must be taken of the fact that he was

the principal during the apartheid era and hence probably portrayed its cultural beliefs and ideologies.

But, when Philani took on the role of principal, with new levels of material resources and power available and the departure of the 'old' principal, he was able to move from 'agent' to 'Actor'. An 'Actor' for Archer, is someone who finds a "role/s in which they feel they can invest themselves, such that the accompanying social identity is expressive of who they are" (Archer, 2003, p.118). And from my data, particularly the interviews, it is quite clear that Philani-as-Principal is a role which sits very authentically with him. In moving from the role (structure) of Deputy Principal to that of Principal (structure, but with greater emergent properties and powers than that of a DP), Philani's own PEPs exerted a new and different causal influence on how he began to think about leadership and subsequently how he acted.

Spillane (2006) argues that this "practice is framed in a very particular way, as a product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation" (p.3). This kind of interaction, according to Spillane, is what gives form and shape to the leadership practice. What happened next was that Philani created new structures where teachers with the necessary expertise were placed in key leadership positions and (now reconciling literature from both Chapters 1 and 2) "leadership was therefore seen as an ever-present potential, available to any member of the organisation" (Department of Education, Task Team Report, 1996, p.226).

The causal relationship between structures (as mechanisms) meant that when Philani changed the structure of the role of principal, other structures within 'the institution' were also changed viz. the nature and form of, for example, existing committees and the way in which

leadership is now practised in the school. These new structures brought with them new properties and powers which causally influenced the PEPs of all the teachers in this case study and others, as Part One of this chapter shows. Hlumi, for example, highlighted that *“to be a chairperson of the meeting, this is new to us as the previous principal chaired all management and staff meetings”* (I, p.6). And my observation during the SMT and staff briefing session also confirmed that *“the management meeting is convened by a different management member each week and today’s meeting was convened by the Senior Primary HOD”* (OS, p.27). Those who chaired meetings were selected according to the matters to be discussed and Level One Educators were the chairpersons of subject committees. ‘Grade controllers’ also became a new institutional structure and a new role (also a structure) for Level One educators (DF, p.4 & 74).

Perhaps one of the most significant changes to note was that by opening up opportunities for more teachers to lead, these ‘agents’ also moved to become Actors which means that their personal investment in the school deepened. Thus Grade Controllers began to use their PEPs in turn, to bring about change to the overall structural condition (Archer, 1995). Those who chaired meetings were selected according to the matters to be discussed and personal expertise, and Level One Educators were the chairpersons of subject committees. For example, Twali was the Sports Director (I, p.5) and Thandi was a grade controller for Grade 9 (I, p.4). Grade controllers and chairpersons changed every year, thus affording many educators the opportunity to be placed in leadership positions. It would have been at the interface of the structural, cultural and agential properties and powers identified here, that more emergent properties and powers were produced since there are ‘internal and necessary relationships within and between emergent properties’ (Archer, 1995, p.168).

In this way, structure, culture and agency can be seen to act as mechanisms at the level of the real; either to effect change and transformation, *or* keep the status quo (the latter is *not* the case in the case study schools in this research). For example, it is now possible to see that the generative powers of the ‘rules and policies’ of the school (and the government legislation framing these) as *structures*, together with the attitudes, beliefs and values which constituted the Cultural System (or *culture*) during the *previous* principal’s time there, presented *constraining mechanisms* to change and transformation. With Philani taking up the role, however, and the way in which he used his PEPs and their causal influence on the existing SEPs and CEPs as described above, the generative powers and properties of the changed structures and Cultural System that emerged from this interface have created *enabling mechanisms* for change and transformation at Wembibona.

But Archer also talks a lot about the ‘internal conversation’ (2003) which individuals conduct within themselves and how out of these deep levels of reflexivity, emerge ‘concerns’ which are transformed into ‘projects’ which ‘agents, both individual and collective, seek to realise in society’ (ibid, p.132). These ‘projects’ find expression in *practices*. ‘Concerns’, ‘projects’ and ‘practices’ are all, of course, integral to the constitution of an individual’s PEPs and contribute to the causal powers and properties of them. She helpfully explains the ideas in this paragraph further by saying:

In everyday terms, we examine our social contexts, asking and answering ourselves (fallibly) about how we can best realise the concerns, which we determine ourselves, in circumstances that were not of our choosing. ... We survey constraints and enablements, under our descriptions (which is the only

way we can know anything); we consult our projects which were deliberately defined to realise our concerns; and we strategically adjust them into those practices which we conclude internally (and always fallibly) will enable us to do (and b) what we care most about in society (ibid, p.133).

In concluding Part Two, it is useful to show, from the data, what ‘concerns’, emerging from deep reflexivity by ‘the collective’ at Wembibona can be said to have become ‘projects’ (in Archerian terms). There is, for example, the ‘vision and mission statement’ (also part of the Cultural System) which reads, “*We are committed to placing teaching and learning first in everything that we do in our school. This would be achieved through providing staff with opportunities for leading, training and development*” (SRJ, p.69; DF, p.172). The *practices* (following the trajectory of concerns -> projects-> practices), as illustrated earlier in this discussion, can be understood to be all the changes in leadership practices now taken on by Actors at Wembibona. The strong belief in the potential of all learners, the high value placed on empowering all teachers, establishing accountability for actions as a key value, in addition to that of teamwork, respect for others and the observance of shared symbols, rituals and traditions – all of these can be understood as collective ‘concerns’ emerging out of reflexive engagement on “activities tied to the core work of the organisation that are designed by organisational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, practices of other organisational members” (Spillane, 2006, p.11).

The relevance of ending Part Two with an emphasis on the ‘agent’ is to reiterate the essential social realist position that, “agents are the only efficient causes in social life” (Archer, 1995, p.195). It is also only through “the actions of agents that the constraining or enabling powers

of structures and culture can be realised” (Archer, 1995, p.195). It is through their ability to reason about and reflect on their context and through their powers of creativity that they are able to accept, reject, resist, or circumvent the effects of structure and culture (Vorster, 2010, p.27).

5.4 CONCLUSION

In bring the totality of Chapter 5 to a close, it is clear that participants made every endeavour to go beyond what was expected of them. They undertook this to make change happen in their classrooms in terms of teaching and learning, and to take on so many leadership practices as the data included in this chapter illustrates. This was largely due to their commitment and ability to make great sacrifices and to make every attempt to get to know their learners, their backgrounds, aptitude levels. Context therefore mattered to them and they made every effort to adapt and adjust their teaching and learning strategies to suit the contexts of their school and their learners. The success at Wembibona was largely because participants and other teachers had pooled their resources and developed their “joint agency” (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p.440). As a united team, with a reservoir of expertise they chartered a way forward and adapted their teaching and learning strategies accordingly. Through their Corporate Agency and the causal efficacy of the powers and properties of the SEPs, CEPs and PEPs, leadership practices emerged. This then set Wembibona on a changed and transformed trajectory towards high functionality and success despite the challenges that were experienced. Coupled with this, teachers were shown deep respect by drawing on their expertise, allowing them to exercise their creativity and through acknowledging their contributions, they in turn made them feel that they were part of a winning team. Their

confidence and exuberance inspired them to win many teaching accolades, to network with schools internationally and to ensure that their learners were given the best opportunities to excel.

I now turn to Chapter 6, where I analyse the data of Ithemba Primary School.

CHAPTER 6

ENACTING LEADERSHIP: THE CASE OF ITHEMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the findings of Wembibona Combined School. In this chapter I present my analysis of the data at Ithemba Primary School, meaning ‘destiny’, in isiZulu. The following pseudonyms have been used to refer to the participants: Teacher 1, Thandiwe; Teacher 2, Thembisile; and HoD, Hosipho, and Principal Petronella. I have used the same layout strategies as in the previous chapter in organising this chapter, that is, Part One is purely descriptive, whilst Part Two engages with a social realist analysis of the data relevant to Ithemba Primary School.

6.2 PART ONE: TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES EVIDENT AT ITHEMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL

As with the previous chapter, I have structured this section according to the zones and roles of Grant’s (2008, 2012) model of Teacher Leadership and in response to research question 1: What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

6.2.1 Zone 1: Leading Within the Classroom

As established, in this zone of the classroom, there is one role and all four participants led strongly in this zone. I now discuss the enactment of leadership in this zone, using the indicators within the role as criteria to analyse my findings.

6.2.1.1 Role 1: Continuing to Teach and Improve One's Own Teaching in the Classroom

All participants proved to be exemplary classroom practitioners in the area of expert classroom practice (indicator 1), and they engaged in autonomous decision-making to make change happen for the benefit of learners (indicator 7). To cite examples, Petronella taught Grade 7 Mathematics and Economic Management Sciences (EMS). I observed that desks in her classroom were arranged so as to make maximum use of the floor space and there were innovative Mathematics charts used and learners participated actively in the discussions (SRJ, p.33). Likewise, Hosipho created an enabling learning environment. She set daily homework exercises and these were promptly marked (SRJ, p.8). Colourful charts were displayed and she used flashcards to help learners pronounce and spell difficult words. Desks were organised in clusters to cater for group work and Hosipho explained how she often told funny stories to relax her learners and to get them to respond (I, p. 6; SRJ, p.25). Class monitors were rotated and they assisted by collecting and handing out books (I, p.25). Thembisile also had colourful charts displayed on the walls and her floor space was creatively utilised to cater for the large class size. Learners under her care were attentive and spontaneous in answering questions and in voicing their opinions (SRJ, p.22). She also used innovative strategies such as group work and peer learning because she was of the opinion that learners could grasp difficult concepts more easily when these are explained by their peers (I, p.10).

In the area of record keeping, reflective practice (indicator 4), and in the design of learning activities and improvisation of resources (indicator 3) all participants were proficient. For instance, Petronella was often found marking her learners' books and planning and preparing lessons, teaching aids and assessment tasks (OS, p.10). During a visit to her classroom, I also observed that her learners' books "*were in a very good condition, neatly marked and covered with positive comments*" (OS, p.20; SRJ, p.33). Hosipho too, took pride and spent time planning and preparing her lessons and I observed Petronella complimenting her on the high quality of her learners' efforts (OS, p.20). Similarly, Thandiwe explained that when she planned her lessons "*you would find that there are a lot of books around me so I know that I have taken information from a variety of books, variety of materials. This is so that when I teach my learners I know that I give the learners the best lesson*" (I, p.3). To verify this, I observed how meticulously she planned her work (OS, p.5). In line with this finding, Crowther et al. (2002) argue that teacher leaders show characteristics such as determination, optimism and commitment towards their work.

Effective, inventive, value-driven strategies were utilised to ensure good classroom discipline by all participants (indicator 6). During the transect walk I observed how disciplined learners were in all the participants' classrooms and the ingenious methods that the teachers employed to maintain discipline in their large class sizes (SRJ, p.6). All educators were workshopped on alternatives to corporal punishment and incentives were given to those who excelled in maintaining good discipline (DF, p.29). For example, Thembisile affirmed that she had won certificates from the principal of the school for maintaining good classroom discipline (I, p.6; DF, p.10). She was strongly of the opinion that "*it is not easy to punish learners; it is words that have more impact, yes! Words speak louder*" (I, p.6). Her 'master plan' was to speak to

those who defaulted in a soft voice to mentor them and to enlist the help of social workers, as well as the Department of Education Psychological Services where necessary (I, p.7). I observed how well-mannered and attentive her learners were and that she had used incentives such as stars, and praised them for excellent behaviour, attendance, punctuality and academic performance (SRJ, p.22-23).

The professional qualifications of participants varied and they all attended workshops and seminars to keep abreast of new developments (indicator 2). Their professional qualifications were as follows: Thandiwe held a Bachelor of Education Degree (B.Ed.) and was studying towards a diploma in Library Education. Hosipho and Thembisile had both completed Diplomas in Education. Petronella was more highly qualified and acquired a Senior Primary Diploma in Education, a BA Degree, a B.Ed Honours degree and the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in School Leadership. She was studying towards the Principals' Management Development Programme (PMDP) during the time of the data generation process (PJ, p.1). Besides their academic qualifications, participants attended workshops, meetings and seminars thus indicating that they had a wealth of knowledge and skills to contribute to leadership practices.

The data revealed that all participants were proficient in the zone of leading within the classroom. This seems particularly so for the principal, as she was a committed grade 7 Mathematics and Economic Management Science teacher. She spent a considerable time ensuring that learners were exposed to the best possible teaching and learning strategies. This was perhaps because it was a primary school? However, I did not generate any data in the area of classroom action research (indicator 5) and this could be ascribed to the fact that

they were a small staff and there were consequently huge demands placed on their teaching time. All four teacher leaders aptly portray Harris and Day's (2003) description of teacher leadership as they were "in the first place, expert teachers who spent the majority of their time in the classroom, but take on different leadership roles at different times" (p.439). In addition these teachers were passionate about ensuring that they had "a demonstrable impact on students' self-esteem and achievement" (Crowther et al., 2002, p.15) and they were committed to their learners at school (Leithwood et al., 2004).

6.2.2 Zone 2: Leading Beyond the Classroom in Assisting Colleagues at Their Own School

Within this zone, participants led strongly. They "worked in dialogic ways with colleagues in the pursuit of improved teaching and learning" (Grant, 2012, p.57). Working from the premise that leadership potential exists very widely within a school (Harris & Lambert, 2003), what was accentuated was that teacher leaders and 'followers' with the skill, different areas of subject expertise, diverse viewpoints and perspectives were encouraged to contribute to the leadership practice. What follows is a discussion of the analysed data which pertains to the three roles within this second zone. It was found that the emphasis was not on the heroic leader but on the collaborative input of a web of leaders.

6.2.2.1 Role 2: Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge (In Own School)

All participants made every endeavour to attend Department of Education (DoE) Curriculum workshops (indicator 5), to contextualise the curriculum (indicator 4) and engage in joint curriculum development (indicator 1). As an illustration, Hosipho asserted how she met with

the Foundation Phase educators after each of the workshops attended to contextualise information disseminated and come to a meaningful conclusion of how the changes needed to be implemented (I, p.27). She related that they would “*talk and talk and talk about the curriculum and the expected changes. We discuss the changes and everyone is allowed to voice their views. I respect their views*” (I, p.27). Through engaging teachers in dialogue the team was able to “hear perspectives and experiences that were different from their own” (Shields, 2006, p.77).

Petronella also gave continuous guidance and direction on curriculum development to the Heads of Department (HoDs). In addition, as part of the campaign to improve teaching and learning, she, together with the HoDs, introduced what they called ‘supervision by walking around’, (DF, p.8). Petronella and the HoDs visited the classes of all teachers personally and compiled comprehensive reports on their lesson presentation, learner exercise books as well as the books of the educators. They noted their strengths and challenges. Together with other teachers they worked out improvement strategies (DF, p.3-4 & 8). For example, one of the comments that Petronella wrote to a teacher was as follows: “*in class the educator involved learners in practical tasks that enhanced understanding of concepts*” (DF, p.8). The manner in which teachers were developed and learnt from each other resonates with Wenger’s (1998) Community of Practice Theory. This theory espouses that learning takes place through the mutual engagement of teachers in trying to develop curriculum knowledge and who collectively develop knowledge and ‘shared meaning’ (Williams, 2009). A space was therefore created for them to be involved in “negotiation, learning, meaning and identity” (Wenger, 1998, p.134) thus attempting to transform the school into a professional learning community (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Three of the participants, excluding Thembisile (I did not collect any data about her in connection with this indicator) excelled in the area of conducting subject committee meetings (indicator 3). Petronella reported that chairpersons of subject committees were those with the relevant skills and subject expertise (I, p.7). In this case, leadership was “conceptualised as distributed practice ‘stretched over’ the social and situational context of the school” (Spillane et al., 2004, p.3). As a point in illustration, prior to having been appointed as Principal, Petronella was a Mathematics Subject Advisor (PJ, p.1) and she was seen as the one with the ‘expert power’ in Mathematics, hence she was the chairperson of the Mathematics Subject committee. In her role as principal she spent a considerable amount of time giving guidance and direction to educators on planning their assessment tasks and lesson plans (SRJ, p.29). Hosipho also did the same with teachers in her department. Apart from assisting teachers in the Mathematics department, Thandiwe highlighted how, as chairperson of the English Subject committee, she enlisted the expertise of other English teachers to help conduct workshops (I, p.21). Evidence showed that she also had a passion for reading and guided teachers on the choice of relevant books for the different age groups (OS, p.11). What could be deduced was that those teachers with the skills and expertise took the lead and leadership was dispersed throughout the school and not confined to those in formal leadership positions only (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2000).

Whilst Thembisile led strongly in both extra (e.g. drama, debating) and co-curricular coordination (various codes of sports), Thandiwe took the lead in curricular (core, example in activities relating to the various subjects offered) and co-curricular coordination (indicator, 6). Thembisile, for instance was the chairperson of the Sports Committee and together with the other committee members had organised various sporting events such as the athletic days,

netball and soccer tournaments, field trips and excursions (I, p.16). She also engaged teachers in the gardening project and the schools cleaning project which were both linked to the Life Orientation (LO) programme. Although the school had no sporting facilities, Thembisile made every endeavour with other committee members to take the learners to the local community sports grounds for sports training (I, p.5; OS, p.11). Another example was when Thandiwe tried to develop confidence and good communication skills in learners, she began to promote reading by forming a reading club and by encouraging learners to participate in the International Literacy Day Programme (OS, p.13). Additionally, she and the English committee engaged learners in dramatisations, assembly talks and in the recital of poems. They also organised a time-table so that learners from the various grades participated in the assembly (I, p.10; OS, p.13-15). What is illuminated is that leadership within this role did not come from those in formal leadership positions thus emphasising the fact that all members within the school have the ability to lead and that leadership can be conceived as a form of agency that can be distributed or shared (Harris & Lambert, 2003).

It was established that Hosipho and Petronella led strongly in the area of curriculum development; Thembisile was strong in the area of both extra and co-curricular development and Thandiwe was strong in the area of both curricular and co-curricular development. Participants were skilled in different aspects of curriculum development and through the use of their diverse skills they collectively contributed to the leadership practice. I did not generate any data in the area of team teaching (indicator 2). This was probably because of the large class sizes and the fact that this small staff had less free time to engage in team teaching.

6.2.2.2 Role 3: Leading in-Service Education and Assisting Other Teachers (In Own School)

All participants took the lead in staff development initiatives (indicator 2), mentoring (indicator 4), peer coaching (indicator 3) and in forging close relationships with individual teachers through which mutual learning took place (indicator 1). Harris and Day (2003) consider these roles as being the most important dimension of teacher leadership and priority was given to these roles at this case study school. This was because the School Management Team (SMT) had established through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis (DF, p.13) that the management as well as the staff needed to improve on curriculum delivery. They consequently drew up a SMT Effectiveness Plan which highlighted areas that they needed to improve on. In addition, they devised curriculum monitoring tools to assist them to keep on track with the curriculum (DF, p.14). In this regard, I observed that Petronella met with her HoDs' every Thursday to guide, mentor and direct them in terms of curriculum development (OS, p.16). Similarly, Thandiwe explained how she conducted workshops on teacher professionalism, the formulation of lessons plans and assessment tasks, and in the use of computers to plan and prepare lessons (I, p.1 & 5 & 14). The focus therefore was on the learning that took place together and how meaning and knowledge was constructed collectively and collaboratively (Harris & Lambert, 2003).

All participants took the lead in contributing towards developing the skills and confidence in others (indicator 5). This was poignantly highlighted by Thandiwe when she claimed that teachers with the expertise in specialised fields were encouraged to spearhead projects and to take the lead in areas in which they had expertise (I, p.17). Hosipho, for example, tried to

build good relationships with teachers in her department by asking for their advice, purposefully asking them to assist in certain areas so as to get them know them better (as she was newly appointed) and she motivated them to conduct workshops (I, p.16). What came to the fore was that there were reluctant teachers who refused to participate in the leadership practice. Petronella therefore conducted a skills audit (DF, p.4) and placed those with the relevant expertise in leadership positions.

Every effort was made by all participants to work with integrity, trust and transparency (indicator 6). A good example was the trust and respect that Thandiwe had earned. This could be ascribed to the time and effort that she had put into assisting her colleagues in planning and preparing their lessons and in assisting to develop their computer skills (OS, p.10). Petronella had also earned a great deal of trust and respect and Thembisile relayed how “*at the moment we don't feel any challenges because our Principal is transparent and easy to approach*” (I, p.22). To support this argument, Thandiwe noted that “*if there is any help she can give, she gives you the opportunity to come to the office and speak with her*” (I, p.4). However, what threatened to undermine and erode the trust and the bond that was forged between Petronella and Thandiwe was when Thandiwe was not chosen for the HoD's post and had to be persuaded that the choice of a male HoD was necessary as the school had no male educators (I, p.4).

6.2.2.3 Role 4: Participating in Performance Evaluation of Teachers (In Own School)

Within this role all participants took the lead in the performance evaluation of their colleagues at their own school. They made valuable contributions to the IQMS developmental process (indicator 1) as well as school-based planning and decision-making

(indicator 5). For instance, Thandiwe, the chairperson of the Staff Development Team (SDT), took the lead in initiating the professional development programme for teachers. She explained that staff development workshops were planned according to the Personal Growth Plans (PGP) of educators and that she encouraged teachers with the expertise to assist in conducting workshops (I, p.16).

Petronella also contributed effectively to the IQMS process and, apart from being appraised by her colleague from a neighbouring school, she was also instrumental in the growth and development of the two new HoDs (SRJ, p.35). During the IQMS performance appraisal process she asked me (the researcher) to accompany her to Hosipho's class to observe her Maths lesson (OS, p.35). She offered valuable support and suggestions and praised Hosipho on her classroom management as well on the appropriate use of her carefully designed teaching aids such as charts, flash cards as well as the overhead projector (OS, p.35). In comparison to the other participants, Thembisile's contribution to the IQMS process was in the field of extra and co-curricular activities where she had organised coaching clinics for educators in the various codes of sport (SRJ, p.10). This, in turn, improved teachers' proficiency in coaching learners and in improving the learners' skills and competency in the codes of sport that were offered at the school.

Indications of informal peer assessment activities were also prevalent data and it was Hosipho, Thandiwe and Petronella who were at the forefront (indicator 2). To cite a few examples, staff minutes revealed that both Petronella and Hosipho walked around during the School Based Walk around Programme. They complimented teachers on positive aspects of their teaching and made suggestions to them on how to improve their curriculum

management and classroom teaching (DF, p.8). To lend credence to the argument, Hosipho relayed how if a teacher did not know how to do something she would sit with the teacher and immediately try to resolve the problem (I, p.5). Similarly, Thandiwe made known that teachers still came to her (even though here a new HoD was appointed) on a regular basis to assist them with designing assessment tasks and lesson plans (I, p.10; OS, p.9). These ‘routines’ such as walking around the school, complimenting teachers, making on-the-spot suggestions and engaging in discussions involved the leaders, followers and aspects of their situation (Spillane, 2006). Participants were in turn key enablers to the leadership practice.

Participants also took part in ongoing reflections in co-curricular, extra-curricular, and curricular activities (indicator 4). The minutes of a SMT meeting, for example, revealed that all SMT members were engaged in reflections and they were asked for their opinion on issues (DF, p. 5). To illustrate, at one particular SMT meeting, for example, the HoD’s reflected on whether teachers were preparing their lessons according to the prescripts of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and at the next meeting it was illustrated that they gave feedback on how the curriculum unfolded in terms of the CAPS (DF, p.6). After each of the management meetings, the HoD’s were asked to monitor particular aspects of the curriculum and they were given due dates to report back. In the next meeting, under matters arising on the agenda, input was given as to progress made in terms of curriculum development (DF, p.5-8). What is highlighted was that all teachers, that is the leaders and followers in their joint interactions (Spillane, 2006), contributed to the leadership practice by giving input, making suggestions and on remaining focused on the task at hand. This also resonates with Grant’s (2010) argument that distributed leadership can be conceptualised “as

a social practice in which multiple leaders interact with followers in a range of situations” (p.7).

Within the zone of providing curriculum development knowledge to their colleagues, all participants made valuable contributions according to their areas of expertise. Leadership in this instance is conceptualised as a “process which moves towards change and movement” (Grant, 2012, p.54) and where the teacher leaders have used their agency to bring about change (Grant, 2012). The plan to bring about change and progress was derived at through the collaborative input of all teachers.

6.2.3 Zone 3: Leadership in Whole School Development in Issues Such as Vision Building and Policy Development

Within this zone, participants were very strong and each contributed towards whole school development. This is the zone that they identified that needed the most attention. What follows is a discussion of the two roles within this zone of the model.

6.2.3.1 Role 5: Organising and Leading Peer Reviews of School Practice (In Own School)

In the area of organisational diagnosis and dealing with the change process (indicator 1), as well as in Whole School Evaluation (WSE), (indicator 2) all participants made valuable contributions in trying to “build a professional community” (Spillane, 2006, p.7). The Institution Level Support Team (ILST) was spearheaded by Petronella and its three sub-structures namely; the Integrated Management System (IQMS), Learner Support Team (LST) Whole School Evaluation (WSE) component were led by Thandiwe, Thembisile and an Intermediate Phase educator respectively. An example of how the participants dealt with

organisational diagnosis was exemplified during the WSE evaluation process which was led by Thembisile (DF, p.9). During this process and whilst engaging in a SWOT analysis the staff realised that there were committees that were non-functional (DF, p.9). They consequently “jointly worked together” (Spillane, 2006, p.14) and drew up the schools commitment charter which highlighted the teachers’ commitment towards quality teaching and learning (DF, p.9). Further to this, the Staff Development Team (SDT), spearheaded by Thembisile, met with the staff to draw up the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as well as the School Development Plan (SDP), (DF, p.12). According to Thembisile, a great deal of discussion, reflection on practice and debates went into drawing up and implementing the various development strategies.

In addition, the SMT also drew up a SMT Effectiveness Plan (DF, p.14). Evidence that the plan was being put into action was demonstrated during a SMT meeting where Petronella gave guidance to the HoD’s on how to check and monitor educators’ work. In addition, they worked together in designing various monitoring tools (DF, p.14; OS, p.4) as well as the schools based walk about programme (DF, p.8). These “leadership routines and structures” (Spillane, 2006, p.7) coupled with the conditioning context created for growth and development were key enablers to the leadership practice. In addition, the emphasis was not on the leader but on the ‘joint interactions’ and the input given by the followers as well that constituted the leadership practice (Spillane, 2006).

Engaging in union matters was high on the priority list of teachers at the school and Thandiwe and Thembisile took the lead in this area (indicator 4). Thandiwe was the site steward of a Teacher Union and Thembisile was on the Site committee. Thandiwe attended

union workshops and seminars conducted over weekends and during the holidays (I, p.22). These workshops covered topics such as presentation skills, assessment, lesson preparation and alternatives to corporal punishment (I, p.23). Thandiwe, in turn, organised similar workshops for the staff (I, p.22). She reasoned that *“being the site steward is a demanding job because if you attend the meeting you have to give proper feedback to the teachers. If they have questions you have to answer their questions”* (I, p.22). In this regard, I observed that she gave comprehensive feedback during a staff briefing and replied succinctly to questions posed (OS, p.25).

Inherent in the data was that all participants took the lead in school practices such as policy development, staff development and professional development initiatives (indicator, 5). However, in the area of fundraising (part of indicator 5), Thembisile and Hosipho were the key role players in devising creative ways of raising funds, despite the fact that they worked within an impoverished community. Thandiwe commented that she was the chairperson of the fundraising committee and had tried to raise funds by initiating various projects by working with other teachers (I, p.8). She related that Thembisile had a great deal of skill in gardening and that she had initiated the gardening project with learners as part of a LO project (I, p.8; SRJ, photographs p.18-19) and raised funds for various projects. Similarly, Hosipho was in charge of selling items such as pens and pencils to learners. The profits of the projects were used to upgrade the school’s security system (I, p.8).

Although the school did not engage in any formal school based action research programme (indicator 3) there was evidence to show that they engaged in other forms of research. It was Petronella and Thandiwe who took the lead in this regard. To illustrate: Thandiwe undertook

research with the library committee to set up the school library (DF, p.12). Further, when Thandiwe and the SDT were drawing up the SIP they identified that they needed more parental involvement in “*the teaching of their children*” (DF, p.12). It was then suggested that “*teachers needed to visit neighbouring schools to find out how they motivated parents*” (DF, p. 12). At a follow up staff meeting (DF, p.13), teachers reported on their findings. Another example was when Petronella conducted a skills audit (DF, p.35) to identify educator strengths and gaps. She, in turn, used the findings to overcome the shortage of skills in the teaching of Mathematics and in the area of sport development.

6.2.3.2 Role 6: School Level Decision-making within One’s Own School

Even though there were dissatisfactions and participants were aware of the micro politics of the school, they all continued to work unabated (indicator 1). To illustrate this point, despite the fact that Thandiwe was not appointed to the HoD’s post, there were indications that she continued with her work and contributed to the leadership practice. Her professional work ethic was displayed when she set up the school’s library and trained learners to participate in the International Literacy Day celebrations (I, p.14; SRJ photographs, p.54-57). Another example was that when Hosipho was appointed as HoD, she found that she was inexperienced and the youngest in her team but she did not let this constrain her. She related how she motivated and inspired the teachers and tried to draw on their skills, expertise and experience to strengthen the leadership practice (I, p.4). Further to this, despite the challenges that Petronella had experienced in trying to take up her post and in getting teachers to do their work she pursued and worked with the willing teachers (SRJ, p.10).

Each of the participants played a key role in ensuring that all teachers were made to feel part of the change or development process and that they had a sense of ownership of the school (indicator 2). This was succinctly encapsulated by Hosipho when she commented that “*we welcome the views of all educators and we listen to them, we value their opinions, we motivate them*” II p.13). She explained that during staff meetings there was time allocated for teachers to engage in reflective practices, debate issues and to make suggestions (I, p.5). To confirm this I observed that at a staff briefing session “*a level one educator who is in charge of sports convened the meeting and others present made contributions and reflected on issues*” (OS, p.2). Further, Thembisile explained how the sports committee had planned a major inter-school games event. The task of collecting monies, planning the meals for learners, organising the busses and liaising with teachers from the other schools (I, p.10) was distributed to all committee members. Being actively involved in trying to “build a professional learning community, meant that leadership was being stretched over multiple leaders” (Spillane, 2006, p.15). As with the Ithemba Primary case study, the manner in which teachers contributed to the leadership practice is similar to the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* where there was cooperation, the sharing of ideas (Msila, 2008) and where teachers were being developed and given the opportunity to contribute to the leadership practice.

In the area of problem identification and resolution (indicator 3) and conflict resolution (indicator, 4) participants were proficient. There were no overt indications of any conflict during the data generation process. The previous conflicts that they had experienced over the appointment of the HoD dissipated when the constraining agents had left. Participants were good at identifying problems and finding solutions. As a point of illustration, when Thandiwe identified that there were certain teachers who behaved in an unbecoming manner

when confronted by parents, she conducted a workshop on professionalism to remind them of how they should behave as professionals (I, p.5). In addition, when she discovered that teachers had difficulty in planning and preparing their lessons, and in using the computer, she assisted them to develop their proficiency in this area.

In the area of school-based planning and decision-making, three of the participants, with the exception of Hosipho, took the lead (indicator 5). The level of planning and executing the plan was best exemplified when Thandiwe took the initiative in starting the school library. She formed a library committee, conducted a SWOT analysis and devised a plan of how the project would unfold. They approached Education Library Teaching Services (ELITS) and business houses for assistance in setting-up of the library and for the donation of books and shelving (I, p.14). She explained that the project was a huge success because the team pooled their ideas, planned thoroughly, were committed and because the principal supported them and even obtained sponsorships to purchase books for the library (I, p.14; SRJ photographs, p.54-57).

In a similar vein, when Thembisile decided to implement the School's Garden Project she approached the principal with the idea and had a plan of how it would unfold (I, p.1; SRJ photographs, p.18). She relayed that she and her team got together, shared the responsibilities and planned the budget required and how the profits would be utilised. What is emphasised was that the "leadership practice took form in the interaction between the various leaders and their followers and aspect of the situation" (Spillane, 2006, p.17) and the contributions that each made, defined the leadership practice.

It can be inferred that Thabisile, Thandiwe, and Petronella led very strongly in the area of whole school development “where leadership was embedded in the school community as a whole” (Leithwood et al., 2009, p.16). Hosipho led strongly only in certain areas of zone 3. This was probably because she was new at the school and still learning the ropes. What strengthened the leadership practice was the collaboration of committed teachers who set the course for the institution by sharing ideas and by taking responsibility for whole school development.

6.2.4 Zone 4: Extending Beyond the School to Lead in Community Life and Cross-school Networking

Within this zone of the model, none of the participants led strongly in the area of working with other schools in terms of curriculum development. However, they worked closely with the SGB as well as with the parent committee.

6.2.4.1 Role 2: Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge (Across Schools into Community)

All participants made attempts to empower parents about curriculum issues (indicator 2) and they therefore ensured that parents were regularly updated and invited to meetings to discuss curriculum matters (DF, p.12). In their Schools Development Plan the staff endeavoured to involve parents in their learning (DF, p.12 & 7). For instance, I observed parents attending various grade meetings where Thembisile and Thandiwe, together with other teacher leaders, addressed parents about their children’s progress, homework requirements, the programme of assessment as well as the campaign to get children involved in reading at home (OS, p.23).

Likewise at the Foundation Phase parent meeting, Hosipho and a Grade 1 educator addressed parents about curriculum expectations (OS, p.23). These meetings were held once very quarter and various aspects of the curriculum were discussed.

In addition, every effort was made to keep the SGB informed about curriculum related matters and it was Petronella who took the lead with other teacher leaders (indicator 3). None of the other three participants were on the SGB. At a SGB meeting, I observed that Petronella and the other staff representatives explained in great detail to the members of the SGB about curriculum related matters (SRJ, p.11 & 19; OS, p.19). For example, Petronella informed them about the Principals Management Development Programme (PMDP) that she was involved in (OS, p.19). In addition, they were briefed about the June examination results as well as the forthcoming Annual National Assessment (ANA), (OS, p.19; SRJ, p.19). What was eminent was that there were “*discussions, members listened carefully to what was being discussed and they gave their input and planned accordingly*” (OS, p.21).

Within this role of the model it was only Petronella who worked closely with the SGB while all participants worked closely to empower the parent community about curriculum related matters. They were all weak in the area of joint curriculum development (indicator 1) and in networking with other schools (indicator 4).

6.2.4.2 Role 3: Leading In-service Education and Assisting Other Teachers (Across Schools into Community)

Both Thandiwe and Thembisile forged close relationships and built rapport with individual teachers through which mutual learning took place (Indicator 1) with teachers from other schools. This happened in numerous ways. For example, Thandiwe attended union meetings

and networked with teachers from various schools. Thembisile also indicated that she was a member of the Inter-School Sports Committee and relayed how the committee organised various sporting events with schools in their circuit (I, p.26). She gave an example of how her committee had planned a visit to a school more than 200 km away for learners to participate in the various sporting events and to learn more about places beyond their homes (I, p.20). In addition, Thembisile was the chairperson of the Schools Cleaning Project (Gardening project) and played a key role in mentoring teachers from 54 schools in her ward on how to go about initiating the project at their schools. The committee met once a month to share ideas and plan projects and events for learners to engage in (I, p.6 & 19).

Analysis of data in this role of the zone uncovered that there were few indications that participants were involved in staff development initiatives (indicator 2) in peer coaching (indicator 3), mentoring teachers (indicator 4) and in building skills (indicator 5) with teachers from other schools. Active participation in the leadership practice was, to a large extent, restricted within this role of the model.

What was highlighted was that “leadership can surface from an assortment of people, in any array of different forms, and at a range at different times, and at times the leadership may emerge from teachers whilst at other times it may emerge from those educators holding formal management positions within a school” (Grant, 2012, p.62). This then lends itself to my argument and belief that no one person can lead a school on his or her own and that a distributed leadership perspective of leadership is more effective because it involves active participation, diverse ideas and joint decision-making from a whole array of teacher leaders (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Gronn, 2003; Spillane, 2006). Furthermore, participants led very

strongly in zone 1 and 2 and in zone 3 they led strongly within certain roles and were weak in others. Participation in zone 4 was limited to working with the SGB, the parent committee and in co and extra-curricular participation with other schools.

6.3 PART TWO: STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND AGENTIAL EMERGENT PROPERTIES THAT ENABLED OR CONSTRAINED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AT ITHEMBA PRIMARY SSCHOOL

As in the previous chapter and in order to answer the second research question, attempts were made to identify what the underlying causal generative mechanism were, in terms of the Structural (SEPs), Cultural (CEPs) and Agential Emergent Properties (PEPs). I did this to illicit what enabled or constrained the emergence of leadership practices at the level of the actual and empirical (Danermark et al., 2002, p.206). To do this I engaged with Archer's (1995) concept of analytical dualism. When applying Archer's theory I constantly asked myself: "How must the world be - in terms of underlying generative mechanisms – for our observations in the actual and empirical to make sense?" (Case, 2013, p.139). To refresh the minds of the reader the participants in the study included the two Level One Teachers, Thandiwe and Thembisile, the HoD Hosipho, and the Principal Petronella.

As in the previous chapter I bore in mind that the emergent powers and properties of structures, cultures and agents can interact and influence one another, often without even an agent or agents having awareness of it. Apart from engaging in analytical dualism, I had to remember that 'all structural influences (i.e. the generative powers of SEPs and CEPs) "are mediated to people by shaping the situations in which they find themselves" (1995, p.196). In view of this I focused my analysis at what emerged at the interface of structure, culture and

agency. This was to remind myself that it was at this interface that emergent properties and powers are exercised and where change does or does not begin, depending on the action of agents involved.

Bearing this in mind, the role of principal that Petronella (the principal at Ithemba) held can be understood as a structure, as can Ithemba Primary School – as an ‘institutional structure’. As structures, the role and the ‘institution’ pre-dated Petronella’s entry to Ithemba Primary, and as ‘structures are irreducible to people’ (ibid, p.71), we cannot conflate the role of HoD, DP, principal, or ‘the school’, with Petronella but must look at the interface between Petronella as ‘agent’, the ‘school’, and now her principalship as ‘structures’. This is in order to identify the causal influences of the power and properties that led to Petronella changing leadership practices to what they were at the time of this study, at a school in which she had been, in one way or another contributing to ‘leading’ for 10 years.

An important point to consider is the manner in which the school was led and managed *prior* to 2001 when Petronella became principal. This is because Archer (1995) contends that people enter into a society which has been predetermined but which they can either reproduce or transform depending on their vested interest, social standing and on their personal emergent powers (Archer, 1995). The cultural system therefore exists independently of people and is anterior to the current context and is the product of the activities of past agents who determine what happens in the current context (Archer, 1995). The manner in which the school was led was premised upon the ideology of the colonial, apartheid government where schools were bureaucratically controlled in terms of decision-making processes. To authenticate this, Thembisile remarked that the past principal was autocratic and she relayed

that “*he did not develop us, he did not make any changes, and so this woman (referring to Petronella) she is trying. There are a lot of changes, even the community can see that there are changes*” (I, p.18). In line with this discussion, Harber and Davies (1997) claim that leadership practices in African countries lean towards the authoritarian and the South African Education System has traditionally been authoritarian. This has been due to the legacy of apartheid education which has been racially polarised and had an unequal system of education where certain racial groups were privileged.

In addition to the past principal, there were also other agents (members of staff) who severely constrained leadership from being distributed at Ithemba Primary. What was highlighted was that Petronella could not take up her post as principal in 2001 because the post was disputed by the Intermediate Phase male HoD who had been the acting principal. One finds that, despite the dismantling of apartheid in 1994 and the transformational agenda of our South African education system, that the issue of marginalization and prejudices against women in contemporary South African society still existed at this case study school. In relation to this argument, Petronella stated that “*it was a hassle when I got promoted, because at that time I was still very young. I was tiny in the body so the SGB wasn't for the idea of a little girl coming to head the school*” (I, p.1). She relayed how the “*SGB was keen on the male who was behind her in marks to head the school*” (I, p.1) and how they had reneged on their decision and wanted the male HoD as Principal. As explained by Petronella, there was therefore a dispute for three years and she proclaimed that she “*couldn't get into the post and eventually the Union said, if you scored this person so high, so the person must get the post*” (I, p.1). It was against this backdrop that she eventually took up her post in 2003. Effectively, this meant that for three years (2001-2003) there was no principal at the school. In this

regard, Thembisile related how *“there was no one leading us and the HoD who did not get the principal’s post refused to monitor what was happening at our school”* (FGI, p.6). Petronella had to fit into a pre-structured, patriarchal environment that was inherited from her male predecessor. There were, therefore, a great number of structural constraints when she was appointed as Principal.

Consequently, during the time of her appointment as principal at Ithemba Primary School in 2001, and upon her entry into the school in 2013, she indicated that there were two groups of teachers consisting of those who supported her and others who supported the former male HoD and his followers. Therefore, attempts to distribute leadership was hampered because there were educators who refused to do *“anything extra beside teach in their classrooms”* (Thandiwe, FGI, p.7). In this regard, Thabisile related that the previous HoD *“had his supporters who refused to contribute to the smooth functioning of the school and there was a breakdown of teaching and learning”* (FGI, p.7). These structural agents thus constrained the leadership practice and thus prevented leadership from being distributed.

One can deduce therefore, that the strength of structural and cultural conditioning in terms of distributing leadership at Ithemba during the years prior to Petronella becoming principal, including the period 2010-2013 was extremely weak. In addition, the actions of the previous HoD and his followers during the period 2013-2010 prevented her from exercising any agential/personal emergent properties and powers to confront a ‘non-distributive’ form of leadership from taking place. This was despite the fact that Petronella was committed to change and progress and that she held beliefs and values contrary to those of the ‘past principal’ as well as those of the past HoD and his followers. Yet Archer says that:

‘...emergent structures represent objective limitations upon the situations and settings which agents can encounter. Thus what is ‘logged’ within the register of the cultural system defines the doctrines, theories, beliefs etc. in existence and thus circumscribes that which impinge upon agents as their ideational environment. Objectively, it delimits that which can be reproduced, reformulated, rejected or transformed’ (2003, p.196/7).

I would argue that this offers a very plausible explanation for Petronella’s inability to effect meaningful change during the period 2001 and 2003. I could also say the same for the period during which the former HoD was still at the school and where transformation took place at a very slow pace. The inability to effect meaningful change in terms of participation in leadership practices during this period could be ascribed to the oppressive, racist, socio-political climate and the patriarchal view and ideologies of the past principal. In terms of forms of ‘agents’ (as described in Chapter 2), we could also describe Petronella at this stage of her career as, perhaps, still a ‘Primary Agent’. It was only after the constraining agents (HoDs) had left, was Petronella able to exercise her legitimate power (as a consequence of her position). She gained prominence as the principal of the school, and rose to becoming an influential social and corporate agent and Actor (Archer, *ibid*). She was then able to garner the support of many of the other teacher leaders. This led to the emergence of causal influences and hence a change in the structural and cultural conditioning, facilitating a context for a wider distribution of leadership opportunities.

In order to achieve this, attempts had to be made to: unite the fragmented staff; overcome other structural barriers experienced such as the problem of having no sport fields; finding

solutions to the water problem experienced; and the fact that a large part of the school buildings which included the staff room and the HoD's offices were vandalised and burnt down at the beginning of 2011 (SRJ, p.32). Further, due to the Department of Education's (DoE) post provisioning norms policy led to the school losing a Level One Teacher and the Deputy Principal's post. Thandiwe argued that having fewer staff members meant that all teachers had to take on extra roles, and this placed greater constraints on them (I, p.7). These factors therefore acted as potential structural barriers to the democratic process (Gunter, 2004) as well as the active engagement of all teachers in the leadership practice. It must be noted that these constraints did not deter Petronella and she made every endeavour to overcome the constraints and managed to create an enabling environment for distributed leadership. She tried to "build an infrastructure that would enable a new sort of leadership practice for teaching and learning to emerge" (Spillane, 2006, p.18).

From this it is possible to deduce that the former principal as well as the previous HoD, and certain members of staff, did not exercise their personal emergent properties (PEPs). This could also be said of Petronella when the previous HoD was still at Ithemba. These PEPs was needed to mediate the influence of the SEPs and CEPs inherent to the 'management' (rather than 'leadership') role they held. Rather, what they did was to submit to them. We can speculate that the former principal had no desire to confront existing norms and hierarchies (other established structures) and ideologies (cultures), and that he was comfortable within these and had no need to change anything. On the other hand, the former HoD had an interest in the principal's post and because he was unsuccessful in becoming the principal he managed to influence a large following of teachers. I can deduce that he emerged as a powerful Social

Actor in trying to influence the Junior Primary HoD as well as other teachers, to constrain Petronella in attempting to distribute leadership.

Petronella was only able to bring about positive changes when the ‘constraining agent’ and his colleague (Foundation Phase HoD) had left the school. His followers probably had no other option but to comply with her. She was then able to exert a new and different causal influence on how she began to think about leadership and subsequently how she acted. And from my data, particularly the interviews and observations, it is quite clear that Petronella-as-Principal is a role which sits very authentically with her.

The departure of the two constraining HoDs further, paved the way for Petronella to exercise her agency and influence the SGB to appoint two HoDs whom she could work with. Her decision to have appointed two new HoDs who were extremely young and who may have lacked experience was probably not the best thing to do. In this regard, the analysis of the data revealed that she had to spend a considerable amount of time in attempting to mentor them and develop their leadership capacity. She did not consider appointing Thandiwe who was the acting HoD for the post as she may have suspected that she could have been a follower of the former HoDs. However, what became clear was that the appointment of the two new HoDs temporarily constrained the leadership practice because these HoDs were not equipped to mentor teachers in their department as they needed to grow and develop their capacity as leaders. This was made quite evident in the SWOT analysis that the SMT conducted on their levels of competency (DF, p.13). Petronella consequently committed herself to changing this and proclaimed how the SMT now “*met every Thursday, and we plan and discuss things together and I mentor them*” (I, p.7; SRJ, p.28-29). These regular meetings

were necessary and an important infrastructure that was created so as to “rebuild organisational capacity” (Murphy & Meyer, 2009, p.10). After working within a fragmented structural SMT environment for nine years, Petronella probably wanted to work at building a united management team so that a “new organisational work ethic would emerge” (Murphy & Meyer, 2009, p.18).

What happened next was that Petronella began to create new structures where teachers with the necessary expertise were placed in key leadership positions. She also encouraged Level One Educators to take on key leadership positions and highlighted that those leading the committees “*are not all SMT members*” (I, p.7). Petronella consequently became a strong underlying structural agent that played a key role in trying to bring about meaningful change and in building a professional learning community. She intimated that all duties were re-allocated after conducting a skills audit (FGI, p.7) and those with the skills and expertise were placed in key leadership positions (FGI, p.8). Authentication of this was contained in various staff minutes as well as from observation of assemblies and staff meetings. This was to ensure that the reluctant teachers gained the confidence in taking the lead.

Petronella and those teachers who were interested in progress may have had liberating ideas and plans to engage in more democratic forms of distributed leadership but they were constrained by the context of the school and had to reconstruct how leadership evolved at the school. And (again reconciling literature from both Chapters 1 and 2) leadership at the school was “conceptualised as distributed practice ‘stretched over’ the social and situational context of the school” (Spillane et al., 2004, p.3). What could be deduced therefore was that teachers with the skills and expertise took the lead and leadership was dispersed throughout the school

and not confined to those in formal leadership positions only (Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2000). To lend strength to this argument, Grant (2010) argues that “developing a culture of distributed leadership is an evolutionary process and which requires that schools transform themselves, both in form and in substance” (p.301). The evolution of distributed leadership at Ithemba Primary School was slowly taking shape and form and as teachers develop their confidence one can see the evolution of other forms of distributed leadership practices evolving.

It was only when Petronella was able to change the structure of the role of principal, was she able to change the nature and form of other structures. This included for example, existing committees and the way in which leadership is now practised in the school. Therefore, by altering the constitution of the leadership team brought with them new properties and powers. This in turn, causally influenced the PEPs of all teachers at Ithemba Primary school. In this regard, part one of this chapter shows that many of the policies such as the vision and mission statement, the School Service Commitment Charter, the SMT Effectiveness Plan, the Educator Pledge as well as various curriculum monitoring tools were either revised or new one’s introduced (FGI, p.8). Similarly, the vision was drawn up in consultation with the teachers and the SGB (FGI, p.7).

Further to this, there were signed pledges by the Principal, SGB members and teachers all committing themselves to ensuring that quality teaching and learning took place through pooling their resources, skills and experience (OS, p.17). This pledge formed part of the Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign (QLTC). In addition, educators collaboratively drew up a School Service Commitment Charter (2011) as well as an Educator’s Pledge after

conducting a SWOT analysis (SRJ, p.17). Teachers, therefore, committed themselves towards collectively providing quality education for their learners. For instance, in the Service Commitment Charter they pledged to work collectively towards ensuring that a quality education would be provided for their learners (DF, p.9). Verification of this has been aptly portrayed in Part One of this chapter.

What strengthened educator commitment was that even the SMT began to reflect on their practices and also devised monitoring instruments such as curriculum monitoring trackers, lesson plans, as well as a tool to monitor educators' performance (OS, p.6). This was to try to see to it that all educators were on track with the curriculum and that they, as the SMT, reflected *as a team*, to improve their own proficiency and competence on a regular basis. Management members consequently, conducted a SWOT analysis (DF, p.13) and came up with a SMT Effectiveness Plan (DF, p.14) and collectively set targets and identified resources that they planned to use to improve their skills (DF, p.14). There were indications that their plans were translated into action. By way of illustration, at a management meeting, it was observed how both the HoDs gave feedback on the progress that they were making in terms of the lesson plan monitoring tool (SRJ, p.20) and the monitoring of both learner and educator books (OS, p.6-7). What I concluded was that the act of collectively agreeing to commit themselves to service delivery and charting the way forward served as enablers to the leadership practice.

Spaces were therefore created for Level One Educators to take on key leadership positions and Petronella highlighted that those leading the committees "*are not all SMT members*" (I, p.7). She further reported that chairpersons of subject committees were those with the

relevant skills and subject expertise (I, p.7). It can be argued that Petronella consequently became a strong underlying structural agent and influential Actor that played a key role in ensuring that leadership was distributed. All duties were re-allocated after conducting a skills audit (FGI, p.7) and those with the skills and expertise were placed in key leadership positions (FGI, p.8).

What was further accentuated was that the underlying structural enablements were the regular meetings, strict rules and policies, well-organised supervision and monitoring programme, clear guidelines and involvement in the decision-making processes through reflexive practice. These were all 'tools' and underlying structural enablements for leadership to be distributed and for quality teaching and learning to evolve. In respect to this discussion, Harris (2014) strongly believes that for the leadership practice to have any positive impact there has to be strong discipline and she suggests that disciplined collaboration with impact has to be a prerequisite for improved professional practice. These type of structures and cultures were necessary for this case study school as teachers had to be made accountable so as to restore the culture of teaching and learning and for them to actively take on leadership roles and positions.

Of note was that when teachers began to take advantage of the opportunities for them to lead, these 'agents' either moved to become Actors or were in the process of moving to becoming Actors (Case, 2013, p.145). This move also meant that they began to personally commit themselves to the school and that they no longer held back because of being influenced by constraining agents. By voluntarily agreeing to take on leadership roles and making use of opportunities provided to them it became evident that many of the teachers began to grow

and emerge as leaders. They in turn used their PEPs, to bring about change to the overall structural condition (Archer, 1995).

It could have been at the interface of the structural, cultural and agential properties and powers identified here, that more emergent properties and powers were produced since there are 'internal and necessary relationships within and between emergent properties' (Archer, 1995, p.168). In this way, structure, culture and agency can be seen to act as mechanisms at the level of the real, either to effect change and transformation, or keep the status quo. The latter is not the case in this case study school as it became evident that transformation in terms of how leadership was distributed was taking place.

Through delving to the deep ontological level of the real it became possible to identify what were the possible causes and *constraining mechanisms* that hindered leadership from being distributed before and during the period that Petronella was appointed as principal. This included the generative powers of the 'rules and policies' of the school (and the government legislation framing these) as *structures*. This was coupled with the attitudes, beliefs and values which constituted the Cultural System (or *culture*) during the previous principal's time and this included the hegemonic practices towards women leaders. In addition, the attitude of the former HoD and his followers also served as barriers to leadership being distributed. Therefore, when Petronella took up the role of principalship she experienced constraining conditions due to the leadership practices of the past principal as well as the cultural beliefs and ideologies of who should lead. Even though she may have had liberating ideas for transformation and she could not fully exercise her agency due to the constraints of the former HoDs and their followers. However, once they had left she managed to use her PEPs

and her causal influence on the existing SEPs and CEPs as described above. Consequently, generative powers and properties of the changed Structural and Cultural System that emerged from the interface thus created *enabling mechanisms* for change and transformation at Ithemba Primary to take place.

As already highlighted in Chapter 5, Archer draws our attention to the ‘internal conversation’ (2003), (refer to Chapter 5 for explanation of this). It is important therefore to show, from the data, what ‘concerns’, emerging from deep reflexivity by ‘the collective’ at Ithemba can be said to have become ‘projects’. For example, the collaboratively drawn up vision (also part of the Cultural System) is the driving force in enabling educators to work together to bring about change and progress and to improve the culture of teaching and learning. The vision, reads as follows, “*to promote a sound relationship amongst the stakeholders for the sole purpose of developing the learner holistically*” (DF, p.2). This vision thus reflects the need for teachers to work together, to build sound relations so that they would collectively assist their learners to grow holistically.

The changes in the leadership taken on by Actors at Ithemba therefore contributed to their school becoming highly functional. These practices included the high value placed on: developing a powerful work ethic; in developing and mentoring teachers; in creating a conditioning context for teachers to work in; the norm of accountability; building a collaborative team; encouraging diversity of ideas; utilising the skill of all teachers; and the practice of caring for all teachers. This was coupled with the powerful symbols prevalent at the school which served as strong enablers to the leadership practice. This included the ritual of the morning assembly and the tradition of valuing and respecting educators.

Coupled with the above practices mentioned, the various other and ‘tools’ that enhanced participation in the leadership practice and leadership from being distributed included: mentoring, monitoring, clear guidelines, perseverance, discussions, feedback, reflections and high expectations placed on the HoDs as well as the teachers to excel. All of these can be understood as collective ‘concerns’ emerging out of reflexive engagement on “activities tied to the core work of the organisation that are designed by organisational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, practices of other organisational members” (Spillane, 2006, p.11).

The relevance of ending Part Two with an emphasis on the ‘agent’ is to reiterate the essential social realist position that, ‘Agents are the only efficient causes in social life’ (Archer, 1995, p.195) and that ‘it is only through the actions of agents that the constraining or enabling powers of structures and culture can be realised. Agents, therefore have the power to enable or constrain mechanisms in the structural and cultural domains.

6.4 CONCLUSION

In drawing conclusions based on the discussion in this chapter, it is clear that existing structures were being elaborated upon and a culture was emerging where leadership was being distributed according to the skills and expertise of all teachers. In addition, it is evident that teachers are co-operating and are participating in leadership practices. This in turn has resulted in the school becoming highly functional. The success at Ithemba can be ascribed to the fact that participants and other teachers had begun to pool their resources and they have consequently developed their “joint agency” (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p.440).

Unlike in the past, now in the current context with a more united team, and the utilisation of a wealth of expertise found amongst the teachers they have chartered a way forward. They are achieving this by working as a team and by adapting their teaching and learning strategies according to the context of their school and learners. Through their Corporate Agency and the causal efficacy of the powers and properties of the SEPs, CEPs and PEPs, more distributed forms of leadership practices emerged. This has set Ithemba on a changed trajectory where the school has become highly functional. Coupled with this, teachers have begun to show deep respect for each other and are drawing on each other's strengths and expertise. This has then allowed them to exercise their creativity and through acknowledging their contributions, has inspired them to aspire towards reaching greater heights.

I now turn to Chapter 7, where I compare the findings of Wembibona Combined as well as Ithemba Primary School.

CHAPTER 7

LOOKING ACROSS THE TWO CASES: EMERGING TRENDS AND PATTERNS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two chapters, I presented my analysis of the data of the two case study schools (Wembibona Combined School and Ithemba Primary School). Whilst these chapters foregrounded the uniqueness of each of the case study schools in terms of their leadership practices, this chapter moves beyond the single case to provide insights drawn from both cases into the leadership practices of two highly-functioning, disadvantaged schools. The analysis is again driven by my two research questions and, as with the previous two chapters, this chapter is in two parts. Part One synthesises the teacher leadership practices across the case study schools using Grant's model of teacher leadership (2008; 2012). Part Two provides a synthesis of the underlying structural, cultural and agential emergent properties that enabled or constrained these leadership practices. I begin with the synthesis of teacher leadership practices.

7.2 A DESCRIPTIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

7.2.1 Zone 1: Leading Within the Classroom

Overall, the cross-case analysis highlighted that all participants led strongly within the zone of the classroom. Role 1 within this first zone is about ‘continuing to teach and improving one’s own teaching in the classroom’.

All participants across the two sites displayed the attributes of exemplary classroom practitioners, in consonance with the argument that teacher leaders are first and foremost leaders within their own classrooms (Grant, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2000). They proved to be expert teachers who spend the majority of their time in the classroom doing the basics of teaching well but took on leadership roles at times when development and innovation was needed (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p.44). Thus, the centrality of teaching (indicator 1) was crucial to these teachers.

These teachers were all extremely well qualified (indicator 2) and proved to be highly skilled, knowledgeable and able to devise innovative, context-based teaching and learning strategies so that their learners thrived in a challenging socio-cultural environment (indicator 3). Despite the constraints of limited resources and large class sizes it was elicited throughout the cases that there was the maintenance of outstanding classroom discipline (indicator 6). The inclusion of innovative classroom practices such as the design of creative learning activities, improvisation of resources (indicator 3), outstanding record keeping and the engagement in reflective practice (indicator 4) was demonstrated across the cases.

The teachers afforded their learners great respect and did not settle for merely teaching content knowledge from a prescribed text book. Instead they pooled their resources and explored all avenues (indicator 7) so as to expose their learners to the best possible teaching and learning opportunities. These teachers spent a considerable amount of their personal time with their learners in trying to really get to know them holistically. Their inventiveness (indicator 7) was evident in attempting to create the space to spend additional teaching time with learners and they put in extra effort to assist learners who needed more support. They endeavoured to understand the world of their learners and tried to assist them in overcoming their challenges in terms of learning. Thus these teachers took their pastoral care role seriously (indicator 6).

These teacher leaders were all extremely successful (indicator 1). A measure of success of their leadership within the classroom was their achievement at school awards ceremonies as well as district and provincial Teacher of the Year Award competitions. This recognition of achievement through certificates and awards provided a real incentive for these teachers. It boosted their self-confidence, inspired them to try harder and was a catalyst for them to motivate their colleagues to involve themselves in the process too. This is consistent with the finding of Crowther et al. (2002) that if recognition and encouragement be given to good teachers, in turn, they will become more positive and will work harder.

Critical to the success of the classroom leadership practices of these teachers was the fact that they were involved in on-going professional development activities (indicator 2). In this regard, they attended DoE workshops and, thereafter, met regularly with their staff to give feedback and to conduct in-house workshops (I discuss this further in section 8.2.2). This

laid a firm foundation for them to be able to impart valuable information to their colleagues as well as learners and to keep abreast with the on-going changes in terms of the evolving curriculum in South Africa. These findings are consistent with Gehrke's (1998) argument that successful leaders "work hard at refining their professional knowledge and skill" (p.49). These teachers displayed individual talent or what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) term, in relation to teaching specifically, 'human capital'. For them, 'human capital' is about

knowing your subject and knowing how to teach it, knowing children and understanding how they learn, understanding the diverse cultural and family circumstances that your students come from, being familiar with and being able to sift and sort the science for successful and innovative practice, and having the emotional capabilities to empathise with diverse groups of children and also adults in and around a school. It is about possessing the passion and moral commitment to serve all children and to want to keep getting better in how you provide that service (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p.89).

In summary, and returning to the model of teacher leadership, the teacher leaders in this study led strongly in the zone of the classroom as was evidenced in data representing six of the seven indicators. The only indicator not evident in the study was teacher engagement in action research (indicator 5). I now move on to discuss the take up of leadership in Zone Two.

7.2.2 Zone 2: Leading Beyond the Classroom in Assisting Colleagues in Curricular and Extra-curricular Activities

The participants in this study demonstrated their leadership through their take up of all three leadership roles in this second zone.

First, participants provided curriculum development knowledge within their own school (role 2). As mentioned earlier, all participants from across the cases attended DoE workshops and, in turn, took this new learning back to their staff (indicator 5). In so doing, they contributed towards contextualising the curriculum for their own school and learners (indicator 4). What made these feedback sessions meaningful (indicator 1) was that time was spent in making meaning of the information disseminated at these workshops. Nothing was taken at face value and every attempt was made to ensure that the school contexts and learner contexts were considered. Participants spent a considerable amount of time in discussion, deep listening and reflective practice so as to chart the best way forward for the school. One of the schools followed this up with team teaching (indicator 2).

A common feature across the cases was that regular subject committee meetings were held where participants and teachers with the subject expertise played a pivotal role in chairing meetings and giving feedback to staff members (indicator 3). It is important to note that post level one teachers were invited to take the lead in chairing some of these meetings and in spearheading various projects. The input from each of the committee members was crucial to facilitate an understanding of the subject and the success of subject related activities that were planned. This was a good example of what van der Mescht & Tyala (2008) refer to as ‘group or team leadership’ which de-emphasises the role of the individual leader.

At both schools, participants not only paid serious attention to the formal curriculum; they also ensured that learners participated actively and excelled both in extra and co-curricular activities (indicator 6). It is worth noting that it was predominantly the post level one teachers who were involved in extra and co-curricular activities. While the schools' disadvantage was apparent in the absence of sports fields, these teachers made every effort to take their learners to the local sports field to train them for the various codes of sports. In this regard, they displayed a great deal of "passion and the moral commitment to serve all children that they taught and interacted with" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p.89).

Second, participants led in-service education and assisted other teachers within their own school (role 3). Across the cases every effort was made to forge close relationships and build rapport with individual teachers so that mutual learning could take place (indicator 1). This included building skills and confidence in each other (indicator 5) as well as striving to work in an atmosphere of trust and transparency (indicator 6). Emphasis was placed on mentoring (indicator 4) and peer-coaching (indicator 3) and these practices served as key 'enablers' (Case, 2013) to the leadership practice.

Third, participants participated in performance evaluation of teachers in their own schools (role 4). This was particularly evident in the formal system of performance management and appraisal of teachers - the IQMS process (indicator 1) – which was taken seriously at the case study schools. Teachers who were strong in the area of moderation of assessment tasks (indicator 3) were delegated this responsibility. The chairpersons of the Staff Development Teams at the schools were Post Level One teachers who were responsible for the on-going professional development of their colleagues. However, informal performance evaluation also

took place through peer-assessment activities (indicator 2) and classroom visits (to varying degrees) at the two schools.

Structured reflection was integral to this performance evaluation role and core, co and extra-curricular activities were reflected upon at the case study schools (indicator 4). Engaging in reflective practice created the platform for discussions, sharing of ideas, deep listening and dialogue.

From this discussion, it can be seen that the participants in this study did not only lead in their classrooms but they extended their leadership as they worked with their colleagues outside of the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities. In working with their colleagues, they deliberately used teamwork in order to pool their human capital, expand their network of influence and opportunity and build “cultures and networks of communication, learning, trust and collaboration” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p.89).

Thus, while these teachers displayed much human capital, they also displayed ‘social capital’ which refers to their relations among people and “how the quantity and quality of interactions and social relationships affects their access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectation, obligation and trust; and how far they are likely to adhere to the same norms or codes of behaviour” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p.90). This social capital provided a huge reservoir of expertise amongst these teacher leaders which was shared and utilised to rise above the range of harsh challenges experienced at each school. The teacher leaders worked collectively and collaboratively and pooled their ideas and resources and thus managed to achieve success. These findings resonate with the findings of Crowther’s (1997) study conducted in a disadvantaged community facing similar circumstances. Crowther found that

teacher leaders displayed a deep sense of “commitment towards their work, enthusiasm which was contagious and who had the ability to inspire others and raise their expectations” (p.537).

7.2.3 Zone 3: Leading in Whole School Development Issues Such as Vision Building and Policy Development

The participants in this study demonstrated their leadership through their take up of both leadership roles in this third zone.

First, participants organised and led peer reviews of school practice in their own school (Role 5). They played an active role in the leadership of school-based teams such as the School Development Team (indicator 6). They engaged in collective decision-making and each member within a committee had a specific responsibility assigned to them. It became the policy of the schools that collective decision-making was more important than the decisions of one or two individuals. Also in relation to this fifth role, participants were involved in the processes of school-based organisational diagnosis (indicator 1), whole school evaluation (indicator 2) and school-based planning and decision-making (indicator 5). In addition, participants also played an active role in union representation (indicator 4). What is worth noting is that it was the post level one teachers who were the site stewards and, although this was not a legislated practice, the decision could have been due to the fact that the formal school leaders wanted to remain neutral. Nevertheless, it was apparent that all site stewards were knowledgeable, gave regular feedback to staff members, engaged staff about union matters and took mandates to their union meetings. They used their knowledge of union matters to empower and capacitate their colleagues.

Second, participants were involved in school-level decision making within their own schools (role 6). In this role, there was evidence across the cases of participative leadership practices (indicator 2) involving high levels of consultation and communication (indicator 4) and calling for decision-making in situations of unavoidable uncertainty (indicator 5). Micro-political issues surfaced in these two schools but, when they did, they were acknowledged and dealt with as speedily as possible (indicator 1). Where school-based problems were identified (indicator 3), these were deliberated upon and decisions taken about a way forward (indicator 5). Plans were then put in place (indicator 5) and, when necessary, new structures with their incumbent roles were instituted to resolve the problem (indicator 3).

Thus these participants demonstrated the ability to use their discretion and make wise judgements in circumstances which required them to be insightful and innovative. Hargreaves and Fullan refer to this as ‘decisional capital’ which, they explain, is “the capital that professionals acquire and accumulate through structured and unstructured experience, practice and reflection” (2012, p.93).

7.2.4 Leading beyond the School in Community Life and Cross-school Networking

The participants in this study demonstrated their leadership through their take up of both leadership roles in this fourth zone.

First, participants provided curriculum development knowledge (role 2)_but this was mostly to the SGB and parent community of the school. SGB’s from across the schools were capacitated and empowered about curriculum related matters (indicator 3). While not all the participants in my study served on the SGB, there were other teachers who were involved in

this leadership role. Nonetheless, participants who served on the SGB endeavoured to empower parent members about school policies and curriculum related matters and they made every effort to keep parents abreast of curriculum matters (indicator 2). There were regular grade meetings which focused on expectations in terms of curriculum and assessment requirements.

However, there were only isolated examples of networking with other schools in terms of curriculum development (indicator 4). For example, joint curriculum development at learning area meetings (indicator 1) did take place from time to time. Perhaps because so much time was spent adapting the curriculum to suit the needs of learners in their own unique school contexts, little time was left to do much else. Furthermore, the remote locations of these schools might have made cross-school relationships difficult, particularly when very few staff members had access to personal vehicles.

Second, participants led in-service education and assisted other teachers across schools (role 3) but this was mainly related to extra- and co-curricular activities and it varied across the two schools. Through participation in various extra and co-curricular activities as well as staff development initiatives (indicator 2) those participants who led strongly within this role were able to assist in developing skills and confidence in others (indicator 5), they were involved in coaching (indicator 3) as well as in mentoring and inducting (indicator 4). They thus imparted valuable skills and expertise and learnt valuable skills and expertise in return.

7.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS TO PART ONE

Thus it can be seen that participants in this study demonstrated leadership across the four zones and roles of teacher leadership as identified in Grant's (2008; 2012) model of teacher

leadership. Their leadership was expansive across the four zones, unlike the many studies of teacher leadership in mainstream South African schools where the leadership of teachers was restricted to the first and second zones (Grant & Singh, 2009; Grant et al, 2010; Mpangase, 2010; Gumede, 2011). This expansive form of teacher leadership, which can also be termed successful (Harris & Muijs, 2005), was a consequence of a number of factors including the different types of capital teachers were able to draw on. These included human, social and decisional capital which, when used collectively, constitute professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). And, as Hargreaves and Fullan argue, when the vast majority of teachers possess the power of professional capital, they become “smart and talented, committed and collegial, thoughtful and wise” (p.93). It stands to reason then that this wealth of professional capital found in the case study schools was most likely a key contributing factor to their high functionality.

7.4 STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL AND AGENTIAL ENABLEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS ACROSS BOTH SCHOOLS: WHAT CAN BE SAID?

I have already examined how applying ‘analytical dualism’ in my analysis of each school showed the way in which the causal relationships between Structural (SEPs), Cultural (CEPs) and Agential Emergent Properties (PEPs) influenced the emergence of new properties and powers. Engaging in this type of analysis enabled me to explain the leadership practices evident in the two contexts. While it is not possible to generalise beyond a specific case, the point has been made earlier that ‘case knowledge’ does emerge from studies such as these. In addition, whilst mechanisms that enable and constrain the emergence of new SEPs, CEPs and PEPs are inevitably context-dependent, insights can be gained from immersion in certain

contexts that allow one to speculate on the transferability of these insights to similar contexts. I argue that this is possible for my study here. Briefly, I am going to sketch what I see as structural and cultural enablements and/or constraints that apply to both schools (and which can be considered relevant in other contexts), and then consider the notion of ‘agency’ along similar lines.

7.4.1 Structural Enablements

The principals of both schools established, and/ or deepened structures that enabled extensive and participative opportunities for Post Level One teachers to ‘lead’ – both within and beyond the school fence. These included structures such as subject committee meetings (where curriculum was central to discussion), in-service education workshops, IQMS/ performance evaluation, new structures to facilitate new positions at the schools, re-capacitating the SGBs and parent communities, Sports Co-ordination and so on. Similarly, both principals entered pre-existing contexts not of their making but which (in keeping with Bhaskar and Archer’s view on reality) emerged from the causal relationship between ‘mechanisms’ that lay at the level of the real.

Where there was dissent or contradiction, which indeed there was as the situation at Ithemba Primary School shows, this was ultimately overcome through the way in which Petronella took on the role (structure) of principal. Through her ‘social interactions’ she was able to modify the existing structural, cultural and agential relationships and exert a considerable positive influence at the socio-cultural level (Archer, 1995).

7.4.2 Structural Constraints

At the risk of yet more repetition, key *initial* structural constraints in both schools clearly lay in how these had been used to inhibit leadership opportunities from being distributed to anyone other than those in the SMTs. Other structural constraints were (and still are) the lack of material resources both schools face, large class sizes and the lack of on-site sporting facilities. The loss of staff at Ithemba Primary School due to the Post Provisioning Norms can also be considered a structural constraint. ‘Rules and policies’ are also structures and almost always understood as constraints, ‘boundaries’ that are externally imposed and which bear costs for crossing. What this study shows, however, is that while ‘structures’ *are* so often regarded as ‘fixed and immutable’, the reality is infinitely more complex and ‘mutable’ than first thought. While contextually, these schools appear at first glance to be like all others classified as disadvantaged i.e. rural/ semi-rural, poor infrastructure etc. it is possible to ‘emerge’ from within this context as highly functional and successful. This study has aptly demonstrated that agents within an organisation have the power to change structures. Powerful corporate agents within the case study schools managed to change the structures to enable a more distributed flow of leadership. Rather than focus on those in formal leadership positions only the skills and expertise of all staff members were tapped into and leadership became a collective endeavour. This in turn enabled the schools enabled the schools to become highly functional and this was despite the odds stacked against them.

7.4.3 Cultural Constraints and Enablements

Cultural constraints and enablements are considered together here. This is because in both schools, if I had been able to track changes over time in an authentic morphogenetic cycle, I

speculate what might have been the case. What began as cultural constraints under the two previous principals of both schools, have now emerged, through processes of causality, as cultural enablements. So, for example, prior to the assumption of the position of principal, the *beliefs* about the role of the principal (autocratic, ‘Big Man’); *beliefs* about the role Post Level One educators can play in a school; the *values* of distributing opportunities to lead; collaborative teaching and learning; advancing one’s own professional development through further study etc.; and the *rituals and symbols* held to be important; served as mechanisms at the level of the real to constrain the Cultural System (Archer, 1996¹) and the socio-cultural level as a whole. However, as this study shows, over time, and again through the causal relationships between groups and individuals at the socio-cultural level, “there is elaboration of the Cultural System due to the Socio-Cultural level modifying current logical relations and introducing new ones” (ibid p.106). The previous two chapters show exactly the results of this modification of the existing ‘logical relations’ and how ‘new ones’ came about, leading to a whole new set of beliefs, values and commitments. This then acted as mechanisms at the level of the real leading to changed practices around ‘leading’ which were welcomed by everyone and are now woven integrally into the current Cultural Systems of the schools.

7.4.4 Agency

The need for Actors/ Social Actors (Archer, 2003) (as opposed to the majority of a school staff component remaining Primary Agents) has been shown in this study to be crucial to change and transformation in schools. This is more especially in schools categorised as

¹ Archer, M.S., 1996. *Culture and Agency. The place of culture in social theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

‘disadvantaged’ in the South African context. This is because Actors invest in, and identify with, the *role* s/he assumes, and finds meaning in using that role for change and transformation. I argue strongly that if Philani and Petronella had not moved from being the Primary Agents whilst under their previous principals, to the Actors they became that transformation in the way they led would not have happened. When assuming their respective principalship roles, the extent, quality and nature of the leadership practices that have emerged in Wembibona and Ithemba Schools would not have taken place. It has to be acknowledged though that Petronella emerged as a Social Actor much later and this was due to the victimisation and hegemonic practices levelled against her as female principal. By using their PEPs the way they did (and presumably continue to do), and consequently effecting a causal influence on the SEPs and CEPs of their schools, they have in fact established the necessary conditions for leadership to be distributed. This in turn enabled all other staff, but particularly Post Level One teachers also to become, over time, Actors. The study shows that the Post Level One teachers who participated in this study can already be understood as Actors. What I can speculate on, therefore, is that key characteristics of a highly functional and successful school will be where structural-cultural conditions act as mechanisms for the emergence of ‘agency’ and Actors.

What follows is Chapter 8, where I conclude my thesis.

CHAPTER 8

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION: LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS

A tiny band of schools situated in the poorest communities provide some of the highest quality education. They are performing heroic deeds under difficult conditions, and serve as role models for the rest of the system and this is achieved through a professional investment in appropriate leadership. (Taylor, 2006, p.53 in Money and Morality).

8.1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear from the evidence that the schools in this study, despite their material, economic, social and cultural disadvantage, were highly functional and provided quality education for their learners. In the previous chapter I provided insights drawn from both cases to answer my two research questions:

- *What teacher practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?*
- *What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?*

In this concluding chapter, I discuss how the case study schools have shattered the myth of traditional leadership by embracing teacher leadership as an organisational phenomenon. I next reflect on the study and suggest some theoretical contributions. Thereafter, I make recommendations for research and finally I conclude the thesis.

8.2 SHATTERING THE (ENTRENCHED) MYTH OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP: TEACHER LEADERSHIP AS AN ORGANISATIONAL PHENOMENON

As discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, there is much literature to indicate that a distributed perspective on leadership is the exception rather than the norm in mainstream schools in South Africa. The majority of these mainstream schools continue to underperform, despite the numerous attempts to improve the teaching and learning in these institutions. It is these mainstream schools which tend to rely on traditional forms of leadership which view leadership as positional rather than relational and where power remains vested in the person of the principal at the top of the management hierarchy (Naicker & Mestry, 2013; Ntuzela, 2008; Singh, 2007; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). Teacher leadership, where it exists in these schools, is largely ‘restricted’ to departmental leadership (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Or else it is what Harris and Muijs (2005) term ‘emergent’ where leadership is shared but only among the SMT (see for example Grant, 2010; Grant et al., 2010; Nene, 2010; Molefe, 2010).

In direct contrast, the two schools in this study were highly functional and they succeeded despite the odds stacked against them. They shattered the myth of traditional leadership in their schools and instead adopted a distributed perspective on leadership. Leadership was not limited to a select few but shared among the entire staff, including post level one teachers. These teachers led expansively across all zones and enacted most of the roles of Grant’s teacher leadership model. Thus they were what Harris and Muijs (2005) term ‘successful’ teacher leaders and this was due to the fact that teacher leadership was taken up as an

organisational phenomenon rather than merely an individual endeavour in the case study schools.

Working from the premise that all teachers can lead, the principals as corporate agents provided an enabling culture and deliberately orchestrated a set of opportunities for teachers (experienced and novice) to lead. The expertise of each individual teacher was valued and structures, positions and roles (aside from those legislated) were created to enable the emergence of teacher leadership. A culture of teamwork, ongoing communication and high levels of trust were created and principals provided moral support and encouraged teachers to take risks. And, as Harris and Muijs argue, “a culture of trust is both a facilitator of and a result of teacher leadership, as giving people autonomy both requires and helps create trust” (2005, p.104).

The teachers in these two schools were unique. The majority were well-qualified (with post-graduate qualifications) and they valued good education. They were fiercely committed to their learners and held steady to the goal of effective teaching and learning. Their experience of teaching was not confined to their disadvantaged circumstance but they had experiences of educational contexts beyond their school borders. They had what I call a mobility of educational experience which offered alternative ways of being and doing and this stood them in good stead to do things differently. They were professionals in the full sense of the word, drawing on their human, social and decisional capital as they saw fit.

There emerged a dynamic learning community (Mitchelle, 2001) in these schools where teachers worked toward empowering each other and they thus became interdependent (Covey, 2004). The emphasis was on the collective expertise rather on the individual leader

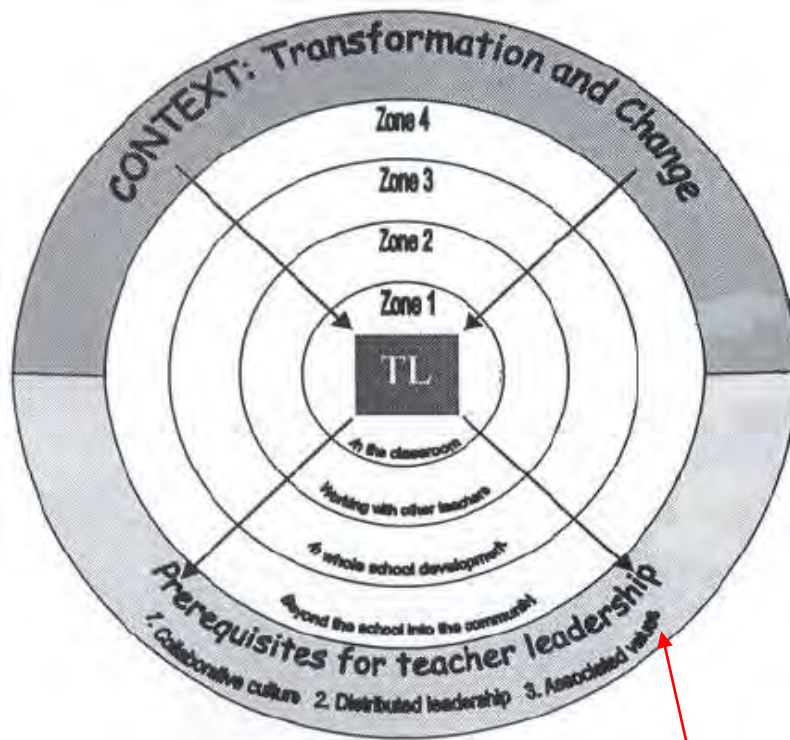
and on the plural rather on the singular (Muijs & Harris, 2003). In essence there was a “web of leaders” contributing to the leadership practice of the school. This finding resonates with the work of Fullan (2011), Hopkins, Ainscow & West (1994) and Oduro (2007) which ascribes a school’s success in terms of learner performance to that of good leadership practices. Active participation in the leadership practice was due to high levels of teacher confidence, accountability, responsibility, commitment, sacrifice of personal time and dedication. In line with this, Sergiovanni (2001) argues that the basic shift is from a “power over approach to a power to approach” (p.57).

Thus, like Christie, one might argue that in the context of mainstream schooling in South Africa the “traditional model of leadership simply does not match the organisational complexity of [21st] century schooling” (2010, p.697). If we are to turn our education system around, we need to draw on the agency and power of all our teachers, regardless of position or years of experience. We have to awaken the sleeping giant of teacher leadership (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). But to do this, we need to document and share case studies of good leadership practices in successful mainstream schools (as I have attempted to do in this study). Thus, this thesis argues that previously disadvantaged schools in South Africa have the capacity of succeed against the odds. The existing structures, cultures and agents need to be aligned so that the skills, and expertise of all teachers are utilised so as to contribute to the success of a school. Structures are therefore not immutable and agents within the organisation have the power to change oppressive leadership structures. In the light of this argument this study also makes a social realist contribution to the field of educational leadership and management in that it has demonstrated that Social Realism can serve as an under-labourer to a leadership study.

8.3 REFLECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The first of these reflections is the use of Grant's (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership. I believe it was an appropriate model to use, since it provided the necessary conceptual tools to be "able to construct an account of school leadership that is grounded in everyday practice" (Spillane, 2006, p.10). It served as an analytical tool so as to arrive at a clear understanding, at an empirical level, of the leadership practices at the case study schools. I concur with Grant (2010) that its value also lies in its heuristic potential; a tool for looking forward. I agree that "it offers researchers a language of description to be able to converse with other researchers about the possibilities of teacher leadership in a particular context and it offers a framework for future studies" (2010, p.339).

The model indicates that one of the prerequisites for teacher leadership is that of a collaborative culture (Grant, 2008a). The first contribution emerging from my study is to make an addition to Grant's model by adding: collaborative structures and agency to the notion of collaborative culture (See *Figure 6*). This study has aptly demonstrated that for leadership to be distributed and for there to be active participation in the leadership practice, the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties play a crucial role. The cultural domain is shaped by the prevailing structures and they constitute the parts (Archer, 1995) and vice versa. Structure and culture (parts) pre-exist but can only be activated by the agents (people).



As prerequisites to teacher leadership, I add collaborative structures and agency to that of collaborative cultures

Figure 6: Zones and Roles Model of Teacher Leadership (Grant, 2008; 2012) to Which I Add Collaborative Structures and Agents

We now know that from a critical realist standpoint that simply giving an empirical description of the phenomenon under study alone is inadequate. My second contribution to research conducted in the field of Education Leadership and Management in South Africa, therefore, is an attempt at a critical and social realist study. This has not been a simple undertaking and even now, at the point of conclusion, I recognise that I have much still to learn about Archer's approach to Social Realism. However superficial my engagement with Archer's work may be considered, I do believe that her concepts of structure, culture and agency as properties constituting the 'social' – and as *analytically distinct* from one another i.e. for research and analysis purposes only – have proved extremely useful in this study. As a result I would like to encourage other researchers to make use of the meta-theories of critical and social realism when working with Grant's Model of Teacher Leadership (2012). In doing so, a researcher would follow two key steps (See *Figure 7*):

In Step 1, Grant's (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership as revised by me could be used to understand what teacher leadership practices are evident at the levels of the *actual* and *empirical*.

In Step 2, Archer's (1995) concepts of structure, culture and agency and that of analytical dualism could be used to identify what the underlying causal structural, cultural and agential mechanisms are at the level of the real that enable or constrain these practices. This will enable the researcher or practitioner to arrive at the 'best possible explanations' (Bhaskar, 1975) for why things are the way they are.

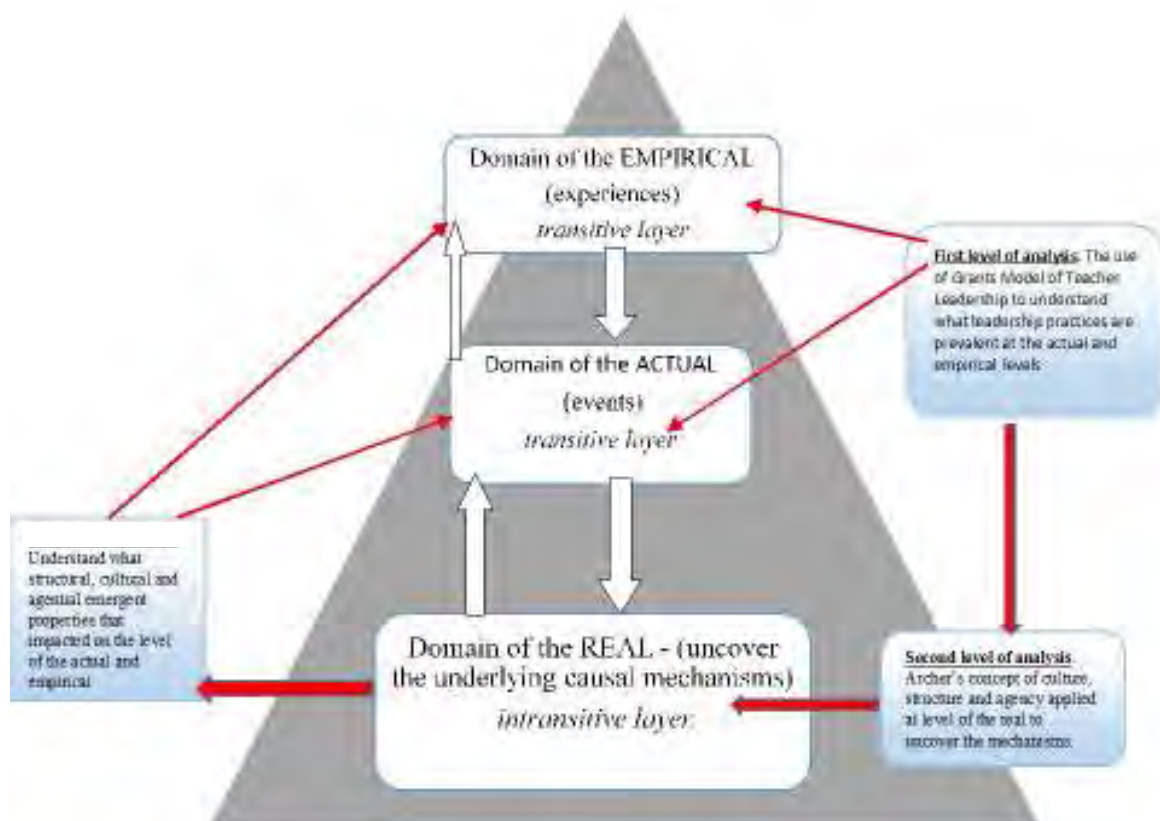


Figure 7: Three Tier Model to Make Meaning of Leadership Practices in Previously Disadvantaged, Highly Successful Schools

Scholars, policymakers and professionals wishing to undertake social science research in the field of ELM as well as practitioners who endeavour to change and improve their practice can derive a great deal of benefit by adopting this model. Engagement with the model will assist these people to get to a better understanding of reality in terms of the phenomenon being studied.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

I make three recommendations for future research.

First, one of the limitations of this study was that it focused only on the leadership practices of teachers at the case study schools. The leadership of learners, for example, was beyond the scope of the study. To fully understand the distribution of leadership in schools, a study which looks at both teacher leadership and learner leadership would be interesting.

Second, while I drew on critical and social realism in my study, I did so very tentatively and rather superficially. These are very complex theories and a far more sophisticated application thereof is possible. For example, further research which tracks the process of change in the leadership practices over time is possible using Archer's morphogenetic framework.

Third, Harris and Muijs argue that successful teacher leadership requires a "carefully orchestrated and deliberate process" (2005, p.123) so that it becomes embedded in the culture of the school. It would be interesting to do an intervention study in a school which exemplifies restricted teacher leadership and track its progress as it attempts to move towards more emergent and successful teacher leadership practices.

8.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In conclusion, and as a consequence of my study, I argue in line with Harris and Muijs (2005) that to improve underperforming schools, there are three non-negotiable elements:

- A central focus on teaching and learning
- Commitment to meaningful professional development
- Distributed forms of (teacher) leadership

If mainstream South African schools can attend to these three key elements, then there is hope for the transformation of the education system in South Africa. And indeed there is hope if only we remember that:

Leadership is much akin to potential energy as it is to kinetic and it is the latent as well as the currently lived and enacted expressions of leading. Leadership potential exists very widely and is seen to be located in the potential available to be released within an organisation (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p.10).

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Research Office (Govan Mbeki Centre)
Private Bag x54001
DURBAN, 4000
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609
Ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

28 June 2011

Mrs. S Pillay (205400735)
School of Education and Development

Dear Mrs. Pillay

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0400/011D
PROJECT TITLE: Distributed Leadership: Who holds the Power?

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor – Dr. C. Grant
cc. Dr. C. Thomson
cc. Ms. T Mnisi/Mr. N Memela



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.: 2/4/8/15

Mrs. Sivie Pillay
34 Executive Drive
Orient Heights
Pietermaritzburg

Dear Mrs. Pillay

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **Distributed leadership: Who holds the power?** in the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators, schools and institutions are not identifiable in any way from the result of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Head of Institution where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period: From 01 March 2011 to 31 March 2012.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Superintendent General. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are **under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation**.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), contact Mr Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Address to: The Director: Resource Planning; Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

...dedicated to service and performance
beyond the call of duty.



APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (SGB)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville

3209

LETTER OF CONSENT: SCHOOL-GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body

.....

.....

.....

Dear sir/ madam

I am currently completing a PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In order to complete this degree I need to conduct a research project. The

topic that I am researching focuses on LEADERSHIP PRACTISES in South African schools. My research topic is LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL, DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS? My research questions are as follows:

What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

This is an emerging field of research and I am of the opinion that engaging in both Distributed Leadership and Teacher Leadership have a powerful role to play in transforming teaching and learning in our South African schools. This area has not been researched much but is gaining momentum in our country. In this regard, I have identified your school as a successful school, which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into the leadership practices at your school. My supervisors are Dr Inbanathan Naicker (Telephone No. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (Telephone No. 0844003347) who are senior lecturers. I will greatly appreciate it if the principal and the School Governing Body would grant me permission to conduct research at your school.

I wish to make it known that participation in this project is voluntary and the identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the anonymity of all participants and they are free to withdraw their participation at any time without negative or

undesirable consequences to themselves. The project is being done with permission of the Higher Degrees Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. S. Pillay

Contact details: Tel. Nos. 033 3914284 (h) 033 3914552 (w) 0724766234 (c)

APPENDIX D: APPROVAL BY SGB

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville

3209

DECLARATION

I, _____ Chairperson of _____ School do hereby give consent to Mrs. S Pillay to use the school as a research site. I confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research study.

Consent Granted		Consent Not Granted	
-----------------	--	---------------------	--

Signature

Date

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville

3209

**CONSENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/DP/HOD/EDUCATOR TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH**

(* Ps. Letters will be addressed individually to each of the participants

RE: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently completing the PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In order to complete this degree I need to conduct a research project. The

topic that I am researching focuses on LEADERSHIP PRACTISES in South African schools. My research topic is LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS? My research questions are as follows:

What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

This is an emerging field of research and I am of the opinion that engaging in both Distributed Leadership and Teacher Leadership have a powerful role to play in transforming teaching and learning in our South African schools. This area has not been researched adequately enough and is gaining momentum in our country. In this regard, I have identified your school as a successful school, which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would, therefore, like to consider your school as a 'research site' in order to get a clearer understanding of leadership practices at your school. To this end, I would greatly appreciate it if you would consent to me interviewing you individually as well as a member of a group. I would also like to invite you to participate in three journal-writing processes on the topic of distributed leadership (PS for principals only). In addition, I request that I be allowed to spend a period of time in your school (to be negotiated) so as to be able to observe leadership practices in the school both in formal and informal situations.

Please consider the following before you consent.

- You are under no obligation to consent to my request and you will in no way be victimised or prejudiced in any way should you refuse me.

- Should you agree to be part of my research project, the information that you share with me will be held in strict confidence between me and my supervisors only, and anonymity will be ensured which is in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. However, the results of my findings will be published in the form of a thesis but all names of participants' and their school will be removed).
- You are at liberty to withdraw from the process at any stage if you feel that your position is being compromised without any negative or undesirable consequences to you.

My supervisors are Dr Inbanathan Naicker (Telephone No. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (Telephone No. 0844003347) who are both senior lecturers. Any queries you might have with regard to this research project can be directed to either one or other of these supervisors, or to me. My contact details are as follows:

033 3914284 (h), 0724766234 (cell no.)

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

MRS. S. PILLAY

**APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT'S AGREEMENT TO UNDERTAKE
RESEARCH**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



DECLARATION

I, (full names of participant) _____ who is based at _____ Primary School do hereby consent to participate in Mrs. S Pillay's research project.

I am aware that:

- Her research project aims to get a clearer understanding of the leadership practices at my school.
- The information she gathers will be used as part of her research project. I understand that both the interview and journal-writing processes (principals only) will take up some of my time.
- The information will be published in the form of a thesis and will be reviewed by others.

- Dr Inbanathan Naicker (contact no. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (contact no. 0844003347) are the supervisors for the research project.

Having taken note of the above information I freely and voluntarily agree to take part in the research process and acknowledge that I have not been forced to do so. I declare that I have been briefed about the research project and that I fully understand my part in it. I am also aware that information divulged by me will be kept in strict confidence but that the findings of the research will be published in the form of a thesis. I do understand that I will not receive any payment for my participation in this research. Mrs. S. Pillay is hereby authorised to use any information derived from me as part of the research project she has undertaken. Kindly tick the relevant block:

Consent Granted		Consent Not Granted	
-----------------	--	---------------------	--

Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: Permission to Participate in Focus Group Interview

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville

3209

**CONSENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/DP/HOD/EDUCATOR TO PARTICIPATE IN A
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

(* Ps. Letters will be addressed individually to each of the participants)

**RE: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW:
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am currently completing the PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In order to complete this degree I need to conduct a research project. The topic that I am researching focuses on LEADERSHIP PRACTISES in South African schools. My research topic is LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL SCHOOLS? My research questions are as follows:

What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

This is an emerging field of research and I am of the opinion that engaging in both Distributed Leadership and Teacher Leadership have a powerful role to play in transforming teaching and learning in our South African schools. This is an emerging field of research and I am of the opinion that Distributed Leadership has a powerful role to play in transforming the teaching and learning in our South African schools. This area has not been researched adequately enough and is gaining momentum in our country. In this regard, I have identified your school as a successful school, which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would, therefore, like to consider your school as a 'research site' in order to get a clearer understanding of leadership practices at your school. To this end, I would greatly appreciate it if you would consent to me interviewing you as a member of a 'focus' group. Kindly take note that the Principal, either the Deputy Principal or the HOD and two level one educators will also be part of this group when this particular interview takes place. The purpose of this type of interview is to bring everybody's ideas together and provide a

space for all participants to engage with each other on the different areas they have addressed during their individual interviews.

Please consider the following before you consent.

- You are under no obligation to consent to my request and you will in no way be victimised or prejudiced in any way should you refuse me.
- Should you agree to be part of my research project, the information that you share with me will be held in strict confidence between me, the other participants in the group and my supervisors only. Anonymity will be ensured which is in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. However, the results of my findings will be published in the form of a thesis.
- You are at liberty to withdraw from the process at any stage if you feel that your position is being compromised without any negative or undesirable consequences to you. Kindly note that you will be participating in a group and the other participants will be privy to what you say. Anonymity and confidentiality in this regard cannot be guaranteed although all attempts will be made to the participants not to divulge information discussed in the focus groups.
- My supervisors are Dr Inbanathan Naicker (Telephone No. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (Telephone No. 0844003347) who are both senior lecturers. Any queries you might have with regard to this research project can be directed to either one or other of these supervisors, or to me. My contact details are as follows: 033 3914284 (h), 0724766234 (cell no.)

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

MRS. S. PILLAY

APPENDIX H: Agreement to Participate in Focus Group Interview

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



DECLARATION

I, (full names of participant) _____ who is based at _____ Primary School do hereby consent to participate in the focus group interview with Mrs. S Pillay.

I am aware that:

- Her research project aims to get a clearer understanding of the leadership practices at my school.
- The information she gathers will be used as part of her research project. The information will be published in the form of a thesis and will be reviewed by others.

Dr Inbanathan Naicker (contact no. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (contact no. 0844003347) are the supervisors for the research project. Other participants in the group will be privy to the information discussed.

Having taken note of the above information I freely and voluntarily agree to take part in the focus group interview and acknowledge that I have not been forced to do so. I declare that I have been briefed about the research project and that I fully understand my part in it. I am also aware that information divulged by me will be kept in strict confidence but that the findings of the research will be published in the form of a thesis. I do understand that I will not receive any payment for my participation in this research. Mrs. S. Pillay is hereby authorised to use any information derived from me as part of the research project she has undertaken. Kindly tick the relevant block:

Consent Granted		Consent Not Granted	
-----------------	--	---------------------	--

Signature

Date

**APPENDIX I: Permission from the Dean of Education to Peruse Portfolios
of Principal in ACE**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209

The Deputy Dean
Professor Volker Wedekind
School of Education
Scottsville
3209

RE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Sir

I am currently completing the PhD in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The topic that I am researching focuses on LEADERSHIP PRACTISES in

South African schools. My research topic is LEADING SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST THE ODDS IN HIGHLY FUNCTIONAL SCHOOLS? My research questions are as follows:

What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

This is an emerging field of research and I am of the opinion that engaging in both Distributed Leadership and Teacher Leadership have a powerful role to play in transforming teaching and learning in our South African schools. This area has not been researched adequately enough and is gaining momentum in our country. Through my research, I wish to get a clearer understanding of how distributed leadership is enacted in schools because distributed leadership has the potential of broadening our understanding of leadership and is an emerging form of leadership practice in schools.

The study that I am undertaking will be focusing on the Case Studies of three atypical primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. In preparation for choosing the schools, I have decided to choose schools where principals have successfully completed the ACE-SL. I will therefore be looking at the portfolios of these students to assist me in my choice of the participants. Through reading their portfolios and their reflections and the studying of documents, handouts and articles about the school in their portfolios, I will get a good idea about the culture and structure of the school and the work ethic of the principals. The manner in which the portfolio has been compiled will also tell me a lot about the principals, their motivational levels as well as their leadership practices. After careful analysis, I will finally

choose three schools. This will be under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Neil Avery. A set of indicators have been developed to assist me in my choice of the three highly functional schools. The choice of highly functional schools is because research on teacher leadership in South Africa show restricted teacher leadership within an authorised leadership framework. The findings show few cases of emergent or successful teacher leadership. To understand distributed leadership better I need to find schools, which are highly functional, that is where power is likely to be shared and where there is emergent or successful teacher leadership taking place because this is where dispersed or democratic leadership is more likely to be found. I want to understand this perspective better since it has not been the focus of research to date in South Africa. I therefore wish to inform you that I will be looking at some of the portfolios of students who have been through the ACE-SL at the University of Pietermaritzburg.

My supervisors are Dr Inbanathan Naicker (Telephone No. 031 2603461) and Professor Callie Grant (Telephone No. 0844003347).

Thanking you most sincerely.

Yours faithfully

Sivie Pillay

Student Number: 205400735

APPENDIX J: Agreement by Dean of Education (Pietermaritzburg)**FACULTY OF EDUCATION****DECLARATION**

I, _____ do hereby acknowledge having received your letter (S. Pillay, Student No. 205400 735) and am aware that you will be looking at the portfolios of students who have completed the ACE-SL.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully

Deputy Dean,

Professor Volker Wedekind

School of Education

Pietermaritzburg

APPENDIX K: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The primary aim of the interview will be to understand the leadership practices of the participants and how they interact with each other. The focus group interview will be based on what I observe, on what principals write in their journals, on their individual open-ended interviews as well as on the documents collected. The questions below will serve only as a guide and will be adjusted according to the data collected. Cues and prompts will be used to get participants to talk.

The Focus Group Will Consist of:

- The Principal
- 1 Head of Department or 1 Deputy Principal
- 2 Post Level 1 Educators

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL SERVE AS A GUIDE DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Welcome all participants and thank them for their time. (Set time frames and discuss ground rules for participating in the focus group interview. Encourage participants to relax and to be as honest and open as possible stressing that this will influence the trustworthiness of the research findings).

1. What do you understand by the concept of distributed leadership?
2. Explain to me what you think distributed leadership would look like in practice?
3. Give me some examples of how this happens at your school?

4. Are there mechanisms in place for distributed leadership to emerge at your school?
5. Explain how this happens.
6. Do you manage to work effectively together as a team? Enlighten me on what happens. Tell me how you rely on each other's skills, expertise, knowledge and experience or is this possible in the environment that you work.
7. What are the advantages and challenges that are being experienced in trying to get educators at your school to work collaboratively?
8. Who is responsible for the different types of decision-making processes at the school? How meetings are conducted and give me some practical examples of how staff members offer suggestions and give their input and become involved? What are the benefits and challenges that are encountered?

Explain what goes on with regards to leadership roles at your school. Are educators assigned to the same leadership roles all the time or do leaders change? Tell me what happens. Do educators willingly render their services or are there a select few who do so? Explain the challenges and the benefits that you experience from this. (Refer them to the various committees eg. Staff, learning area, grade, phase, staff development, developmental support, and teacher support meetings)

What are some of the goals that you have for your school? Tell me more about how these goals are being realised and to what would you ascribe this? What part do you have to play in the achievement of these goals? (Refer them to mentoring, staff development programmes, induction, conducting of meetings, being chairpersons of subject committees etc.)

Ask participants if they wish to add anything more.

Thank participants for their invaluable time and effort.

APPENDIX L: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Through observation, I want to get a good understanding of the leadership and the practices in disadvantaged, highly functional schools as well as the mechanisms that enable or constrain them. I will therefore observe the interactions between the various role players in the different situations identified below to see how distributed leadership practices (if any) are evoked and/or practised. I will bear in mind my two research questions as follows:

What teacher leadership practices are evident in highly functional, disadvantaged schools?

What are the underlying structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms that enable or constrain these practices?

Situations to be observed during the 4-week observation cycle which will be broken into two weeks each.

- Staff meetings (2)
- Either a subject committee, grade or phase meeting/workshop (2)
- Assembly (3)
- Briefing sessions (2)
- Trans-sect (walk around the school on an ongoing basis). (Move around the school with the primary participants who will identify examples of distributed leadership practices). Field notes will be kept and a reflective journal will be kept in this regard.

The main aim of the observation process will be to observe the leadership practices at the school and I will observe the kind of interactions that take place amongst the leaders at the various post levels. The process will unfold as follows:

OBSERVATION OF STAFF MEETING (2 PER SCHOOL)

Questions	Brief Notes
Who convenes the staff meeting? Comment on seating arrangements.	
What is the leadership and management style that is displayed during interactions?	
Matters discussed. (Brief points)	
Type of staff participation? Is there evidence that leadership is being distributed? Explain how this happens	
Are matters discussed before decisions are taken?	
What are the opportunities provided for staff members to voice their opinions. Describe the structures in place for staff participation.	

<p>Is there an agenda and are deviations allowed? Explain whether the meeting is attuned to the needs of all teachers.</p>	
<p>What are the levels of trust, accountability and responsibility that the principal places in the staff?</p>	
<p>What kind of incentives is staff given? (Eg. Praise, thank you notes, celebrations, information published in the form of newsletters, parent notices etc.)</p>	
<p>How does the school keep abreast, sustain and realigns itself to new knowledge, innovation and change?</p>	

Field Notes

Reflexive Notes (after observation)

**OBSERVATION SHEET FOR LEARNING AREA/ PHASE MEETING /
GRADE MEETING**

Questions	Brief Notes
Who convenes the meeting and is there evidence of shared responsibility and accountability?	
Matters discussed. (Brief points)	
Is there evidence of participation amongst the members?	
How are decisions taken? Are there discussions before decisions are taken?	
Are all members given a chance to voice their opinions?	
Do leaders remain the same all the time or is there any evidence of the leadership being	

fluid and emerging?	
Is there an agenda and are deviations allowed?	
What is the leadership and management style that is displayed during interactions?	
Are educators praised for achievements?	
Comment on the effectiveness of these committees.	

Field Notes

Reflexive Notes (after observation)

**OBSERVATION SHEET FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT/ MENTORING/
INDUCTION PROGRAMMES**

Questions	Brief Notes
Who convenes the workshop/ meeting/ programme and is there evidence of shared responsibility and accountability? Comment	
Is there evidence of continual professional development amongst staff as well as staff development programmes and is the talents and potential of educators nurtured, improved and developed. Do the staff development programmes include leadership and management development? Provide examples.	
Are all educators given a fair chance to display their leadership skills and expertise during these programmes?	

<p>Comment on the power dynamics prevalent between the various committee members? (consider that members are from the various post levels)</p>	
<p>Is leadership extended to all post levels or is it confined to those in formal leadership positions? Provide examples of what happens.</p>	
<p>What is the leadership and management style that is displayed during interactions? Comment on how the style displayed impacts on the way that educators interact with one another.</p>	
<p>What are the processes by which teacher leadership practices are distributed? (Eg. Democratic decision making, according to skills, expertise, experience, knowledge, given options). Are there any positive effects on organisational and individual learning</p>	

when leadership is distributed?	
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Field Notes

Reflexive Notes (after observation)

OBSERVATION SHEET FOR ASSEMBLIES

Questions

Brief Notes

a. Who convenes the assembly?	
b. Matters discussed. What kind of guidance is given to learners? (Brief points)	
c. Is there evidence of staff, learner participation?	
d. Comment on the power dynamics between	

<p>the principal, other staff members and learners during the assembly.</p>	
<p>e. Evidence of how staff members/ learners are praised for their achievements?</p>	
<p>f. Describe the kind of atmosphere that prevails at the assembly based on the manner in which the assembly is conducted and on the opportunities afforded to learners and staff members.</p>	
<p>g. Comment on the type of leadership and management style that is displayed during interactions?</p>	

Field Notes

Reflexive Notes (after observation)

APPENDIX M: Open-ended Interviews – Principals

There will be two open-ended interviews with each of the participants. One will be at the beginning of the process and one will be at the end of the process. (PS. The questions formulated below are mere guidelines and may change depending on what I read in the participants journals and observe at the research sites).

INTERVIEW 1 (WELCOME PARTICIPANT)

- Tell me about your first teaching experiences and how you moved from being level 1 through to being a leader at the various post levels. What leadership roles did you play at the various post levels? (i.e. as Level one educator, HOD & DP).
- Tell me about your past principals and their leadership styles. Explain whether their leadership style influenced you as a leader? What were the opportunities that were provided for you to grow and emerge as a leader and by whom?
- What do you understand by the term distributed leadership? Give me examples of how you think this will look like in practice.
- Who are the ones responsible to lead at your school? Provide some examples of how this happens.
- What is your opinion of sharing leadership roles? Are there any benefits/challenges when leadership is distributed?

INTERVIEW 2

Is there anything that you want to add to the first interview?

- Explain how decisions are made at your school? What are the advantages and challenges when there is consultation and shared decision-making? (E.g. Is there a management meeting before you consult with staff? Is there collaboration, consultation, discussions, are suggestions given by others considered?)
- Explain how leadership is distributed at your school? Do leaders change or are they the same all the time? What mechanisms are there in place to distribute leadership? Elaborate on this.
- Are teachers encouraged to take on leadership roles and are the skills, experience and knowledge that educators possess located, developed and sustained and is this utilised to the maximum? What are the challenges and how do you overcome them?
- What kinds of relationships exist amongst the various staff members and is there evidence of interdependence, synergy, teamwork and collaboration? Do you manage to achieve this? Provide me with details and concrete examples of how this happens.

Is there anything else you wish to tell me?

APPENDIX N: Open-ended Interviews – HoDs / Deputy Principals

(PS Interview will be either with the Deputy Principal or with the Head of Department and will depend on who is selected)

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

INTERVIEW 1

1. Tell me about your first teaching experience and how you moved from being level 1 through to being a leader at the various post levels. What leadership roles did you play at the various post levels? (I.e. as Level one educator, HOD/ DP). What were the opportunities that were provided for you to grow and emerge as a leader and by whom?

Tell me about your past principals and their leadership styles. How did their leadership styles influence you as a leader?

What do you understand by the term distributed leadership?

Who are the ones responsible to lead at your school?

What are the benefits if any when leadership is distributed? Give a few brief descriptions.

Do you think that there should be distinct role functions for leaders at the various post levels? Briefly elaborate on this.

INTERVIEW 2

Is there anything that you wish to add to the first interview?

Explain how decisions are made at your school/ in your department? What are the advantages and challenges when there is consultation and shared decision-making? (e.g. Is there a management meeting before staff members are consulted? Is there collaboration, consultation, discussions and are suggestions given by others considered?)

Explain how leadership is distributed at your school? Do leaders change or are they the same all the time? What mechanisms are there in place to distribute leadership? Elaborate on this.

Are teachers encouraged to take on leadership roles and are the skills, experience and knowledge that educators possess located, developed and sustained and is this utilised to the maximum? What are the challenges and how do you overcome them?

What kinds of relationships exist amongst the various staff members and is there evidence of interdependence, synergy, teamwork and collaboration? How do you manage to achieve this?

How have you managed to sustain the enthusiasm of staff amidst the multitude of changes that have taken place in education?

Is the skills, experience and knowledge that educators possess located, developed and sustained and is this utilised to the maximum? Is there anything else you wish to tell me?

APPENDIX O: Open-ended Interviews – Level One

(They have been identified as teacher leaders).

INTERVIEW 1

1. Is this your first school? What prompted you to become a teacher? Tell me about your first teaching experiences and how did you manage to become a teacher leader? What were the challenges? Why do you think that people recognise you as a teacher leader?

Tell me about your principal/principals and what are some of the opportunities that have been created for you to become a teacher leader?

What do you understand by the term distributed leadership?

Are there benefits when leadership is distributed? Briefly explain giving examples.

Do you think that there should be distinct role functions for leaders at the various post levels?

Do you have distinct role functions or do they change? What would you say is the reason for this?

INTERVIEW 2

Is there anything that you wish to add to the first interview?

Explain how decisions are made at your school? What are the advantages and challenges when there is consultation and shared decision-making? (Eg. Is there a management meeting before you consult with staff? Is there collaboration, consultation, discussions, are suggestions given by others considered?)

Explain how leadership is distributed at your school? Do leaders change or are they the same all the time? What mechanisms are there in place to distribute leadership? Elaborate on this.

Are teachers encouraged to take on leadership roles and are the skills, experience and knowledge that educators possess located, developed and sustained and is this utilised to the maximum? What are the challenges and how do you overcome them?

What kinds of relationships exist amongst the various staff members and is there evidence of interdependence, synergy, teamwork and collaboration? Do you manage to achieve this? Provide me with details and concrete examples of how this happens.

Tell me about the various leadership roles you play both within and beyond your classroom? How has it benefitted your learners and improved your classroom practice?

Is there anything that you wish to add?

APPENDIX P: Journal Entries: Principal

Principals will use the following guided questions to complete their journal entries. Each participant will complete three journal entries and they will be given two months to complete the journal entries. Spaces will be provided after each question for participants to write.

(Details of how the journal entries must be done will be explained in detail and participants will be encouraged to be as creative as possible. They will be encouraged to include illustrations, handouts, photographs, and mind maps to express themselves).

JOURNAL ENTRY 1

Personal details of participants. (The information is to get a clear picture of the leadership life histories of the participants. PS This sheet will be pasted into principal's journals for them to complete).

Field	Information
1. Name of school	
2. Location	
3. Type of school	
4. Name of participant	

5. Nominal date of appointment	
6. No. of years in current post	
7. As Head of Department and Deputy Principal	7.1
	7.2
	7.3
	7.4
	7.5
	7.6
8. History of leadership 8.1. As HOD: No. of years Name of school 8.2. As DP: No of years	
	8.2

Name of school			
9. Educational qualifications)	9.1		
	9.2		
	9.3		
	9.4		
	9.5		
10. Professional Dev. Activities engaged in or conducted in the last year. (State whether the meeting was attended by you or conducted)	10.1		
	10.2		
	10.3		
	10.4		
11. State whether currently studying?	Yes	No	Area of study-

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1. What is your understanding of a leader in education?

In your opinion what are some of your personal attributes that qualifies you as a leader?

Provide some examples of how these attributes are utilised optimally at your school.

Tell me about the schools that you taught at as a level one educator. What were the most important leadership roles that you undertook both within the classroom, in whole school development and at other schools. Who were the people who were instrumental in developing you as a level one teacher?

What kind of opportunities has been provided for you to develop as a leader and by whom?

Provide examples. (Level two and three)

What is your understanding of distributed leadership? Explain how this should look like in practice.

Do you think that leadership should be distributed? Give some examples of how this happens in practice at your school. What are the challenges/benefits encountered.

JOURNAL ENTRY 2

Do you think that it is important to share leadership roles? Tell me more about your experiences in this regard.

Write briefly about your work ethic. What are your expectations of those whom you work with? (Include teachers, other leaders, learners, School Governing Body, parents)

What are the expectations placed on you as the head of the institution by the Department of Education, School Governing Body, the Community, other principals, and educators at your school and by your learners? (In terms of empowering others, giving guidance, induction, mentoring, keeping abreast with change) Is it possible to manage to achieve these expectations and explain how you go about achieving them?

How do you cope and manage your various roles? Elaborate on the kind of support structures that you have in place or would like to have in place.

What are your goals and vision in terms of developing and empowering other leaders at your school? What programmes or structures do you have in place to ensure that this happens? What are the challenges in trying to achieve this?

Is leadership confined to the same people all the time or do leaders change? Who decides who should lead the various projects, meetings, workshops? What are the challenges that you encounter?

JOURNAL ENTRY 3

Who provides the mentoring/induction at school and how effective is the

What are some of the staff development programmes that you have in place to help develop the leadership capacity of other staff members. How effective have these programmes been? Tell me briefly how the processes unfold and who are the ones responsible for the staff development mentoring/induction programmes? Are you involved either formally or informally?

Schools have been bombarded with many changes recently. (Example, the Integrated Quality Management System, the Foundations for Learning Campaign and the Annual National Assessment etc.). Choose one of the innovations and explain how the process has unfolded at your school and who are the people that were involved? How did you manage to get your staff to own the process?

Explain how you go about allocating staff duties. Is the duties fixed or do the duties change. Explain your reasons

Provide some examples of how you get your staff to work collaboratively so that their skills, knowledge, experience and expertise are utilised.

Tell me about some of your schools most recent achievements and explain how you managed to accomplish this?

APPENDIX R: LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE