AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION POLICY AFTER 1990

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A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.Ed. in the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape

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KEY WORDS

Decentralization

Policy process

Policy text

Equity and redress

Policy contexts

Policy actors

Neo-liberalism

'New Right'

Populist localism

Participatory democracy

ABSTRACT

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This minithesis traces the evolution of the South African education policy of decentralization from 1990 to 1996. The tracer study is guided by Bowe, Ball with Gold (1992)'s conceptualization of the policy process and the conceptual distinction of the policy process into the context of policy influence, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practice. In terms of the context of policy influence, I analyze how the political, social and economic forces have influenced the emergence and evolution of the education policy of decentralization in South Africa. I also analyze how forces within the context of education policy influence have shaped the representation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. It becomes apparent from my analysis that the federal ideology permeating the interim constitution and the international pressures influenced the key policy actors, the democratic movement and the National Party to adopt the notion of decentralization, albeit for different rationales. While the democratic movement adopted the policy of decentralization in order to advance the objective of participatory democracy and populist localism, the NP intended to advance neo-liberal tendencies like individual liberties, competition and meritocracy.

As regards the context of education policy text production, I analyze the effect of the role played by civil society, the Ministry of Education and parliament in the development and textual representation of the discourse of decentralization. Guided by Lauglo (1990)'s conceptual distinction of decentralization into delegation, deconcentration and devolution, I establish that the key policy actors similarly represented decentralization as devolution, or "the transfer or authority by law from the state and to some regional or local (or private) authority which is not directly accountable to the center"(Lauglo, 1990:30). With regard to funding, I contend that the intervention of the international consultants served to introduce the market ideology in the provision of education.

In conclusion, I contend that the education policy of decentralization, through its promotion of the notion of school ownership does not only dilute the central state's resolve to redress gross historical disparities in education but it inadvertently impedes the realization of the equality of opportunity and the equality of outcome. I also argue that the ideology of the market promotes the perpetuation of historical inequalities in education.

December 1999

DECLARATION

I declare that *An analysis of the concept of decentralization in South African education policy after 1990* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

CHAILE MAKALENG DECEMBER 1999

SIGNED: .....

DATE : 08/12/1999

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

At one point or the other, the notion of 'redefining the public and private boundaries' (Sayed, 1997:1) in education has been on the agenda of most governments. There has, however, been little consensus in framing the discourse of educational decentralization. Representations of the discourse of educational decentralization have always revolved around concepts like privatization, deregulation, deconcentration, delegation and devolution (Rodinilli et al, 1987). Why is it that there are contested definitions of the notion of decentralization? Equally important, why is it that the international community is particularly attracted to decentralization as a restructuring tool? As I did not have answers to the two questions, I decided to undertake a systematic probe on the policy of educational decentralization.

THE FOCUS OF THE MINITHESIS

The research for the minithesis is located within the discourses of policy-making and policy analysis. Within these fields, the research will be particularly focused on the reading or interpretation of the discourse of decentralization. In this regard, I intend to explore the forms and implications of the education policy of decentralization, as embodied in the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996. I will, however, not only be restricted to SASA but will look at SASA's antecedent policy texts and other influences or pressures which could be related to the evolution of the Act. In other words, my approach to SASA will be guided by the assertion that

> ... an analysis involves more than a narrow concern simply with a policy document or text. We need to understand both the background and context of policies, including the historical antecedents and relations with other texts, and the short and longer-term impacts of policies in practice (Bowe, Ball with Gold, 1992:44).

Although I will also assess the likely impact of the education policy of decentralization on the realization of the values of redress and equity, the main focus of my research will be restricted to the process of producing the policy text and will not extend to a general assessment of SASA in practice.

MOTIVATION AND PURPOSE

Certainly, the education policy-making process in South Africa was triggered by, amongst others, two major education problems, namely, the racially and ethnically fragmented education system, and the racially and ethnically skewed per capita expenditure in education. Arguably, the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress are used in reaction to the legacy of apartheid education. Mindful that the education stakeholders were mainly divided into those who benefited from apartheid education and those who were historically disadvantaged, I was moved to analyze the emergence, struggles, compromises and contestation around the discourse of decentralization, equity and redress.

I also realized that the policy of decentralization is a common international trend; particularly if you were to consider that in the 1980s and 1990s, most states adopted the policy of decentralization in the administration and management of education Bray (1996), Hartley (1994) Levacic (1992) Meadmore et al (1995), Weiler (1989). However, the policy of decentralization was adopted for different rationales. For instance, while some states were influenced by rationales of

administrative efficiency and effectiveness, others were influenced by political and economic rationales.

In South Africa, the transition rhetoric of the early 1990s gave rise to the evolution of the education policy of decentralization. Probably influenced by the notion of multi-party talks at Kempton Park, the main education policy actors began a process of educational restructuring which culminated in the enactment of the policy of decentralization, as articulated in SASA, 1996.

Having noted that the policy of decentralization was a common trend in the 1980s and 1990s, I decided to probe the rationales for the adoption of this policy by education Ministries in general, and by the South African education Ministry in particular.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first question which I set out to answer is

> Given the different rationales and contexts for the adoption of the policy of decentralization, shifts and shifting influences during the education policy process, how is the discourse of decentralization represented in SASA?

In formulating this research question, I was mindful of the fact that during its evolution, the education policy of decentralization was impacted upon by different forces in different policy contexts. It is as such the objective of my minithesis to probe the nature of forces which influenced the education policy of decentralization, and how these forces have moulded the policy text.

In relation to the first question, I also intend to investigate the following question:

> Is the policy of decentralization, as embodied in SASA, likely to promote the principles of redress and equity or is it likely to perpetuate disparities between the historically privileged and disadvantaged schools?

How do I intend to probe the research questions?

METHODOLOGY

The research will take the form of a policy tracer study. I am hopeful that this methord of inquiry will help me to identify and analyze the shifts and shifting influences in the evolution of the education policy of decentralization. My adoption of this approach has been influenced by my intention to subscribe to Bowe, Ball with Gold (1992)'s conceptual distinction of the policy process into the context of policy influence, the context of policy text production and the context of policy practice. Ranson (1995) calls these contexts the moments of policy. So, I will look at the conceptual context of policy influence in order to analyze how the political, social and economic forces have influenced the emergence and development of the education policy of decentralization. My focus will then shift to the context or moment of policy text production. I will analyze how the roles of civil society and the parliamentary process in the context of policy text production have affected the education policy texts which were produced between 1994 and 1996. In other words, my analysis of the produced policy texts will be guided by a literary theory,

> ... in which case, policies are seen as representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and contexts) (Ball, 1993: 11).

I will, however not examine the context of policy practice in that the focus of this minithesis is on the production of the education policy of decetralization and not necessarily on the process of its implementation.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS MINITHESIS

The minithesis will be divided into three main chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter Two

I will survey and highlight the conceptual tools that I am going to be using in my policy analysis. I will also review the literature on the theory of the state in the provision of education.

Chapter Three

I will start off by demarcating the period between 1990 and 1994 as the policy context of the education policy of decentralization. Thus, Chapter 3 will focus on the social, political and economic forces which I consider to have impacted on the evolution of the education policy of decentralization. Although there were obviously other education policy actors, I will identify the democratic movement and the National Party as the key policy actors. The two policy actors constituted the main political camps which contested the political agenda and the education agenda. I will go on to outline their ideological frameworks and their initial policy positions on the notions of decentralization, equity and redress. The purpose of the outline would be to identify convergence and contestation around the discourse of decentralization, equity and redress.

Chapter Four

This chapter will be focused on the period between 1994 and 1996. I will examine the contexts of education policy influence and the context of education policy text production. With regard to the context of education policy influence I will analyze forces which have influenced the evolution and content of the education policy of decentralization. In terms of the context of education policy text production, I will analyze policy texts which were produced between 1994 and 1996, namely, the

White Paper on Education and Training (15 March 1995), the *Hunter Commission's Report* (31 August 1995), the *White Paper 2b* (14 February 1996) and the *South African Schools Act* (15 November 1996). I will analyze these policy texts in order to outline the influences and shifting influences through the parliamentary process, and how they have affected the produced policy texts and thus framed the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

Conclusion

I will conclude the minithesis by assessing how the legislated compromises (in SASA) are likely to affect the realization of the values of equity and redress. I will also conclude by indicating that in terms of the notion of a policy process, SASA (1996) is not a finished education policy product but is rather open to further reformulations.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL TOOLS FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

It has been highlighted in Chapter One that the main objective of this minithesis is to do an analysis of the evolution of education policy on decentralization in South Africa, from 1990 to 1996. In this chapter, I intend to develop a conceptual framework for my policy tracer study.

Considering that there is currently a wealth of literature on the notions of policy and policy analysis, I will be reviewing part of this literature in order to find the most appropriate way of positioning or approaching my own policy analysis. Furthermore, as the focus of this minithesis is not only on the notion of policy, I will as well be reviewing the literature on the notions of decentralization, equity and redress.

Analyzing public policy is a complex exercise in that one has to first develop the kind of conceptual framework that would adequately represent the very concept of policy. Although I obviously need to formulate a theoretical approach to my analysis of the evolution of education policy, I note that

> explanations of policy patterns are further complicated by theoretical and empirical constraints. There are multiple metaphors and models but no grand theories of public policy generally or education policy more specifically. There are numerous studies but few conclusive findings (Malign and Knapp, 1997: 419).

One would have thought that in the midst of the current vast literature on policy and policy analysis there would be a standard or 'grand' theory which fixes the meaning of policy and the policy patterns inherent in the very notion of policy. I think the 'multiple metaphors and models' on policy and policy analysis are owed to different perceptions on the role of the state in policy process, intended policy goals, processes and methods of research. As a result of lack of consensus on the issues I have just referred to, "... no one analytical mode or set of theoretical tools or interpretation stance is adequate or exhaustive of the analytic possibilities of policy analysis" (Ball, 1993:6). In other words,

> ... an adequate understanding of public policy demands a multi-theoretic and multi-disciplinary analysis. A number of theoretical methodological presuppositions can form the basis ... for a more integrated approach to explanatory analysis (Ranson, 1995:442).

The point being made by Ranson is that a comprehensive policy analysis, in my case a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of education policy on decentralization, requires an integrated approach which

> involves a complex web of theories - theories of the state, of civil society, of interest groups, of the bureaucracy, of the change process, of economic development and so on (Christie, 1996:67).

Of the theories referred to by Christie, the theory of the state reflects divergent views from policy analysts or policy experts. The divergence apparently occurs at an ideological level, as will be seen later. For now I intend to look at how the notion of the state is conceptualized.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE STATE

Central to the analysis of policy is the role played by the state in the process of policy development. Before reviewing a number of theories about the role of the state in policy development, let us look at how the notion of the state is defined.

> The state can be defined both in terms of the institutions which make it up and the function these institutions perform. State institutions comprise legislative bodies, including parliamentary assemblies and subordinate law-making institutions; executive bodies, including government bureaux and departments of state; and judicial bodies - principally courts of law - with responsibility for enforcing and, through their decisions, developing the law (Ham and Hill, 1985:23).

In brief, Ham and Hill conceptualize the state in terms of its legislative, executive and judicial institutions and their inherent functions.

Another view is that the

> state consists of a number of entities - public service departments and statutory authorities of various kinds - which often have conflicting interests; for example, compare the Treasury with Social Security (Taylor et al, 1997:29).

Similar to the view of the contradictory nature of the state is the view of a state as

> a set of publicly financed institutions, neither separately nor collectively necessarily in harmony, confronted by certain problems deriving from its relationship with capitalism, with one branch, the government, having responsibility for ensuring the continuing prominence of those problems on its agenda (Dale, 1989:57).

Taylor et al (1997) and Dale (1989)'s conceptualizations of the state bring in an element of complexity in understanding the structures and relations of the state departments. This point is also highlighted by the fact that "the state often finds itself in conflict with elements of the local state" (Ball, 1990:20). The dispute between the Grove Primary School and the Western Cape (Provincial) Education Department on the issue of redeployable teachers is an example in point. "Indeed even within the same public service department there can be very real disagreements and struggles over policy directions" (Ball, 1990:20). This view is consistent with Taylor et al (1997)'s assertion that the structures of the state are perceived as a terrain in which individual policy actors would struggle in order to achieve preferred political outcomes. The idea of the state as a terrain of struggle

is further augmented by the assertion that "... by state should be understood not only the apparatus of government, but also the private apparatus of 'hegemony' or civil society" (Gramsci, 1971:261). Gramsci's assertion highlights a coercive relationship within the state departments.

An education state is perceived as a "conglomeration of sites and agencies concerned with the regulation of the education system" (Ball, 1990:20). So, it is not only the structure that defines an educational state, but also the function that the state performs. "Certainly, the [education] states, more than ever, have become de facto as well as de jure policy makers for the schools" (Mazzoni, 1994:53).

Having reviewed conceptualizations of the state, I now need to review the role that the state is perceived to be playing in education policy.

Theorizing the State and Education

Ball (1990) argues that theories on the role of the state in education have always revolved around the centre-periphery location of the state in relation to the provision of education. Similarly,

> ... abstract statements about the state are always a shorthand for this conglomeration and must be consistent with an exploration of its dynamics...In order to understand the relations and processes of the state and their place in civil society, we must grasp the way the state is embedded in a particular socio-economic system ... together with its nature as a site of political negotiation and conflict (Mc Lennon, Held and Hall, 1984:3).

My understanding of Mc Lennon, Held and Hall's argument is that it is the complex location of the state in the socio-economic system that causes the problematic relationship between the state and its components or structures. I think theories of the state constitute an attempt to explain the 'centre-periphery' relations of the

state. But, "do we need a theory of the state?" (Macpherson, 1981:61). Macpherson goes on to clarify that his question

> ... is not whether we need a theoretical understanding of the political process in modern states, but whether we need a theory of the state in the grand manner of the acknowledged 'great' theories, ranging in modern times, from, say, Boding and Hobbes to Hegel and nineteenth century juristic theories of Green and Bosanquet and such thirteenth century thinkers as Barker and Lindsay and MacIver (Macpherson, 1981:61).

In answering his own provocative question, do we need a theory of the state, Macpherson says

> There is, I assume, no question that in order to understand the operation of contemporary states we need the political process in our own liberal - democratic states (and, if we are to be comprehensively informed, in communist and Third World states as well) (Macpherson, 1981:61).

His basic argument is that while we need theories of the state in order to understand the location and "operation of contemporary states', we do not necessarily need a theory of the state in the grand tradition because it is in most cases "descriptive and prescriptive or justificatory" (Macpherson, 1981:61).

Macpherson's basic concern is that the theories of the state have not been able to avoid a 'value judgment' about the structure and function (s) of the state they were analyzing; hence, they all tend to be 'descriptive and prescriptive'. Perhaps the value judgment aspect of the theories of the state is unavoidable in that theorizing the role played by the state in policy development is largely influenced by the ideological point of view from which the notion of the state is perceived. I think that the best way to look at the theories of the state is in relation to perceptions about the operation of societies.

Functionalist Approach

> Generally, a functionalist approach tends to conceive society in terms of the functional interdependence or coherence of its parts, so that society is maintained as an on-going entity, a social order (Hall, 1981:20).

The 'functional interdependence' or coherence referred to by Hall is "... underpinned by a value consensus and that the various institutions in society contribute to the ongoing stability of the whole" (Taylor et al, 1997:24). A functionalist paradigm is basically premised on the fundamental assumption that collective members of the society are bound by shared values. Consensus over the shared values leads to order in the society. Deviation from the shared values or order is frowned upon by adherents of a functionalist paradigm.

A functionalist perspective of education is that education serves to maintain social order. In other words, the function of education, for functionalists, is to reproduce society again, "...one generation after another, in roughly the same form" (Hall, 1981:20). This apparently causal relationship between education and society corresponds with what Taylor et al (1997) call a rational approach to policy making. They contend that for functionalists, "policy is conceptualized in distinct and linear phases (policy development or formulation, implementation and evaluation)" (Taylor et al, 1997:25). The chronological steps in policy generation and implementation mean that the process of policy is unproblematic in that the civil society and its institutions have a collective responsibility to the maintenance of stability and order. Taylor et al see a connection between a functionalist perspective of the policy process with a positivistic approach. They define the latter as a particular approach to knowledge which purports to apply scientific methods to solve policy problems. The role of a functionalist state in education is to facilitate or promote, through education, the interdependence or coherence of the society.

Marxist Theory.

The broad framework of Marxism has attracted a lot of commentary, from amongst others, Bowles and Gintis (1976 and 1981), Dale (1982 and 1989), Poulantzas (1973), Offe (1984) Wright (1979) and Hargreaves (1985). The amount of interest in the Marxist theory is probably generated by the theory's perception on controversial issues like domination, contradiction and conflict, as will later become apparent. It is, however, clear from the above writers that the theory is based on an analysis of capitalist mode of production. "In advanced western industrialized societies, the capitalist mode of production dominates, giving rise to two major social classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat" (Ham and Hill, 1985:32).

The two major social classes are defined in terms of their financial status. In analyzing the distribution of income and wealth, Miliband (1968) arrives at the conclusion that there is continued concentration of wealth in a small class - the bourgeoisie. Miliband also sees a similarity in social background between the bourgeoisie and members of the state elite; that is those who occupy senior positions in government, the civil service, the military, the judiciary and other state institutions.

Miliband explores the relationship between economic power and social power. Similarly, Hargreaves (1985) looks at the relationship between education, the state and capitalism. They both express the point that a capitalist state is not a neutral agent as, in Hargreaves' words, "it is an instrument of class domination" (1985:32). The precarious location of a capitalist state leaves it with three contradictory roles:

a) support of the capital accumulation process
b) guaranteeing a [conducive] context for its continued expansion and
c) the legitimation of the capitalist mode of production, including the state's own part in it (Dale, 1989:28).

According to Dale, a capitalist state banks on a sound economic growth for its continued maintenance of political power. On the basis of this dependence, it has to act as an instrument of capital

> ... by reproducing a skilled, adaptable and compliant work force; by averting social unrest either through policies of law and order or ones of social and educational amelioration; and by direct intervention in the management of the economy (Scace, 1980:78).

Put otherwise, the role of a capitalist state is limited or constrained by its function of assisting the maintenance of a capitalist mode of production. This 'boundary' created by its function of assisting the maintenance of a capitalist mode of production is at times referred to as structural limitation. The latter

> constitutes a pattern of determination in which some social structure establishes limits within which some other structure or process can vary, and establishes probabilities for specific structures or processes that are possible within those limits. That is, structural limitation implies that certain forms of the determined structure have been excluded entirely and some possible forms are more likely than others. This pattern of determination is especially important for understanding the sense which economic structures 'ultimately' determine political and ideological structures; economic structures set limits on possible forms more likely than others, but they do not rigidly determine in a mechanistic manner any given form of political and ideological relations (Wright, 1979:15-16).

Hargreaves argues that the notion of structural limitation explains why the autonomy of education and politics is "relative rather than complete" (Hargreaves 1985:69). The point he is making is that due to its contradictory location, the state's policy options are guided or determined by capital accumulation. The state's relative autonomy in the provision of education is clarified by Hall (1981)'s conception of the 'correspondence principle'. In terms of this principle, the state is viewed as

> an ideological apparatus for the legitimation of inequalities caused by capitalism through, for example, the development of welfarism and promotion of beliefs about meritocracy (Gordon,1989:439).

Gordon's assertion could be used to summarize the Marxist theory on the role of a capitalist state. Due to its obligation to capital accumulation the state uses education as an ideological instrument to reproduce or legitimate dominance (Hogan 1981) or hegemony (Gramsci 1971). According to Hogan (1981) and Gramsci (1971), a capitalist state is viewed as a huge machinery which has the capacity to influence all sectors of the society. If the Marxist view of the role of the state provides a "totalitarian vision" as Ball (1994) argued, is there a viable alternative?

A Pluralist Approach

A pluralist theory

> argues that power in western industrialized societies is widely distributed among different groups. No group is without power to influence decision-making, and equally no group is dominant. Any group can ensure that its political preferences and wishes are adopted if it is sufficiently determined (Ham and Hill, 1985:28).

The discourses permeating a pluralist theory are representation, consultation and bargaining. So, the relations between organized groups, or interest groups, are guided by democratic participation in decision-making.

> Although all groups and interests do not have the same degree of influence, even the least powerful are able to make their voices heard at some stage in the decision-making process (Ham and Hill, 1985:28).

Educationally, reference is made to the

> relative influences exerted by a plurality of interest groups in the control and administration of education; to the complex interactions, negotiations and mutual influences between political, administrative, professional and lay

> groups in the educational decision-making process at local and national levels (Hargreaves, 1985:65-66).

If there is adequate representation of interest groups in the process of decision making, what role does the state or government play?

> The role of government agencies is viewed differently by different writers in the pluralist tradition. While some writers argue that government is neutral and acts essentially as a referee in the struggle between groups (Latham, 1952), the dominant theme in the work of Dahl is that government agencies are one set of pressure groups among many others. According to the latter interpretation, government both pursues its own preferences and responds to demands coming from outside interests (Ham and Hill, 1985:28).

A pluralist approach to the operation of society and policy formulation is a central issue in a critique by Hatcher and Troyna (1994) of Ball's notion of a policy cycle, and Ball (1994)'s counter response to Hatcher and Troyna. Hatcher and Troyna contend that although Ball clearly stated his intention to develop [in his notion of policy] a theoretical position which is capable of resolving (but not dissolving) the theoretical gap between pluralism and those neo-Marxist theories which give central place to the role of the state (Ball, 1990:13), "his [Ball's] attempted resolution of Marxist and pluralist positions is secured on a pluralist terrain" (Hatchet and Troyna, 1994:157). Hatcher and Troyna further contend that

> ... while Ball is not a 'conventional' pluralist, but his position corresponds to what McLennan (1989) describes as 'critical pluralism', a revision of conventional pluralism designed to take account of the structured inequality of power in capitalist societies (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994:157).

What actually seems to have caused all the controversy is Ball's intended clarification of his position about the role played by the state in the development and implementation of policy. His assertion was,

> while I do not see the state as a committee acting in the interest of the bourgeoisie, I do accept that the problem of capital accumulation and the maintenance of its condition provides the major problem, constraint and interest effect in the working of the state (Ball, 1993:4).

This clarification was regarded by Hatcher and Troyna as a rejection of a Marxist perception of the state. In other words, Ball is believed to be avoiding or down-playing the correspondence between economic power and the power of the state. This claim was also evoked by Ball's apparent backgrounding of the Marxist notion of relative autonomy of the state and his foregrounding of human agency, as drawn (selectively) from Althusser and Foucault.

In his counter-response to the critique by Hatcher and Troyna, Ball acknowledged that some of his "...formulations of actors' relationships to policy give the impression of considerable 'freedom" (Ball, 1994:172). However, he expressed his unhappiness "... with the totalitarian vision of the state and the disempowerment of 'ordinary' social actors which that involves" (Ball, 1994:172).

In responding to what he calls statism (omnipotent state), and monism (economic materiality) he retaliates:

> Hatcher and Troyna's argument clearly asserts a 'once and for all' hierarchy, it portrays social roles and social actors as structurally determined and historically static, and is insensitive to circumstances (Ball, 1994:174).

Ball goes on to argue that Hatcher and Troyna's defense of generalizations of statism and economism constitutes "...a political correctness which is wrong and incomplete" (Ball, 1994:174). Ball also draws from Hall in his contention that

> there can be no hegemony without the decisive nucleus of the economic. On the other hand, do not fall into the trap of the old mechanical economism and believe that if you can only get hold of the economy, you can move the rest of life. The nature of power in the modern world is that it is also constructed in

> relation to political, moral, intellectual, cultural, ideological and sexual questions (Hall, 1988:170).

The theoretical debate between Ball (1994) and Hatcher and Troyna (1994) has been of particular interest to this minithesis for two reasons. Firstly, the debate serves to exemplify the point I made earlier, viz.,

> explanations of policy patterns are further complicated by theoretical and empirical constraints. There are grand theories of public policy generally or education policy more specifically. There are numerous studies but few conclusive findings (Malen and Knapp, 1997:419).

Secondly, the debate served to demonstrate that policy texts are read and understood differently depending on the context, history and experience of the reader. [I will revisit this point in my review of Ball's conceptualization of policy as text and as discourse].

Elite Theory

In contrast to a pluralist perception of the absence of domination in decision-making, an elite theory propagates "...the concentration of political power in the hands of a minority of the population" (Ham and Hill, 1985: 29). The elites are often found in large-scale organizations. There are also different kinds of elites. There is

> ... a distinction between the political elite which is made up of 'those individuals who actually exercise power in a society at any given time' and which will include members of the government and of the high administration, military leaders, and, in some cases, politically influential families of an aristocracy or royal house and leaders of powerful economic enterprises; and the political class, comprising, the political elite but also leaders of political parties in opposition, trade union-leaders, businessmen and politically active intellectuals (Bottomore, 1966:14-15).

Adherents of this theory hold the view that institutions are basically run by minority groups, who normally represent the interests of the dominant class. But how different is this dominance from the one propagated by Marxist adherents?

Going Beyond Structuralism

The structuralist approach has been criticized for viewing the state as "monolithic, homogeneous and historically invariant, having a united and more or less automatic responsiveness to capital's needs" (Gordon, 1989:438). In this view, the role of an education state in developing and implementing policies is unproblematic. This perception of policy is clearly an "oversimplified way of viewing policy" (Taylor et al, 1997:24) in that it down-plays the role played by social and political forces in shaping education policy. Put otherwise,

> ...one major problem remains if we adopt a simple model of structural limitation, which is how do we actually explain educational change? How do limits impact themselves on existing practices ... The idea of structural limitation seems to provide only a weak version of change. It seemingly cannot tell us where educational change comes from, that is how the notion of what is appropriate, rather than possible, is established (Ball, 1990:15).

My alignment with Ball's contention does not mean that I will be abandoning the whole Marxist paradigm. I recognize the contradictory role of an education state, which is that while it may be seen to be supporting capital accumulation in pursuit of, for instance, economic growth, the ANC-dominated government would also like to be seen as a 'popular democratic state' by its electorate. Put otherwise, while it is true that a capitalist state is "a condensation of class relations" (Poulantzas 1975) whose influence is largely under the ruling classes, it is also perceived as a "site of struggle over contradictions" (Offe 1984). As an institution, the state provides room for groups with different values, levels of power and competing interests. It is mainly due to these differences and competing interests

that the relations of the interest groups are characterized by domination and resistance, or constant contestation and conflict. From the basis of understanding antagonistic relations we can understand the complexity and "politicized nature of the policy process" (Taylor et al, 1997:27), as opposed to the Marxist's unproblematic and oversimplified way of viewing policy.

The point I am making is that I will be adopting a view of education policy and policy process which is equated with 'messy realities' (Ball, 1990:9) or an 'evolving chaos' (Brieschke, 1989:305). As I also see the value-laden nature of policies (Taylor et al, 1997), my interest in the micro politics of policy (Ball 1993:10) would be to analyze how the education policy allocates, foregrounds and backgrounds certain values, and, whose interests the allocated values seem to represent. My approach to education policy will be guided by the fact that as the policy evolves, there is what Ball (1993) calls ad hocery, negotiation and serendipity. I will in fact be mindful that

> contestation is involved right from the moment of appearance of an issue on the policy agenda, through the initiation of action to the inevitable trade-offs involved in formation and implementation. Contestation is played out in regard to whose voices are heard and whose values are recognized or 'authoritatively allocated' in the policy and which groups ultimately benefit as a result of the policy (Taylor et al, 1997:29).

As I will be emphasizing the notion of human agency in the education policy process, I must now acknowledge that this notion has not been without its fair share of theoretical controversy. In his structuralist approach, Althusser (1969) denies human agency. In conceptualizing policy, Ball (1990) draws some theoretical aspects from Althusser (1969) but adds - "I am embracing agency and the ideological category of the individual" (Ball, 1990:9). Hatcher and Troyna contend that Ball's embrace of agency

> is incompatible with Althusser's position; and that Ball's reinterpretation of Althusser's conception within a pluralist perspective excludes precisely what is distinctively Althusserian, and Marxist about it (Hatcher and Troyna, 1994:160).

At the center of Hatcher and Troyna's concern is that Ball ignores Althusser's

> insistence that the task of historical materialism is to study the different practices in their specificity, and that relations to one another in the complex unity of social practice which is the social formation (Geras, 1972:62).

It also Hatcher and Troyna's contention that by adopting the notion of human agency, or "a set of methodological pluralism" (Geras, 1972:71), Ball is not only blind to Althusser's consistent reference to 'the structure in dominance' but he also abandons the thesis of historical materialism. My position in this theoretical debate lies with Ball's honest response to the critique by Hatcher and Troyna (1994). Ball says:

> I would not want to deny the general charge of appropriation because I do not want to take on board all aspects of Althusser's ontological position, that is to say I am certainly uneasy with the denial of human agency. However, simply to equate agency with pluralism is a serious category mistake (Ball, 1994:173).

Actually, despite Ball's embrace of agency and his Foucault-inspired contention that it is not the state but discourse that constitutes power relations, Ball still sees relative autonomy as important in the analysis of policy. His evident departure from structuralism is marked by his assertion that "theoretical development around post-structuralism have been useful in offering a new set of tools to begin to try to explain things" (Ball, 1990:18). He further clarifies that he does not ignore the economic factor but that the level of the economic provides the backdrop of a set of constraints (Ball, 1990:14).

Perhaps the theoretical inconsistencies I have been highlighting explain why Ball was "...ready to confess to contradictions" (Ball, 1994:171). Most importantly, the apparent inconsistencies serve to demonstrate the point I made earlier about the complexity of policy analysis; particularly the view that the absence of a 'grand' theory leaves the 'multiple metaphors and models' with inconclusive findings.

Adopting Ball's Approach To Policy Analysis

Despite the criticism of theoretical inconsistencies, I still remain convinced about the appropriateness of Ball's approach to policy analysis in that he, like I intend to do, advocates

> an open and creative approach which emphasizes finding the appropriate theory and concepts for the task at hand, rather than narrowly applying a particular theory which may close off possibilities for interpretation. The task, then is to examine the moral order of reform to existing patterns of social inequality, bringing to bear those concepts and interpretative devices which offer the best possibilities of insight and understanding (Ball, 1994:2).

Simply put, I will be using Ball's theoretical approach in my analysis of policy patterns which emerged between 1990 and 1996 in South Africa. My analysis will oscillate between some theoretical elements from the structuralist and the human agency perspectives. You may probably advance the argument that in embracing aspects from more than one theoretical approach, my resultant analysis of policy patterns may be incoherent. But, is it not true that a comprehensive policy analysis "involves a complex web of theories?" (Christie, 1996:67) or that

> an adequate understanding of public policy demands a multi-theoretic and multi-disciplinary analysis. A number of theoretical methodological presuppositions can from the basis ...for a more integrated approach to explanatory analysis (Ranson, 1995:442).

I will undertake an analysis of the evolution of the concept of decentralization in education policy in South Africa, from 1990 to 1996. I was attracted to this period because of its theme of political and educational transformation. Due to transformation, there is likely to be conflict between policy issues and values of the old discriminatory education system, as opposed to those of an anticipated non-racial education system. Through textual analysis, I hope to analyze policy texts which emerged in the period between 1990 to 1996. From the policy texts, I specifically want to explore how the policy context and the policy process (from which they evolved) have influenced or shaped the trends and patterns on the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. My intention is to analyze from the policy texts the probable tensions, ambiguities, continuities and textual absences.

In terms of the role of the state in education policy, I will approach it as a "site of struggle over contradictions" (Offe,1984). In other words, I will not completely subscribe to the framework of structural limitation in that the framework will limit my textual analysis to an 'unproblematic' and 'oversimplified' conception of policy development. Thus, if I adopt a structural framework it will for instance not provide me scope to explore and explain how educational transformation came about in South Africa. My point is that my view of the state is not that of a "monolithic homogeneous and historically invariant, having a united and more or less automatic responsiveness to capital's needs" (Taylor et al, 1997:24) but that I will perceive the state as an institution which provides room for different groups with competing values and interests. Although South Africa could be said to be a (modern) industrialized country, and that an education state is most likely to serve some interests of capital accumulation in the interest of economic growth, it will be my contention that such a role is potentially counterbalanced by the role played by social and political forces in the process of policy development and implementation.

Due to the different values, competing interests and subsequent contestation for the meaning of policy by policy actors, I will approach the process of policy development as evolving chaos (Brieschke, 1989:305). In terms of the notion of economic determination, I will, like Ball, see the economic aspect as a constraint amongst many, in the context of policy influence and the context of policy text production (more about these later).

In addition to my post-structuralist approach to policy analysis, I will also borrow Foucault's conception of the relations between power and knowledge, as discourses, or as "meanings which are constructed historically in contested social domains" (1980:13). Thus, I will use the discourse theory to analyze the following policy texts: the Draft White Paper on Education and Training (September 1994), the *White Paper on Education and Training* (March 1995), the *Hunter Review Committee's Report* (August 1995), the *White Paper 2* (February 1996) and the *South African Schools' Act* (November 1996).

> Discourse theory can be helpful ... in exploring the historical context of specific policies and how policy 'problems' are constructed. It is also useful in highlighting how policies come to be framed in certain ways, in other words in pointing to the ways in which economic, social, political and cultural context shape both the content and language of policy documents (Bowe et al., 1992: 43-44).

There are two levels at which I will analyze the policy texts that I have referred to. The first level of analysis will be the general or broad context within which the policy texts emerged. At this level of policy analysis I will, for instance, look at the effect of the discourses of political transformation, the effect of the 1994 elections and the effect of the global economic pressures on the policy process in general,

and in particular, on the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

The second level of approach to policy analysis will be what Ball (1990) calls the micro politics of policy. Mindful that social actors have different values and different levels of power, I will be analyzing how their competing policy interests and options came to shape the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. I will be analyzing how the policy actor's struggles and compromises contributed to the tensions, ambiguities, continuities and textual absences which will probably be reflected in the policy texts I have referred to. It is also on this level of analysis that I will highlight how language (in the policy texts) is used to articulated the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

I should acknowledge, however, that it is going to be quite a challenge "... to relate together analytically, the ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of ad hoc social actions" (Ball, 1994:10).

CONCLUDING THE DEBATE ON THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

I have been reviewing theoretical perspectives about the relationship between society and the state. I started the review by looking at some conceptualization of the notion of the state. It was defined in terms of its structures and function(s). With regard to its structure, the state was defined as a conglomeration of institutions under the auspices of the legislature, executive and judiciary.

I also looked at different theoretical perspectives on the function or relations of the state and society. The functionalist view emphasizes the orderliness and coherence

of society on the basis of shared values. Education was seen as a vehicle of reproducing the coherent social values of the society in roughly the same form.

A pluralist approach revolves around the role of interest or pressure groups. The theoretical approach is permeated by concepts like participation, representation, consultation and bargaining. The purpose and meaning of education would then be democratically debated by all stakeholders.

An elitist approach is basically about understanding power and domination by a minority of the population. A distinction was also made between the political elite (in key government positions, business and the military) and the political class (leaders of political parties, trade unions and politically active intellectuals)

The Marxist approach argues that the state is dependent on capital accumulation for its own survival, and that it was therefore used by capital as its 'apparatus'. As regards education, it is viewed as an instrument used by the state in order to reproduce the unequal social relations.

In an attempt to locate and position my own theoretical approach to policy and policy analysis, I aligned myself with Ball's seemingly paradoxical acknowledgment of the importance of relative autonomy theory and post-structuralism in policy analysis. Thus hoping to avoid oversimplicity, closure or certainty (Ball, 1994), I adopted a conflict or post-structuralist approach to my textual analysis of the evolution of policy and the policy texts which evolved therefrom. As I am going to be analyzing policy texts, perhaps I should first find out how different writers articulate the notion of policy.

CONCEPTUALIZING POLICY

"The term policy has no standard usage, and is riddled with ambiguity" (Prunty, 1984:133). Certainly, Prunty's assertion threatens my resolve to undertake a coherent and integrated textual analysis of policy texts. However, his assertion serves to highlight that in the same way in which the theories about the role of the state in policy development and implementation were varied, the perceptions on policy are like wise varied. So, like I did with the varied theoretical perspectives, I will have to review the varied conceptualizations of policy, with a view of adopting the one which I find to be relevant to the purpose of my analysis.

It seems that the conceptualizations of policy are largely influenced by the theoretical point of view from which one perceives the role of the state in policy development and policy implementation; as will become apparent as my review unfolds.

In general terms, a policy is defined as that which "... government choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1992:2. This view of policy is similar to the perception of policy as "...a course of action (or inaction) relation to the selection of goals, the definitions of values or the allocation of resources" (Codd, 1988:235). What is similar about these two conceptions of policy is the view that policy is not only that which governments do but also that which they choose not to do. In other words, if a government chooses to exclude certain goals and values from its official policy text, the excluded goals and values could still be defined as the government's official policy position. Dye's views on policy is comparable to Codd (1988), although Codd introduces a specific function of policies, viz., the allocation of resources.

Hough (1984) and de Clercq (1997) also define policies in terms of the notion of resource allocation. Hough asserts that policies are "about the transformation of group conflict over public resources and values into authorized courses of action concerning their allocation" (Hough, 1984:16). Similarly, de Clercq, writing specifically about the South African context, says that "policies are rational activities aimed at resolving group conflict over the allocation of resources in order to restore the cohesiveness, order and functionality of society..." (de Clercq, 1997:127).

By implication, both Hough (1984) and de Clercq (1997)'s perceptions of policy reflect connotations of a functionalist theory of society. They both seem to see the need for policies to resolve societal conflict in order to, as de Clercq puts it "...restore the cohesiveness, order and functionality of society" (1997:127). From their perceptions, one gets the impression that a "policy is made to help bring about social ideal, usually by attending to a real or potential barrier to social change" (Prunty, 1984:135).

The formality or informality of policies is highlighted in the conceptualizations of policy by Silver (1990), Hough (1984) and Banki (1986). Silver defines a policy as

> a process providing major guidelines for action, creating frameworks that allow discretion yet provide direction, anticipating action, pointing towards some intended or desired end (Silver, 1990:213).

In his comment about the perceptions of policy, Hough says that

> sometimes a policy is used in a narrow sense to refer to formal statements of action to be followed; while others used the word 'policy' as a synonym for words such as 'plan' or 'programme' (Hough, 1984:13).

A much broader definition of policy is provided by Banki who indicate that policies are

> the formal official authoritative guidelines designed to prescribe and deal with the overall long-term and short-term goals, objectives, intentions, programs, products, services, procedures and activities of an organization, institution or system. Usually it includes or provides for standard operating procedures for planning organizing, staffing, directing, co-ordination, reporting, contracting, budgeting and communication with external organizations, groups and individuals (Banki, 1986 :231).

There seems to be some commonality in Silver (1990), Hough (1984) and Banki (1986)'s views of policy. They all, implicitly or explicitly view policies as "goal directed courses of action or inaction" (Christie, 1996). Thus, they view policies as formalized pieces of legislations which clearly spell out the state's intention and purpose, or guidelines for purposeful action. The view that policies anticipates action (Corson, 1986:5) implies that policy formulation is a linear and rational exercise. This impression is created by the view that government can predict a policy problem or conflict, and then formulate an intention, goal and guideline of corrective action.

Would I find this conceptualization of policy appropriate, or rather useful to my approach to the textual analysis of policy texts which were produced between 1990 and 1996?

Adopting an Appropriate Conceptualization of Policy

Without necessarily oversimplifying the conceptualizations of policy which I have reviewed thus far, I find two things which stand out from them. Firstly, they seem to provide a rational view of policy. Thus they create the impression that governments have the ability to predict a policy 'problem' and then formulate guidelines, a framework or 'formal statements' on how to resolve the problem(s). Secondly, and, most importantly (for the purpose of my minithesis), the conceptualizations of policy do not explicitly refer to the actual production of

policies. In other words, they do not focus on or reflect on the "messy realities" (Ball, 1990:9) or the "evolving chaos" (Brieschke, 1989:305) of policy and policy process. In addition, none of them explicitly refer to policies as texts. Considering that the focus of my analysis is not only the produced texts but also the process of their production, I do not think that the conceptualizations which I have reviewed will be helpful in my textual analysis.

Instead, the approach I am adopting is that "policy involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice" (Taylor et al, 1997:24). With this kind of approach, I will be able to analyze the contexts of the education policy, as well as the finished product itself. However, in an attempt not to cut more cloth than I can sew, the scope of my minithesis will only be limited to the production of the texts, the texts themselves and the modification to the texts. It will not explore processes of implementation into practice.

I am interested in the production of policy texts in order to analyze the role or effect of the economic, social and political forces in the production of education policy texts in South Africa. There are two reasons why I intend to analyze the role or effect of these forces I have mentioned. Firstly, it is also my view that a policy

> is more than simply the policy text: it also involves processes prior to the articulation of the text and the processes which continue after the text has been produced, both in modifications to it as a statement of values and desired action... (Taylor et al, 1997:28).

The point made by Taylor et al (1997) is drawn from Bowe et al (1992)'s conceptualization of a policy cycle or a policy process (more of this later). So although I will not be focusing on the "processes which continue after the text has been produced" (Taylor et al, 1997:28), my focus is on the process during the production of the text and what is articulated by the text produced.

My second reason relates specifically to the occurrences during the policy process. Thus if the policy actors represent different values and interests, how do they formulate a common policy? Of course the explanation is that

> policies are representations encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actor's interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and contexts) (Ball, 1993:13).

From Ball's assertion, I get the impression that policy, in the form of text, is a product of a process of policy actor' struggles and compromises. Likewise, my interest does not only rest with the production of the policy text but also involves the product itself, the policy text. Prunty (1975) defined policy as the 'authoritative allocation of values'. His view reflects the "social intentionality" (Ball, 1993:14) of policies, and that, "fundamentally a policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process" (Codd, 1988:235). I am trying to construct the logic that if policies are defined as products of struggles and compromises over values and interests, then, the policy texts should serve as a mirror reflecting the foregrounding and backgrounding of (the competing) social actors' values and interests. In other words, I will be looking at the values and interests with specific reference to the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress with a view to analyzing as to whose values are represented and 'validated' in the policy text.

But then, Taylor et al (1997) indicated that the process of policy does not necessarily end with the produced text but "... continues after the text has been produced, both in modifications to it as a statement of values and desired action..." (1997:23). For the purpose of my policy analysis the *White Paper on Education and Training*, the *Hunter Committee's Report* and the *White Paper 2* will be

regarded as policy texts while the *South African Schools Act (SASA)* will be regarded as the key text (i.e. the Act). I intend to create the impression that the antecedent policy texts have evolved into SASA, and that during the process of evolution there were shifts and continuities.

Having motivated my adoption of Ball's, and subsequently Taylor et al.'s conceptualization of policy I will now provide operational definitions.

The Cycle or Process of Policy

Ball, together with Bowe and Gold (1992) conceptualize the production of policy in terms of a "series of sequential stages or phases..." (Hough 1984:16) which are "messy, unpredictable and conflict-provoking" (Henry, 1993:102). The cycle of process of policy is disjointed and less rational. Put differently, a policy is not conceptualized as a finished product but rather that it is "both contested and changing, always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite'..."(Ball, 1993:11). In terms of this perception, the production of policies is not seen as a linear, unproblematic and rational exercise but as a "top down and bottom up approach" (Bowe et al, 1992:20). The contestation and conflict characterizing the policy process should be explained by the varied policy actors who represent different values and have different expectations from the policy process. The conceptualized messy policy process is further divided into three conceptual phases or policy contexts (Bowe et al, 1992). The three interrelated contexts are the context of influence, the context of policy text production and the context of practice. I will briefly outline the first two contexts.

The Context of Influence

"It is here that policy discourses are constructed, interested parties struggle to influence the definition and social purpose of education, what it means to be educated" (Bowe et al, 1992:19). In this context, the different interest or pressure groups, as well as policy actors engage in a representation of self-interests and on the construction of policy concepts and discourses which are to permeate both the policy process and the subsequent policy text(s). The context of policy influence is said to have a symbiotic and uneasy relation to the context of policy text production.

The Context of Policy Text Production

Policy is not done and finished at the legislative moment, "it evolves in and through the texts that represent it ..." (Bowe et al, 1992:21). It could be argued that this context is the 'messiest' of the three in that texts are outcomes of struggle and compromise (Bowe et al 1992) and that everyone of the policy actors would like to see their meaning of policy reflected in the ultimate key text, the Act. The provisions of the ultimate key texts are meant to predict certain responses from those who will be affected by the policy. Thus the policy effects (Ball, 1993:15) are experienced within the third context of policy, the context of policy practice.

The Context of Policy Practice

Policies are actually addressed to the arena of practice. It is in this arena that practitioners interpret and implement policy texts. In the process of interpreting and implementing the policy texts, "parts of the texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous, etc." (Bowe et al, 1992:22). The implied contestation in this arena of policy is caused by the fact that

while the policy text has a history of its own, the practitioners interpret and implement the policy text in relation to their histories, experiences, values and interests. Due to the fact that interpretation of policy in this arena is characterized by struggle or contestation, and that those who wrote the policy text cannot control the meaning thereof, the policy text will be recontextualised as some interpretations of policy will be foregrounded while others will be less predominant.

However, the context of policy text production does not fall within the scope of my minithesis because I am interested in the influence and production of the education policy text and not the process of implementing the education policy. Thus, I am interested in the process of producing the education policy of decentralization in order to analyze the shifts and shifting influences.

Apart from the view of a policy as a process with interrelated arenas, a policy is also perceived as text and as discourse.

Policy as Text

Drawn from literary theory, Ball (1993) sees policies

> as representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills resources and context) (1993:11).

Considering that policy texts are not written by one author, are not produced from the same context, and the fact that policies are essentially textual intervention into practice (Ball, 1993:13), the role of language or signifiers in fixing the meaning of policy becomes even more important. As the policy evolves, the writer's intended or unintended textual slippages will constitute one of the key factors which contribute to shifts in the articulation of values or discourses.

Again, the fact that in terms of literary theory, textual constructors cannot control the meaning of the signifiers in their texts, or that "for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (Codd, 1988:239) would have proved to be a gray area for policy text. However, the conception of policy as a discourse is in stark contrast to the view of a policy as a text. In other words while the policy text leaves room for a multiplicity of interpretations, the discourse of policy could be said to be prescriptive.

Policy as Discourse

It is specifically this conceptualization of policy which best explain the "social intentionality" (Ball, 1993:14) of policies because discourse is viewed as process of meaning production and that it constitutes a conscious activity . So, in contrast to the view of policy as a text with a plurality of readings,

> actors are making meaning, being influential, contesting, constructing responses, dealing with contradictions, attempting representations of policy... thus we need to appreciate the way in which policy ensembles, collections of related policies exercise power through a *production* of 'truth' and 'knowledge' as discourse (Ball, 1993:14).

Although the role of language or signifiers play a crucial role in constructing meaning, "but discourse is irreducible to language and to speech, it is more than that" (Foucault, 1974:49). In other words "discourses get things done, accomplish real tasks, gather authority" (Said 1986:152).

Ball's conceptualization of the power of discourse, as drawn from Foucault, prompted Hatcher and Troyna (1994) to contend that Ball was 'de-centering' the state. It must be noted that Hatcher and Troyna are themselves adherents of the centrality of state power. Ball's view is that "the state is here the product of discourse" (1993:14). In his response to the contention that he was 'de-centering'

the state, Ball retorts: "there is no clear and absolute dismissal of the state or state power in Foucault's work" (Ball, 1994:175). Ball further clarified that like Foucault, he was interested in the power beyond the coercive power of the state. He also cited Foucault to reinforce this point:

> I'm not positing a substance of power. I'm simply saying as soon as there's a relation of power there's a possibility of resistance. We're never trapped by power: it is always possible to modify its hold, in determined conditions and following a precise strategy (Foucault, 1980:13).

In concluding my examination of the conceptualizations of policy, I have to restate that I will use the notion of the process of policy to analyze the evolution of the education policy of decentralization from 1990 to 1996. I will also use the notion of policy texts to refer to the policy documents which were produced between 1990 and 1996. The South African Schools Act will be referred to as the key text. The concept of discourse will be used to exemplify human agency in the textual construction of policy texts.

I have thus far looked at the notion of education policy from a bird's-eye-view. In an attempt to shift my focus to the substance of policy debate in South Africa post 1990, I will now look at the discourses of equity, equality and redress.

EQUITY, EQUALITY AND REDRESS

The policy of educational decentralization (in South Africa) is certainly permeated by the notions of equity, equality and redress. There are three reasons why I intend to review the literature on the discourses of equity and redress. Firstly, I wish to explore what appears to be tension between equity and equality. Secondly, I hope to highlight the various meanings attached to the discourses of equity and redress.

I finally intend to adopt an appropriate conceptualization of equity and redress which I will then use to analyze SASA, 1996 and its antecedent policy texts.

In dealing with the 'competing interpretations of equity', Harvey (1982) explains equality as sameness, while equity is explained as fairness or justice. Perhaps some tension between equity and equality could possibly be inferred from Harvey's differentiation of these concepts (equity and equality) in that a fair or just educational provision may not necessarily be understood as equal treatment by those who receive less in the state's pursuit of sameness or equality. Likewise, Leicester (1996) indicates that

> equality of treatment is not always about equal distribution, but about fairness manifested in some other way. To treat people equally means to treat them equally well, and this often entails not treating them the same (1996:278).

Perhaps Leicester's attempt to separate equity from equality is best accentuated by Berne (1994). He argues that "... equity is not equality, but instead resources should be matched to needs - in education finance terms, this is reflected in the principle of vertical equity" (Berne 1994:512).

The argument being advanced by Leicester (1996) and Berne (1994) is that notwithstanding a constitutional requirement to treat citizens equally, there are times when differential resources should necessarily be made to meet different needs. I think the South African context, as characterized by its historical inequalities, provides a good example.

Given these inequalities, there is surely an undeniable need for equity in order to equalize the distribution of educational resources- be they material or human resources. Although equalizing the distribution of resources is meant to eradicate the huge discrepancies between the historically disadvantaged and advantaged, there are those who seem to contend that difference, or cultural diversity as they conveniently call it, should be celebrated and not eradicated. Even though his comments were actually based on the proposed *Empowerement Equity Act*, Martin Barassey, a Wits academic and labor specialist, seems to be arguing for the celebration of difference when he says:

> in considering equality we start with the notion that we are concerned with the extent to which, and the respects in which, two things are the same. Nothing, we must recognize, is ever exactly the same as something else... (Sunday Times, July 1998: p.19).

Brassey seems to be worried by any group comparison on the basis of sameness or discrepancy. He argues that this kind of comparison is value-laden as it seeks to prescribe the correction (or redress) of the perceived discrepancy. He further contends: "we have to decide, by reference to ethical standards, whether to tolerate the difference or eradicate it" (Brassey, 1998:19). He also indicates that equality is not an 'absolute virtue' because it competes with other tendencies whose intention is to celebrate difference. As examples, he sites the issuing of awards, accreditation and certification. It is quite evident, I think, that Brassey is raising what one may call a liberal concern about equality. And his concern is probably not surprising because liberals are not very comfortable with group-based comparisons, for these kinds of comparisons down-play individual excellence.

Brassey (1998), Harvey (1982), Leicester(1996) and Berne(19940's assertions are raised in order to outline the competing discourses of equity. According to

Leicester's version, the pursuit of equity is based on the principle of fairness - which implies that people will not be treated the same because it would not be fair to treat unequal people equally. And the unequal treatment is aimed at equalizing resources or opportunities. However, Brassey, Harvey and Berne seem to contend that equity is not a politically unbiased principle. It seems to be their view that difference is a fact of life and should therefore be celebrated. Thus, treating people unequally, for whatever reason, violates their constitutional right of being equal before the law. I intend to analyze the different notions of equity and then relate it to the discourse of equity that is reflected in the SASA. My objective would be to further analyze the probable implications of equity as a fair treatment and equity as an unequal treatment.

Perhaps at this stage, one should move on to seek an understanding of the discourse of equity; bearing in mind the competing interpretations that I have just alluded to. It seems that in order to get a better comprehension of the discourse of equity one would have to place it in the context of the legacy of racial and ethnic inequality which is noticeable in the nature of access to schooling, educational provision of resources and participation. It is certainly against this background that

> new policies are needed to reverse the trends which dominated the troubled history of South African education and training and to build a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to all learners throughout the country (Woodbridge, 1995:192).

But, before the formulation and implementation of these new policies that Woodbridge refers to, the intention of which would be to redress the historical imbalances of apartheid, an understanding has to exist of the very concept, equity. Another view of equity is expressed as follows:

> ... our judgments about whether or not a given state of affairs is

> just.... The heart of equity lies in our ability to acknowledge that, even though our actions might be in accord with a set of rules, their results may be unjust. Equity gauges the results of actions directly against standards of justice, and it is used to decide whether or not what is being done is just (Secada, 1989: 68-69).

Equity has to do with the intervention of the state in an education system which is characterized by historical inequalities. The intervention in question may be motivated by ethical requirements (the desire to remove unfair boundaries) or ideological and political reasons (an assessment of the degree of social justice) (Leicester 1996). The notion of state intervention is seen as

> a substantial part of the history of federal involvement in education is represented by a series of policies to advance the principle of educational equity. These policies reflect a government response to the belief that all citizens, regardless of sex, race, creed or economic circumstances should be guaranteed equality in education (Brookover and Lezotte, 1981:5).

I also note in passing that the first *White Paper on Education* (1995), makes this point about state intervention. It states that

> the state's resources must be deployed according to the principle of equity, so that they are used to provide essentially the same quality of learning opportunities for all citizens. This is an inescapable duty upon government, in the light of this country's [South Africa] history and its legacy of inequality, and it is a constitutional requirement (DoE, 1995:21).

It does look like the national standards for student achievement certification and other forms of accreditation in South Africa further demonstrate the thesis of state control or intervention. It is through these measures that the state ensures standardization in the provision of education and the subsequent acquisition of appropriate skills. For instance, in deploying its resources to provide the same learning opportunities for all the citizens, the state devolves some of the authority and responsibility to local schools.

> Devolution of control to schools is seen by some to have progressive potential because equal opportunity issues are supposed to be taken into account - that is, the rhetoric is there (Taylor, 1993:33).

Taylor found that the rhetoric of equal opportunities was articulated in the 1988 Education Reform Act in Britain. He clarified that even though standards were determined nationally, school based management also played a major role in the realization of the set national standards. The issue of relations between the notions of equal opportunity and school based management is also raised by Porter (1994:489). He argues that "the focus on outcomes leaves much room for local discretion in curriculum, regardless of the level at which the outcomes are specified". Porter goes on to clarify that there will always be some control at the top to the education hierarchy, and that there will always be a considerable amount of local discretion. What Porter seems to be saying is that local schools will be held accountable for the achievement of their enrolled students and that this achievement has to match the expectations of nationally prescribed standards. And, I think it is at national level that an assessment could be made of the lack or degree of equality amongst schools and regions. But the state would certainly need a better conceptualization of equality in order to make an informed assessment. Perhaps equality is best unpacked by Woodbridge (1995) who breaks it up into various levels. These levels could be understood in terms of a model initially conceptualized by Farrel (1982).

The Farrel (1982) Model of Equality

According to Farrel, equality should be understood in terms of various levels; and these are equality of access, equality of survival, equality of output and equality of outcome.

Equality of Access

In terms of this equality all children in society are provided with equal access to schooling (Farrel, 1982). The issue of access and selection is also dealt with by Herman (1995) in his article, *School- Leaving Examinations, Selection and Equity in Higher Education in South Africa.* Though the issues he addresses relate specifically to higher education, I find his assertions relevant to my research because examination certificates are certainly not mere outcomes of an education system but are, most importantly, indicators of the state's input in that education system.

It is apparently Herman's contention that

> South African education since 1990 has been part of the arena of debate for fundamental sociological change from apartheid order to a just, non-racial democratic state. Schooling selection for higher education is being challenged to meet goals of equity and development of the hugely disadvantaged black majority of the population (Herman, 1995:261).

In demonstrating his point about how selection and admission are being made to meet the goals of equity, Herman sites as an example, the selection procedure at the University of the Western Cape. He cites Van der Berg and Gerwel (1990), who said about the selection procedure:

> ... it was decided to admit 80% of the target figure of first-year students for each degree or diploma on the basis of random computer selection from the total number of applicants who met the statutory matriculation requirements. The remaining 20% were selected on the basis of a number of criteria the university felt were academically, ethically and politically defensible (Van der Berg & Gerwell, 1990:269).

The selection procedure outlined by Van der Berg and Gerwel (1990) is certainly not only aimed at treating new entrants equally or fairly, but it also ensures that there is unequal treatment (redress) whose purpose is to establish equality.

Equality of Survival

In terms of the conceptualization of this equality, learners are empowered to survive training in the formal education system. Learners are also empowered to prepare for the challenges of the working environment.

Equality of Output

Defining equality in terms of output is based on the probability that children from various social groupings will learn the same thing to the same level at a pre-determined point in the school system (Farrel, 1982). The equality of output reflects a departure from an emphasis on inputs. In his article, entitled '*Equal Opportunities' Policies and the 1988 Education Reform Act in Britain,* Taylor observes:

> In Britain, as well as in Australia, there has been a shift in emphasis from 'weak' definitions of equality which stress access and equality of opportunity in education, to 'stronger' definitions which stress participation and equal outcomes (Taylor, 1993:30).

It is also Porter's (1994)'s understanding that the shift from inputs to outputs highlights the inability of the state to specify inputs and procedures "in ways that are functionally related to outcomes" (Porter, 1994:489). Seemingly, the other advantage of a focus on outcomes is that local discretion will be provided room for,even though these outcomes would have been specified at national level.

Equality of Outcome

Though almost similar to the equality of output, this one refers to the effect that an education system has on a person who successfully completes the system (Farrel, 1982:43). Levine (1967) also seems to be speaking about the equality of outcome

when he says that education in a given society is intimately related to the society's status mobility system of self-advancement in a hierarchy of social goods, particularly when one thinks of the occupation ladder of modern industrial societies. Thus, the ability to produce upward mobility within the social structure is largely dependent on the success or failure of the equality of outcome.

In responding to the provisions of the Employment Equity Bill, Brassey (1998:19) has this to say about the equality of outcome: "we might just as readily prefer equality of outcome (in terms of recompense for effort, say, or a distribution according to need)". Instead of an equality of opportunity, for instance, the implementation of affirmative action, Brassey argues for an equality of outcome. Leicester raises the same issue in his assertion "as to inequality of outcome, no one could logically maintain that inequality of outcome entails that there has been inequality of opportunity" (Leicester, 1996:280).

I think the problem here is whether it is the equality of opportunity that is important or whether the equality of outcome is the one which is more significant. Better still, the issue might well be that the equality of opportunity should be managed in such a way that it subsequently translates into an equality of outcome.

Shift From Equity to Adequacy

Clune (1994) writes at length about what he calls a true adequacy model in the system of school finance. He argues that the emerging true adequacy model serves to link resources to outcomes with the purpose of ensuring that all students receive an adequate level of education . "Adequacy", he explains, "means adequate for some purpose, typically student achievement" (Clune, 1994:377). He therefore

argues that there would actually be a direct relationship between inputs and anticipated educational outcomes. He concludes that "whatever justification, the shift to outcome funding is practically very important for the structure of school finance formulas" (Clune, 1994:382). He sees the devolved local control or initiative at school level operating within the parameters of external regulations or within 'the structure of school finance formulas'.

Adopting Farrel (1982)'s Model of Equality

In my textual analysis of the policy texts produced between 1990 and 1996, I will be guided by Farrel's model. I will be analyzing how the policy texts articulate the notions of equity and redress. I find Farrel's model useful in that it covers a wide range of conceptualizations of competing definitions in use, when a policy text refers to the concept of 'equality'. It is perhaps important to first relate the discourse of equality to the notion of decentralization.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM(S)

Globally, the discourse of reform seems to be tantamount to that of decentralization. Reform is portrayed as the "reconstitution of relations among actors in government agencies and civil society" (Popkewitz, 1996: 27). Equally important, "restructuring refers to a decentralized form of educational management and, often, governance within a set of agreed parameters" (Lawton, 1992:139). One gets an impression that the restructuring discourse has to do with changing relations of actors and altering of the structures of educational governance and administration. This view is also strengthened by the fact that

> arguments about the quality of education in schools, the relationship of education to the economy, policies to provide equity and access, and concerns for empowerment and the sharing of power have been prominent in the discourse of

devolution as transformation (Meadmore et al 1995:487).

Implied by these conceptualizations of reform is the historical inability and inefficiency of a highly centralized or bureaucratized education system whose intention was to contribute to the quality of education. Apparently, the restructuring or transformation does not only have to be understood from a historical point of view but also from a global point of view. In this regard, Popkewitz (1996:41) writes: "at one level, these discourses are elements of an international circulation of ideas about appropriate practices and interpretations of school's change". This apparent neo-liberal understanding of transformation is also evident from Sexton, as quoted in Ball (1990). He contends that "to produce the quality and choice that we expect in education, to improve our schools, we need to change the way that we fund and manage them" (Ball, 1990:2).

It is my understanding from these inputs that in the 1980s and 1990s most governments did not only understand the discourse of decentralization as a tool for restructuring the large, centralized bureaucracies in the education arena but that it is also a global issue. In writing about the redefinition of public and private boundaries in South Africa, Sayed (1997) highlights the global phenomenon of the discourse of decentralization. He asserts that:

> the policy of educational decentralization is currently the stated policy of most governments and it is the central plank of major international efforts aimed at restructuring education systems (Sayed, 1997:1).

[The neo-liberal ideology of reform will be revisited in the forthcoming chapters]

While writing about the experiences of Columbia in the 1980s Bray (1996), argues that

> planners in any given situation must decide what elements of the system to decentralize (resource generation, spending authority, hiring, curriculum development, and so on), and they must determine what levels (regional, district, local, school site) they will assign each of these elements (Bray, 1996:9).

However, the levels of decentralization, as well as the elements to be decentralized depend on the kind of powers that the state is prepared to decentralize.

FORMS OF POWERS IN DECENTRALIZATION

There are different forms of powers which could be decentralized to lower levels. These powers are deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Deconcentraton

"Deconcentration transfers authority to the geographically dispersed agents of the central government, strengthening regional and local staffs of the state civil service" (Lauglo, 1990: 30). Deconcentration is the weakest from of decentralization. Though management responsibilities are shifted to lower levels, the state, generally maintains effective control of the whole system.

Delegation

In this kind of decentralization, authority or responsibility is delegated by the state to lower levels but the delegated authority could be withdrawn at anytime because of the unavailability of binding legislation.

Devolution

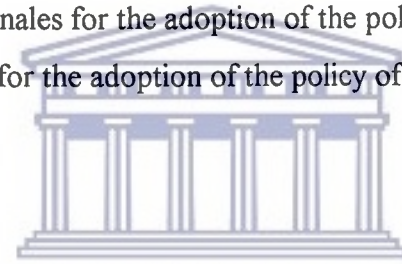
Generally, devolution is perceived as "the transfer of authority by law from the state and to some regional or local (or private) authority which is not directly accountable to the center" (Lauglo, 1990:30). It also has to be noted that of all the kinds of powers that could be transferred from the state, devolution

> ...is the most far reaching form of decentralization in that the transfer of authority over financial, administrative, or pedagogical matters is permanent and cannot be revoked at the whim of central officials (Bray, 1996:10).

It is this kind of decentralization which is enacted in the South African Schools Act, 1996; and which is also the subject of my research. Thus, for the purpose of this mini-thesis, the concept decentralization will be used to mean devolution.

RATIONALES FOR DECENTRALIZATION.

The different forms of decentralization which I have examined do not necessarily reflect the different rationales for the adoption of the policy of decentralization. The following are rationales for the adoption of the policy of decentralization.



Political

> The political rationale for educational decentralization is to redistribute, share and extend power and enhance participation by removing centralized control over educational decision-making (Lauglo and McLean 1985 and Pawda 1993).

Likewise, Bray (1996), sees this rationale of decentralization facilitating participatory democracy and also legitimizing the state. While stakeholders claim ownership and involvement in the education system, the role of the state, as facilitator of the processes and provider of educational resources is not in question.

Lauglo (1995), explains this rationale in terms of liberalism (freedom from restraint), federalism (self-government based on national unity) and populist localism (government based on the popular will of the people).

The political dimension of the policy of educational decentralization can be

> therefore understood to be a reconstitution of the form of the state, and consequently a reformulation of the nature of control exercised in education (Sayed, 1997:3).

In my analysis of the contexts of influence and context of text production, I will look at the role of the state or the shifting discourse or conceptualization of the role of the state. In some cases (McGinn 1986 and Weiler 1989, as quoted in Sayed 1997:3), the discourse of decentralization is understood as a specific response to the crisis of capitalist welfare states; as will be seen in the example of Scottish education (Hartley, 1994).

Quality and Efficiency

Lauglo (1995) sees rationales for decentralization which claim equality and efficiency in the light of pedagogic professionalism (autonomy from professionals), management by objective (efficient use of available resources by systematically monitoring achievement) and the market mechanism or ideology (the discourses of choice, competition, consumers and the product, education). The quality and efficiency rationales are believed to be "bringing untapped local and private resources into the overall resource pool available to education" (Weiler, 1987:35). Weiler further contends that financial responsibilities of the state are shifted from central government to local authorities or communities.

Curriculum

This rationale should be understood in the context of culturally heterogeneous cultures (Weiler 1989). The intention of this rationale is for the state to facilitate learning based on local contexts Lauglo (1990). The local contexts would include regional languages, cultures and traditions which have to become part of the curriculum.

Administrative Efficiency

The administrative rationale for decentralization is meant to

> ... focus on structural issues relating to the education system and are principally concerned with the way in which educational resources are distributed, managed and utilized. The key questions are, how education can be most efficiently and effectively provided and what the responsive and flexible structure is for meeting local and recipient needs (Sayed, 1997:2).

The idea of a responsive state (i.e. by way of distributing, managing and utilizing educational resources) in a decentralized education system is apparently challenged by Bray (1996). He argues that "bringing about more equity- both in the form of inputs like money and outputs like test scores is not always recognized as an overt goal of decentralization" (Bray, 1996:27). He further contends that "choice and school based management plans, for example, may serve to improve the performance only in children from high-demand families" (Bray, 1996:27).

In my later analysis of the role of the state in the policy of educational decentralization, I will, mindful of Bray's contention, seek to understand the tensions between centralization and decentralization (in the policy), and how or whether this tension affects the principle of equalizing the distribution of educational resources. In other words, I will analyze the probable tensions between devolution of powers and the need for central state to intervene in pursuit of equalizing the historical inequalities.

CONTEXTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE POLICY OF EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION.

Having explored the various rationales or models of the discourse of decentralization, it is, I think, important at this stage to shift my focus to various

contexts or countries in which the policy of decentralization was adopted and implemented. The intention is to outline the common patterns of the discourse of decentralization, and, in the process, link these patterns to the rationales I explored. The common patterns will be grouped into two broad periods, namely the 1980s and the 1990s.

China 1980s

Kai-ming (1994) reports that during the 1980s, decentralization in China was realized in two dimensions, namely,

> ... devolution of central funding to local funding, and the diffusion from government to non-government funding agencies; in particular, basic education was largely financed by local governments and local communities (Kai-ming, 1994:265).

Following the loss of central government control to devolution, two consequences emerged. Firstly, disparities were realized among the regions and as a result, this led to different degrees of dependence on the state. Secondly, "the place for central government has dubious implications..." (1994:267). Unlike in the event where decentralization is used as a conflict management tool, the example of China demonstrates what appears to be a typical consequence of devolution, is exemplified by the disparities and inequalities between regions. There also seems to be some tension between devolution and the state's equalization of funding.

Ghana 1980s

In an attempt to highlight the implementation of the policy of decentralization in developing countries, Mankoe and Maynes (1994:24) conducted research with the intention of assessing "... perceptions of relevant stakeholders in Ghana as to the extent of their preferred involvement in educational decision-making" (Mankoe &

Maynes, 1994:24). This included the extent to which they feel they play significant roles and the extent to which they feel a sense of ownership and responsibility

This research was apparently influenced by Mankoe and Maynes' initial feeling that experiences of educational decentralization in developing countries "have not been ultimately positive" (Mankoe & Maynes, 1994:23). They quote the example of Nigeria's intended goal of establishing equal opportunities for all school age children. Local bodies were then charged with the responsibility of raising funds, setting up the schools, organizing them and administering them.

> However, in most parts of Nigeria, the scheme rapidly ran into major problems (as reported by Igwe 1988). Communities found that they were deprived of essential supplies and some areas like eastern Nigeria resorted to various levies to fill the gap (Mankoe & Maynes, 1994: 24).

With regard to Ghana, the research confirmed that most stakeholders understood that even in a decentralized system, they had very little control over decisions that dealt with financial resources. Teachers were found to be dissatisfied about the level of their involvement in decisions relating to the provision of instructional resources. Also, parents were found not to be too happy about their involvement in student discipline. Principals and parents were found to be jointly dissatisfied about their involvement in deciding about the appointment of teachers.

Though there may well be other sources for these reported incidents of dissatisfaction., the main reason seems to be that, despite the opportunities created for involvement and participation in decision making, the stakeholders still feel disempowered to take up their rightful roles. It will therefore take some considerable training to empower them. It is also Mankoe and Maynes' contention that the state of affairs in developed countries or communities is much better than in developing ones.

Columbia 1980s

It is reported by Bray (1996) that in the 1980s Columbia was on the brink of political, economic and social collapse. The tension between the leftist and rightist terrorists had reached uncontrollable proportions. As a result, politicians, police officers, journalists and school principals, were assassinated on a daily basis by the guerrilla armies. "In 1989, congress approved legislation giving municipalities a greater role in basic services such as education and health" (Bray, 1996:2).

Following this decentralization of powers, citizens began to cherish their participation and what appeared to be their ownership of the now restructured, effective and efficient services, processes and structures of the state. The reforms did not only help to alter relations between the stakeholders and the state but they subsequently, but gradually, helped to legitimize government institutions, restore government credibility and general stability in the country (Bray, 1996:2).

Mina Gerais (northeastern Brazil) 1990s

It was during this period that the country had to contend with a low quality of education, inadequate funding, poorly trained teachers, rigid pedagogies, and overregulated management, as well as low student performance. Subsequently,

> a new government decided that the road to quality education lay in giving local communities a greater say in running their schools. They were then granted financial, administrative, and pedagogical autonomy to elect boards in each school (Bray, 1996:13).

The point made by Bray (1996) is that a strong form of decentralization is premised on the need to improve the quality of education

Scottish Education 1990s

Hartley (1994) addresses the discourse of decentralization in the context of the management of public expenditure in the Scottish welfare state.

> Faced with fiscal overload, the government is seeking to curb expenditure in such a way that both professionals and parents come to be complicit in that very endeavor, even though it may have adverse consequences for some of them (Hartley, 1994:129).

The government therefore decided to enter into a business arrangement or partnership ('new deal') with the professionals (for pedagogic reasons) and parents (as consumers). The teachers and parents are lured by the state's appealing slogans of choice, ownership and self-government. In this way, the government appears to "shift the burden of accountability for spending onto schools, thereby relieving itself of having to account for the decline in funding of education itself" (Hartley, 1994:138).

Managing the Managers - Queensland, Australia

In this context, Meadmore et al, (1995), write of devolution as a management technology which has apparently helped to transform the Department of Education in Queensland. With decentralization viewed as an administrative strategy, Meadmore et al conducted research which "... positioned one particular school as subject and object of the discourse of devolution" (Meadmore et al, 1995:399). The researchers spent the whole day observing a female principal (with the fictitious name, Judy) as leader/manager in a decentralized corporate culture (her school).

The intention was to observe how she mediates the discourse of devolution. Miller and Rose (1990), were probably writing about the newly restructured role of Judy

when they assert: "practices of devolution constitute 'action at a distance' by drawing attention to the indirect mechanisms that link the conduct of individuals and organizations to political objectives" (Miller & Rose, 1990:1).

Having observed her interactions with members of her staff and students, and also other administrative activities (of the day) in her office, the researchers concluded that:

> ... it is clear that certain top-down policies are undermining principal's autonomy even though principals as on-line managers are supposedly the key agents for achieving particular goals of government (Miller & Rose, 1990:409).

Considering that Judy's power as a principal is diluted by departmental officials, or top-down policies, the question to be asked is:

> how much power does Judy really exercise? Is it power or merely added responsibility? It appears that there are too many paradoxes evident in the discourse to support the claim that devolution has been achieved" (Miller & Rose, 1990:409).

Guided by the question asked by Miller & Rose (1990), I will now conclude an overview of the notion of decentralization.

CONCLUDING THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DECENTRALIZATION

It is evident from these contexts that because the policy of educational decentralization seems to be influenced by varying factors, its implementation will also be varied. Even though no government can completely decentralize its powers, authority and responsibility, there does seem to be some problem in many cases as to how much power or authority has been decentralized.

In this chapter, in an endeavor to highlight the area and focus of my research, I outlined the research's conceptual framework and also reviewed the literature on the notions of policy, decentralization, equity and redress. Perhaps I should clarify the fact that these interrelated concepts are being reviewed separately for the purpose of a clear and systematic analysis. I consider the concepts to be contextually inseparable; hence my approach to SASA as the 'policy' of 'decentralization'. I also consider that the principles of redress and equity are embodied in the policy (of decentralization). In the interest of a coherent probe, I will attempt to maintain this apparent textual connectivity between the concepts of policy, decentralization, equity and redress. Having clarified that point, I now need to spend some time drawing a link between the specific literature I reviewed and the dominant concepts of my research viz., policy, decentralization, equity and redress. In the process of highlighting the relationship between the reviewed literature and the concepts, I also hope to outline the conceptual framework of the research; and, subsequently, the research questions .

With regard to the concept of policy, the literature I reviewed was mainly around Ball's view of policy. This view is summed up by Taylor et al (1997) as post - structuralism or by Henry (1993) as 'localized complexity'. In terms of these theses, emphasis is placed on the role played by policy actors and interest groups during the evolution of policy. Due to the fact that the policy actors represent different constituencies, hold different ideologies and competing objectives from the policy process, the process is "inherently messy, ambiguous, unpredictable and conflict-provoking" (Henry, 1993:102). Theatrically put, the process of policy making becomes a political platform through which a language contest for meaning unfolds. The contest is consistent with Foucault's notion of the relationship between power and knowledge. Characterizing this relationship is the view of policy as discourse. This issue is elaborated at length by Fulcher (1989); Ball (1990); Bowe, Ball with Gold (1992); Ball (1993) and Ball (1994). In apparently

acknowledging the Foucauldian notion of power, Codd asserts: " fundamentally, policy is about the exercise of political power and the language that is used to legitimate that process" (Codd, 1988:235).

The exercise of political power that Codd refers to indicates how various ideologies of the policy actors inform what Ball (1993) calls the production of 'truth' and 'knowledge' as discourses. It will later on (in the course of my analysis) become clearer that federalism, neo-liberalism and the notion of the new right were some of the dominant ideologies which permeated the evolution of the policy of decentralization in South Africa.

So, not only will I be mindful of the fact that the policy text (SASA) represents a product of compromises reached by policy actors at various stages of its development, I will also approach it as discourse. In terms of the latter, I will be probing the 'discursive limitations' (Ball, 1993) of SASA. My intention would be to understand how the policy frames, perceives or articulates the dominant discourse of decentralization. At an ideological level, the research aims to investigate the set of assumptions, beliefs and values permeating SASA.

I am restating Ball's conceptual distinction of policy as text and as discourse because I think the conceptual framework will be helpful to my textual analysis of SASA and its antecedent policy documents. The conceptualization will again help me to always consider the complexity of policy making; and in particular, the role of social agency or social intentionality (Ball, 1993) in the evolution of policy. In terms of this conceptualization, "policy actors are making meaning, being influential, contesting, constructing responses, dealing with contradictions, attempting representations of policy" (Ball, 1993:14).

I have decided to align myself with Ball's conceptual framework because I think it will enable me to trace the evolution of SASA in an attempt to uncover the shifts

and shifting influences in the discourse of decentralization and also in the articulation of the principles of equity and redress. The conceptual framework will be adopted in two interrelated ways. I will use Ball's conceptual division of the policy process into what he calls contexts (Bowe, Ball with Gold, 1992 and Ball 1994). These contexts are loosely coupled and sequential stages making up the process of policy making. Ball initially foreshadowed the three contexts of influences, policy text production and policy implementation. He later on added the contexts of outcome and political strategy (Ball, 1994).

Ball's conceptual division of the process of policy will be useful to my research because tracing the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress to the initial context of influences and then through the context of policy production will certainly reveal the shifts and shifting influences which occurred. I will, for instance, have to track the roles of the state, stakeholders, local politics and international influences in order to understand how they shaped the discourse(s) of the current policy text (SASA).

The context of policy text production is equally important in that during this stage of the evolution of SASA, the notion of the state may have shifted or the initial positions of the ANC and NP may have shifted due to, amongst others, the effect of globalization and neo-liberalism.

In wrapping up perceptions about the notion of policy, I now state that my working definition of policy would be that of "representations encoded in complex ways via struggles and compromises" (Ball, 1993).

Elsewhere in this chapter, I also reviewed the literature on the discourse of decentralization. In particular, I looked at Lauglo (1990)'s conceptualization of the notion of decentralization. He contends that the policy of decentralization is

adopted by different countries for different reasons. These reasons ranged from the adoption of decentralization as an economic tool to relieve governments of their fiscal overload (as seen in the example of the Scottish education in the 1990s) to the adoption of the policy as an administrative strategy to manage tensions between centralization and decentralization. (Meadmore et al, 1995). Depending on the context and rationale for the policy, it was also implemented in different forms, namely, as deconcentration, delegation or devolution.

Guided by Lauglo's conceptualization (of decentralization) I intend to explore the South African context and rationale for the adoption of the policy and the form of power which is decentralized from the state. Most importantly, I hope to probe the shifts and influences which have shaped the current discourse (of decentralization) as embodied in the Act. In probing these shifts, I also intend to find out if there were no contested (by policy actors) conceptualizations of decentralization. Thus, I intend to find out if the discourse shifted towards a neo-liberal ideology or a socialist one, particularly if one considers the different socio-economic backgrounds and ideologies of the major policy actors.

With regard to equity and redress, the literature I reviewed seemed to have one thing in common, viz., the complexity of framing meaning for the discourse 'equality'.

> Equality of education is a contentious issue with a variety of meanings such as the same education, education with equal facilities, or education with equal outputs results) regarding quality and quantity (Steyn and van der Westhuizen, 1993:37).

Consistent with Steyn and van der Westhuizen's assertion is Farrel's (1982) conceptual model of equality. He contends that the concept of equality could mean

equality of access, equality of survival, equality of output and equality of outcome(attainment). My analysis of the education policy texts would be meant to establish the kind of equality which is legislated in SASA.

Research Questions

Having adopted Ball's conceptual framework of policy analysis; and noting that the policy actors naturally represent different political ideologies and different constituencies with varied or sectional expectations, I will research the following questions:

1. Given the different rationales and contexts for the adoption of the policy of decentralization, shifts and probable shifting influences during the policy process, how is the discourse of decentralization represented in SASA?

2. Is the policy of decentralization, as embodied in SASA, likely to promote the principles of redress and equity or is it likely to perpetuate disparities between the (historically) privileged and disadvantaged schools?

In an attempt to find answers to my research questions, I will first review the context of education policy influence. I will for instance look at how the social, political and economic forces have influenced the agenda and articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress in the education policy in South Africa. I will also analyze the context of education policy text production. The purpose of an analysis of the context of policy text production is to trace the shifts, shifting influences, continuities and tensions around the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. Chapter 3 will examine the context of education policy influence and will serve as a basis for my in depth analysis of the context of policy text production in Chapter 4. So while Chapter 3 will be focused on the social, political and economic forces which affected the education agenda, Chapter 4 will be focused on the process of producing policy texts after 1994.

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CHAPTER 3

SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION IN TRANSITION (1990-1994): SETTING THE TONE AND TENOR FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

The debate around the future education system in this country gained momentum in the beginning of 1990. Central to the debate has always been, amongst others, the form that the new education system should take, what the priorities of the new dispensation should be, and most importantly, the question of who should participate in the education policy process. I interpret these three issues to constitute the events and processes of the transition period.

Guided by Ball's conceptual framework for policy analysis, I now intend to examine these events and processes which I consider to have not only influenced the agenda on the restructuring of education but which have apparently influenced the production of the key policy text, the South African Schools Act (SASA). I will start off with the social context of educational transformation. I will use an overview of the social context to situate my analysis of the process of policy. I will also contend that the social context had a major influence on the agenda of educational change.

The second factor to be analyzed will be the ideological frameworks of the major policy players; namely the then National Party (NP) government and what Kahn (1996) and Badat (1995) call the democratic movement. The latter player was made up of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) and the African National Congress (ANC) alliance partners in this period. In this section of the chapter, the main pillars of the ideological frameworks of the democratic

movement and the NP will be highlighted. I will also examine how the frameworks are shaped by the different histories and traditional constituencies of the democratic movement and the NP.

I intend to argue that as a result of the democratic movement and the NP's different historical backgrounds, their different systems of values and principles, and their different constituencies, they adopted the policy of decentralization for different rationales. In the process of my assertions, I will show some of the internal shifts and shifting influences on their policy actors initial policy positions.

The third factor to be looked at is the notion of globalization pressures on the agenda and process of education policy production. Considering that South Africa is unavoidably part of the international community, I hope to analyze the probable effect of the ideology of the 'New Right' or neo-liberalism on the evolution of SASA.

Lastly, I will review the initial education policy positions which were adopted by the democratic movement and the NP. Apart from a general comparison of the policy documents, I will particularly look at how the documents articulate the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

In concluding this chapter, I will briefly summarize the tensions in policy contestation from 1990-1994 which appear to have constrained the discourse and text of SASA. In an attempt to trace the policy patterns in the outlined period, I will use Ball's concepts of the contexts of influence and policy text production.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

I do not think that any process of policy can unfold in a vacuum; neither do I think that any comprehensive analysis of policy can take place without due consideration to its social context. In making this point, Badat (1995:13) argues that the process of policy should be situated within the 'broader framework of national transformation'. In other words socio-economic and political factors have to be borne in mind if one is to make an informed assessment of the process of policy formulation. This is most probably because "social factors set the agenda for policy-making" (Unterhalter, Wolpe and Botha, 1991:217).

Likewise, I think that the shift in the political landscape in South Africa, in the early 1990s set the tone and tenor for transformation in education. Actually, by the end of 1989, there was evidently a change in international, regional and national forces with regard to the political struggle in this country (Chisholm, 1992). It became clear in the late 1980s that the then NP government could not endure international isolation anymore. The effect of economic sanctions, sport and diplomatic isolation pressured the government to seriously consider a negotiated settlement to the political crisis in the country. In addition, the South African Defense Force's defeat in Angola (in 1988) and SWAPO's victory in the Namibian independence (in 1989) further weakened South Africa's regional hard-line position.

Internally, the country was rapidly reaching a point of ungovernability as a result of the recurrent rent boycotts, heightened school boycotts and other forms of mass protests. There was therefore an urgent need for the then government to stabilize the country and to speedily re-establish the culture of learning and teaching in schools.

The political landscape in this country shifted dramatically in the early 1990s. In particular, the then State President F.W de Klerk's speech in February 1990 shifted the political context from the politics of repression and resistance to the politics of reform and transformation. Attesting to the dramatic shift was, inter alia, the unbanning of liberation movements like the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and, most importantly, the repeal of apartheid legislations like the Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act and the Land Act.

The legacy of economic and social inequalities (of race, class and gender) not withstanding, the country was undeniably going through a major process of political change. The notion of change was central to the demands of the historically disenfranchised majority of citizens in this country because as far as they were concerned the NP government's departure was long overdue for it was not only considered unpopular but was 'illegitimate' too.

And it does not look like the NP government had a viable option to transformation given the students' and political unrest of the 1980s and the fact that the anxiety of economic and political isolation has been a thorn in the NP government's flesh.

Using their long-awaited rights like freedom of speech and freedom of association, the liberation movements began to mobilize the historically marginalised around demands for the establishment of a Transitional Executive Authority and the first non-racial and democratic elections. As Christie puts it,

> moves towards a negotiated settlement through structures such as the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and subsequent multiparty talks promised a new constitution with equal rights for all and an interim government of national unity (Christie, 1994:45).

Although the CODESA negotiations were unfolding at an unpredictable pace, it was, however, certain that there was some faint light at the end of the political

tunnel. The developments in the political context had a domino effect on the racially fragmented education departments in the country. I will now look at what Bowe et al (1992) call the context of policy influence. The context should be understood as an educational landscape and the rippling effect politics had on it.

CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY INFLUENCE

The 1983 constitution made provision for 'general affairs' (euphemism for an African education system under a white minister) and 'own affairs'. In terms of the provision of own affairs, the Department of National Education (1984) was responsible for the formulation of general policy while various ministries were responsible for designated population groups. Simply put, the education system was fragmented into 19 racial and ethnic education departments. Further characterizing the racially fragmented education system were issues like unequal funding and unequal access to education and training. These inequalities resulted in huge disparities between black and white education. There was also lack of democratic control of the education system. It was against this background that the democratic movement formulated demands around the call for People's Education in 1985, translating into the establishment of Student Representative Councils, Parents, Teachers Associations (PTA) and Parents, Teachers, Students Association.

The detrimental effect of the fragmented education system could not be mistaken in black schools. As Christie puts it

> black schooling continued to be characterized by inequalities and shortages of resources and by protest action which brought a virtual collapse of the system in various parts of the country (Christie, 1994:45).

It could therefore be said that there were two main interrelated characteristics of the racially divided education departments. Firstly, there was racial and ethnic

inequality in the government's per capita expenditure on education. For instance, between 1990 and 1991, the per capita expenditure of the NP government was as follows:

* about R3800 (whites)
* about R2600 (Indians)
* about R2000 (Coloreds)
* about R1000 (Africans) (Christie, 1994: 47)

The second characteristic of the segregated education departments is derived from the above conspicuous inequalities and the subsequent shortages of resources for the education of Africans in particular. And that is the poor quality of the education of Africans, as evidenced by the recurrent disastrous African school-leaving results and the recurrent class disruptions at African schools. The recurrence of poor matric results and the accompanying disruptions was called a crisis in black education by, amongst others, Badat (1995).

Given this scenario, it became evident that the ineffective and racially fragmented education system needed serious restructuring; particularly when the education system was producing disastrous black matric results and was as well under constant attack from the very students and civil society it was supposed to serve. The then government was certainly unconfortable with the international bad publicity that the events and incidents attracted.

Therefore, it became pretty obvious that the structures and system of education desperately needed a new vision. By 1990 the ANC and its alliance began to seriously question the will and legitimacy of the then government to single-handedly set the agenda for change or restructure the embattled education system. The ANC's lack of confidence in the NP government created two immediate problems.

Firstly, it compounded the education crisis. Apart from the teacher's strikes, the country saw the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) stepping up its campaign of mass mobilizations and protests. Secondly, the lack of confidence and legitimacy in the NP government prepared ground for the birth of what came to be called the Mandela Education Delegation (in 1993) and its subsequent activities.

The birth and activities of the Mandela Education Delegation helped to set the tone for a negotiated transformation in education . This is because the subsequent series of negotiations (during the transition period) was basically about the struggle for power to frame the education agenda, the timing of the negotiations and what could be called the rules of the game. The democratic movement and the National Party needed to thrash out a negotiated political settlement of the prevalent education crisis. That the process of negotiation was not going to be smooth was testified by the fact that the major policy actors represented different constituencies with different 'histories', and also emerged from two diverse ideological frameworks. I will now review the ideological frameworks of the major policy actors and how they impacted on the process of policy formulation.

The Ideological Framework of the Democratic Movement

I find it fitting to start this section with a working definition of ideology.

> In essence, it is an encompassing system of values, of ideas, of deep convictions and principles (Kwant, 1976:120) that are fused into one great and powerful driving force that - ironically enough - is employed to realize a single, legitimate, well defined, concrete, salutary and all-encompassing goal that is intended to benefit society as a whole (Goudzward, 1981:18).

In terms of Ball's definition of policy and ideology, policy actors engage in a process of bargaining and negotiations with the intent to frame the meaning of policy. The policy actors' different points of views should, I think, account for

their respective systems of values and principles. It is precisely against this background that Ball sees policy as the result of competing and contested values. In addition, the point of view of a policy actor frames an objective or 'all-encompassing goal' that a policy actor hopes to achieve from the process of policy. I am interested in values and principles because policies are regarded as 'the authoritative allocation of values'. What then, is the ANC's ideology?

The ANC, representing mainly the historically disadvantaged citizens in this country, has its ideology traceable to the adoption of the Freedom Charter on the 25th of June 1955 at a 'Congress of the People'. Enshrined in the Freedom Charter were popular principles and values (Johnson, 1995) such as non-racialism, democracy, equality and redress. These values and principles are consistent with a popular democratic ideology, social democracy or socialism (Kallaway, 1988). It was certainly as part of this ideology that popular slogans like 'People's Education' and 'Education for People's Power' were coined.

> Indeed, the education clause of the Freedom Charter which began with the words 'the doors of learning and culture shall be open to all' has remained the benchmark for transforming the education system (Johnson, 1995: 131).

The ordinary members of the Democratic Movement related to these slogans and were as such mobilized around them. Most importantly, the slogans are in tandem with the notion of a welfare state or a strong central state whose timely intervention would serve to redress the historical imbalances created by apartheid. Basically, the Charter emerged as the cornerstone of the vision of the ordinary citizens for a better South Africa. The 'masses' therefore have always had a shared language of struggle or a broad based common discourse of the transformation of apartheid education. Put otherwise, the 'masses' articulated a common thesis of radical transformation due to the fact that they had had to put up with the indignity

of the legacy of apartheid education for too long. So, popular notions like People's Education served to articulate the broad based thesis of transformation. The notion of People's Education roughly meant that there should be speedy redress in education so that the masses should, as a matter of immediacy, get equal funding and access to education opportunities. The thesis further propagated for a stakeholder participation in the structures of school governance. The participatory democracy envisaged would see the establishment of popular structures like SRCs and PTSAs'.

In preparing to approach the negotiations table, the democratic movement was undoubtedly mindful of the aspirations and expectations of its ordinary members who have had to put up with a history of injustice and deprivation. For these ordinary members the participation of the democratic movement in negotiations was aimed at bringing immediate relief from a dehumanizing education system. The bad news though, was that

> negotiations were less about the transfer of power to democratic forces but more about a negotiated political settlement underwritten by a series of agreements, pacts and accords covering a variety of social-spheres (Badat, 1993:141).

The point being raised by Badat (1993) and Christie (1994) is that after 1990, the politics of conflict and confrontation, which the ordinary members of the democratic movement were understandably accustomed to, had to be traded in for the politics of consensus, coalitions and alliances. Equally important, Wolpe (1991) argues that the ANC's broad based thesis of transformation and restructuring of the education system have not been framed in relation to political and economic development strategies. It is actually Wolpe's point that in expecting radical change, the ordinary members of the ANC were oblivious to the fact that the National Party was legally still in power and would naturally prove a political hard

nut to crack; particularly because it was obliged to protect the privileges of its constituency.

Apart from clear political strategies which the democratic movement needed, it also needed economic strategies which would have served to address issues like the improvement of the quality of education. Simply put, the realities of bargaining and negotiations put paid to some of the initial objectives of the masses; viz., the radical and immediate transformation of the educational landscape. Having apparently acknowledged the compromise and challenge, after 1990, the National Education Coordination Committee (NECC) began to propagate for what Badat (1993) calls a departure from oppositional politics towards a politics of transformation and reconstruction. This departure was also motivated by the fact that the democratic movement, due to its position as an oppositional movement, did not have any experience in policy formulation and implementation.

Subsequently the NECC sponsored the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) to investigate and formulate policy options and their implications. These policy options were to be guided by 5 core principles and values of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress. "About 300 researchers and academics worked in research groups to generate policy options to be tabled for discussion" (NEPI, 1993).

Perhaps the compromise adopted by the democratic movement was inevitable given the dilemma that seemed to have confronted it. On the one hand, it had to sustain its credibility and support amongst the historically disillusioned 'masses'; and, on the other, it had also to confront the challenges of a government-in-waiting. Its responsibility as a future government meant that it had to present, during the process of negotiations, policy positions which were well researched and consistent

with political and economic trends; particularly if South Africa were to become part of a global community.

What this meant was that the wishes and aspirations of the rank and file members had to be traded-off in accordance with the political realities of the negotiations and whether or not the country could afford the desired aspirations. It was the need to trade populism for pragmatism which would not necessarily find favor with the rank-and-file members of the democratic movement but rather with the international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

In Namibia, for instance, "the problems of balancing heightened expectations with political and material realities were very evident" (Chetty and Monyokolo, 1992:129). So, although the new government was committed to free and compulsory education, the existing resource constraints severely stifled the policy decisions. Similarly, the ANC, in preparation for the role of governing the country, had to strike a balance between the radical transformation thesis, as exemplified by the activities of the United Democratic Front, and economic and political pragmatism required by CODESA. Perhaps this dilemma was even more evident in the initial stages of the ANC in government. In making almost the same observation as the one made here, Johnson has this to say about the White Paper on education:

> despite such far-reaching policy initiatives and integrating education and training and introducing compulsory education, the extent to which the new government can demonstrate change, particularly in a manner 'visible' to deprived communities, remains a critical test (Johnson, 1995:131).

The South African experience, in particular, demonstrates the fact that balancing the expectations of the masses to radically dispose of the existing apartheid

institutions with the realities of actually running the country may have contributed to some further shifts on the side of the ANC government.

What I have done in this section of the chapter was to look at the ANC's ideological framework and some of the internal shifts or compromises it had to deal with. I am following this approach of probing shifts, shifting influences and compromises in order to explore the context of policy influence, or the events and processes which shaped the SASA. In particular, I intend to explore from the democratic movement's policy positions how these shifts affected the democratic movement's articulation of the notions of decentralization, equity and redress.

Having reviewed the ideological framework of the democratic movement, I now need to turn my focus to the ideological framework of the NP, before focusing on education policy in more detail.

The Ideological Framework of the NP

In the early 1950s, the NP introduced apartheid legislation to justify white supremacy. Since then the NP has been synonymous with apartheid. The policy was basically meant to preserve the power, privileges and interests of white people. Prior to the 1980s the NP was very conservative while after the 1980s, its ideology could be defined as a hybrid of apartheid conservatism and neo-liberalism. The latter is traceable to the USA (Reaganism) and Britain (Thatcherism) and it advocates for minimal state intervention in the economy and in civil society. Thus, since the 1980s, the reforming NP apparently subscribed to a free market system and also believed in the form decentralization of power in the form of federalism. Wheare (1963) explains federalism as

> ... an association of states, which has been formed for certain common purposes, but in which the member states retain a large measure of their

original independence (Wheare, 1963:194).

A federal ideology is evident from instances like the establishment of the tricameral parliament, the creation of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs', and the racial fragmentation of the education system. It was due to their deep regard for an association of states (central, provincial and local) that members of the National Party spoke with passion about issues like intergovernmental relations or the divisions of powers among the various tiers of government. During the early 1990s the NP's passion for the devolution of powers from the central state and the ANC's contrasting passion for a state with more powers frequently threatened to destabilize the sensitive negotiations of the Convention for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (CODESA).

After some backwards and forwards contestation, a break-through, or more appropriately, a political compromise was reached and we now have the nine geographical provinces with some measure of control from the national government. Although there may well be areas of the current arrangement which the NP may not be absolutely pleased with, it looks like the general arrangement of the structures of power is consistent with their federal ideology.

In view of an education system which desperately needed restructuring, due to the credibility crisis which faced it, the NP seemed to have an economic and political project handy. Economic in that the project seemed to have been inspired by the New Right ideology of a free market system. The project was political in that it was inspired by the reformed NP's ideology of neo-liberalism, or the protection of individual and minority group rights. As a result, it constantly argued for the devolution of powers to local schools. The project will become even clearer in my review of the NP's proposals on the restructuring of education. I will start this review by spelling out what appeared to be the NP's dilemma during the period of transition.

Unlike the ANC which was basically a liberation movement representing the intentions of the masses to radically transform all structures in education which perpetuated racial inequalities, the NP government was faced with a

> huge task of maintaining support within the white electorate whose privileged position it [the government] has placed at risk and at the same time gaining support among blacks who are about to be enfranchised (Christie, 1994:45).

It then became apparent that both major players faced dilemmas of different kinds. The ANC faced the dilemma of striking a balance between the aspirations of the historically disadvantaged rank and file members and submitting to the negotiation language of bargaining and consensus. Given other influences during the policy process, like the role of international consultants and limited resources, the ANC also had to redefine its Freedom-Charter-inspired concept of a socialist state.

On the other hand, the NP government faced a dilemma of its own. It had to sustain its legitimacy in the eyes and minds of its mainly white electorate and also hoped to win the support of those it had historically excluded from privileges and education opportunities. Its political project of federalism and neo-liberalism (i.e. its protection for individual and minority rights) was its attempt to balance these contrasting needs.

And, the dilemmas or tensions of the ANC and NP had to be reconciled through the terrain of negotiations about the future of education system. As Christie (1994:48) points out, both sides apparently realized that the current education crisis desperately required a new vision and not existing structures and conceptions. Thus both the ANC and the government researched, formulated and presented proposals on their envisaged education policy options. I think there is one point which stands out from the NP's ideological framework; and it is neo-liberalism. How, then, did

the NP's ideological framework influence or shape its policy position on the notions of decentralization, equity and redress?

The NP and the Democratic Movement's Initial Policy Positions on Decentralization, Equity and Redress

Having reviewed the ideological frameworks of the two major policy actors the democratic movement and the NP, I now find it fit to review their initial education policy positions, particularly with regard to the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. An understanding of the NP and democratic movement's ideological frameworks will serve to shed some light on their education policy proposals or positions. My analysis of the two policy actor's policy proposals will be based on their education policy documents which they released between 1990 and 1994. So, I will first reflect on the emergence of their respective policy documents before concentrating on their policy positions on the notion of decentralization and other related aspects.

The Emergence of Competing Education Policy Proposals from the NP and the Democratic Movement

I find the emergence of their respective policy documents important for two reasons. First, the emergence helps to explain how the earlier policy proposals were arrived at. The circumstances around the emergence of these policy documents is also related to the idea of who the participants were in the formulation of the policy proposals. Secondly, the emergence of the policy documents constitutes a section in the long chain of the process of policy formulation. The second reason becomes even more important for my intention to trace the shifts, shifting influences and tensions during the development of the policy of decentralization in SASA.

In looking specifically at the NP and the Democratic Movement's articulation of the discourse of decentralization, I will be guided by Lauglo's (1985 and 1993) conceptual distinction of decentralization; namely, deconcentration, delegation and devolution. I will assess whether the policy actors had the same stated or unstated rationales for a policy of decentralization. Thus, considering their different historical backgrounds, ideological frameworks and different constituencies, what objective did they hope to accomplish by adopting a policy of decentralization? This question can be adequately answered by first examining the emergence of the education policy documents of the democratic movement and the NP.

Certainly, the policy options of the democratic movement are traceable to the formation of the National Education Co-ordination Committee (NECC) in December 1985. Formed to lead the education struggles, the NECC was actually a national body representing teachers, parents and representatives of educationally disadvantaged students. The formation and subsequent activities of the NECC led to the formal launch of the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) at the NECC's National Congress, held from the 7th to the 9th of December 1990.

Guided by principles such as democracy, non-racism, non-sexism, equality and redress, the NEPI process was essentially an inquiry into feasible policy options for the new system of education in this country. My review of the democratic movement's policy positions will be derived from relevant NEPI reports on education policy options, and also from the ANC's education policy documents, released in 1992.

What is noteworthy about the democratic movement's policy options is that they result from a democratic process which took into consideration the views of trade unions, students and teacher organizations. I am pointing this out for I believe that

the wide consultation of social groups within the democratic movement influenced the movement's socialist point of view on the discourse of decentralization and other important aspects of the policy.

With regard to the NP, one could perhaps begin with its waning powers of repression and torture, which had come to epitomize its rule. The NP's initiative on education policy started taking visible shape with the commissioning, in the midst of the early 1980 school boycotts, of the De Lange investigation by the then state president PW Botha. Following the De Lange investigation was the Minister of National Education's announcement, in 1986, of the development of a ten-year plan. The plan was sparked off by the considerable increase in learner numbers at schools. Basically, the plan envisaged implementation of a full subsidy formula within 10 years. In 1990, the development of the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) was announced. The strategy was essentially intended as a response to the education crisis of the 1980s and the reform discourse of post 1990 (Badat, 1991).

It must also be noted that unlike the democratic movement's initial mass-driven process of policy formulation through NEPI, the NP's process of developing policy proposals was propelled by state officials, academics and researchers. Therefore, "the values and ideology that informed the De Lange Commission and the ERS are not necessarily shared by the mass of South Africans" (Badat, 1991:24). It will be interesting to note how the academics and expert's education policy proposals will influence the articulation of the notion of decentralization. Equally important, I will link Badat's assertions to the NP's neo-liberal ideology and will also look at how this ideology shaped the NP's point of view on the notion of decentralization.

In taking a further step toward its development of education policy proposals, then NP government published, in 1991, its draft Education Renewal Strategy (ERS1) and later, a Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa (CMSA). Also in

1991 and 1992, the NP government passed the Model B and C regulations. These regulations were meant to give the then whites-only schools absolute control over their admission of pupils. As these schools were expected to raise their own operating costs, their school fees were subsequently high. The final version of ERS2 was released in early 1993. The purpose of these documents was to spell out the government's vision for the education system in South African.

Having highlighted how the education policy documents of the major policy actors came about, I think it is logical to now look at the nature of the education policy proposals which emerged from the respective processes outlined. I will specifically focus on how the democratic movement and the NP articulate the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

The NEPI and ERS Proposals

Notwithstanding the varying historical backgrounds, constituencies and ideological frameworks of the two major policy actors, there was evidently no discord on the need to restructure the bureaucratic centralism of the old education system. There was also consensus on the introduction of decentralization in the organization of the envisaged education system. However, there was some debate about the balance between centralism and decentralization. In terms of its vision for the new education system, the then NP government proposed "an education system with a central education authority and regional education authorities that have their own power and decision-making autonomy..." (DNE, 1992:21).

Similarly, the democratic movement states in the NEPI Framework Report that:

> there are those who think the education system has become arid and dehumanizing due to over-organization, especially organization from a distant central state which seems unresponsive to local needs and interests.

> Many people prefer the idea of a radically decentralized system of education organization. Clearly, organization is closely related to accountability and democracy (1993:19).

From the policy actors' assertions, one deduces a thinly veiled divergence in the objective for the adoption of the policy of decentralization. It is their respective choice of words which becomes significant in picking up the divergence. Concepts like 'own power' and 'autonomy', as used by the NP in its policy document, are consistent with neo-liberal tendencies. On the contrary, the democratic movement uses in the NEPI Framework Report the discourses of 'local needs and interests', 'accountability' and 'democracy'. The discourse is clearly consistent with popular democratic socialist tendencies. I will later on elaborate on their different ideological and political objectives for the preference of the policy of decentralization. For now, I need to address their respective predisposition towards the notion of decentralization.

The major policy actors evidently realized that the old bureaucratic centralism was not as effective and efficient as was required. But their preference for decentralization was inevitable; given that the discourse was "an element of an international circulation of ideas about appropriate interpretations of change" (Bray, 1996). So, due to the pressures of globalism, the two education policy actors adopted the policy of decentralization. Noting their similar attraction to the policy of decentralization, one is tempted to ask - did they have the same understanding of the discourse of decentralization? I think in this regard, Lauglo (1985 and 1993)'s conceptual distinction of the notion of decentralization becomes useful. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Lauglo (1985) and Bray (1996) assert that the notion of decentralization should be distinguished by the kind or form of power that is decentralized. Three kinds of powers were outlined; viz., deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Deconcentration is the "...weakest form of decentralization" (Bray, 1996:10). Even though management responsibilities are shifted from the central state to lower levels, the central ministry of education remains very much in control; or as Lauglo puts it, "deconcentrated authority remains state authority" (1995:21). It is evident that both the NP and the democratic movement did not want decentralization to mean deconcentration. For the NP, deconcentration is found to be wanting when it comes to its traditional federal and neo-liberal system of thought because it would not guarantee freedom and individual liberty.

Although some members of the democratic movement may have found deconcentration appealing, in that it would have served to guarantee a strong central state which would unrelentlessly pursue issues of redress and equity, the endorsement of deconcentration would, however, have sounded a death knell for participatory democracy, a long-standing demand of the democratic movement. Also, should the democratic movement have propagated for the weakest form of decentralization, it would still have had international pressures to contend with. These pressures come in the form of global tendencies like deregulation, a free-market system and privatization (financial decentralization). The point I am making is that both the NP and the democratic movement would not have elected to replace the old bureaucratic centralism with deconcentration because this policy choice would have been found globally unappealing, particularly because the international community does not believe in a strong and powerful central state.

The second form of decentralization Lauglo distinguishes is delegation. In terms of delegation the lower levels of government are authorized to carry out prescribed responsibilities on behalf of the central authority. The delegated authority is not guaranteed as it depends on the whims of the central authority. Given that the NP has earnestly been propagating a federal ideology, it is not surprising that its policy documents show a lack of preference for delegation to permeate the envisaged

organization of education. Certainly, delegation does not constitute enough guarantee for self-governance because the recipients of the delegated authority would at all times be banking on the good intentions of the central state.

With regard to the democratic movement, the adoption of a general system of delegation would have left little room for stakeholder participation. It is not my contention that the NP and the democratic movement did not foresee the central authority occasionally delegating some of its authority to the lower levels. The observation I am making is that both policy actors did not propose the notion of decentralization to mean a systematized delegation.

Lauglo's third kind of power is devolution. The latter is described by Bray as

> the most far-reaching form of decentralization in that the transfer of authority over financial, administrative, or pedagogical matters is permanent and cannot be revoked at the whim of central officials (Bray, 1996:10).

It is evident from the general evolution of the policy of decentralization, and in particular, from the policy documents of the NP and the democratic movement, that they both shared "...a commitment to some form of educational decentralization albeit for very different political and ideological reasons" (Badat, 1997:4). The form of decentralization that the policy actors shared is evidently devolution. Certainly, the democratic movement's "idea of a radically decentralized system of education " (NEPI, 1993:19) does not mean deconcentration or delegation. Instead, devolution is clearly implied. The Democratic Movement's embrace of a strong form of decentralization is aimed at furthering the ideological goals of participatory democracy or populist localism.

Likewise, the NP's preference for devolution is implied in its proposal that "... such a system [decentralization] must naturally fit in a new constitutional dispensation" (DNE, 1992). The constitutional dispensation referred to relates to the

geographical decentralization of state authority in this country; otherwise described collectively as federalism. Through federalism, the NP hoped to protect the interests of its privileged minority constituency through notions of individual liberty and parents' ownership of schools.

It should be clear by now, that in terms of their proposals, there was consensus on the organizational shift from bureaucratic centralism to a system of decentralization. There was also consensus on the need for the notion of decentralization to mean devolution of power.

Consensus notwithstanding, the policy actors clearly had divergent political and ideological rationales for the adoption of the policy of decentralization. This divergence is observed from the manner in which they articulate the discourse of decentralization in their respective policy documents. Their different rationales for decentralization have varying implications or effects on the envisaged education system. Perhaps I should now explore the policy actors' rationales and the impact these rationales are likely to have on equity and redress.

Rationales for Decentralization and their Probable Implication for Equity and Redress.

As the process of policy formulation evolved through education policy research, policy positions and negotiations, it became clear that the policy actors differed on the rationale for devolution. I think this difference or tension was to be expected if one considers the policy actors' varying historical backgrounds, ideological frameworks and constituencies with different interests and aspirations. Let us now explore the tensions around the notion of decentralization

With regard to the democratic movement, its historical struggle of resistance largely influenced its point of view on matters of policy. It is therefore important to note

that the democratic movement's resistance politics "operated on an oppositional discourse which drew upon local community support and participation" (Badat, 1997:4). The discourse that Badat refers to was exemplified by activities of mass-based organizations like the Civic Associations, the United Democratic Movement and other anti-apartheid organizations. Common denominators in all these organizations were pickets, marches, rent, bus and school boycotts.

> In the educational sphere, the most poignant illustration of this notion [of grassroots mobilization and struggle] was the call for 'structures of dual power' in the discourses of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) and the formation of Parent, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs) which were conceived as vehicles of community expression (Badat, 1997:4)

The historical involvement of the democratic movement in resistance politics, as demonstrated by activities of its grassroots structures, explains the movement's commitment to representative and participatory democracy. The former and the latter, which are called the 'social democratic rhetoric' by Meadmore (1995), due to their populist appeal, are consistent with the democratic movement's rationale for decentralization. Lauglo (1995) sums up this rationale as a concern for direct and very local democracy. This rationale is not only demonstrated by the democratic movement's long-standing demand for popular structures of governance like PTSAs and SRCs, but is also signified by NEPI's proposed education system with four tiers of governance; namely central, regional, local or district and institutional.

In terms of this proposal, central , regional and local or district levels are, unlike the NP's proposal, to have greater power than the institutional level. While a strong central state is intended to coordinate, regulate or intervene in pursuit of standardization (e.g. accreditations and curriculum development) and the equitable allocation of educational resources, a strong local level is meant to sustain 'populist

localism'. The concept refers to the active and direct involvement of parents and other stakeholders in a collective process of accountability or in cooperating to improve the quality of education at local level.

One can therefore see that above all else, the democratic movement was committed to a political rationale in adopting the policy of decentralization. The same can, however, not be said of the NP's rationale for proposing the education policy of decentralization. Just like the democratic movement, the NP's rationale for decentralization is implied from its consistent system of ideas. The federal ideology which saw the establishment of the tricameral parliament and the creation of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' equally contributed to the NP's commitment to the notion of educational decentralization. The NP's commitment to decentralization is exemplified by its Model B and C Regulations and its Education Renewal Strategy.

> In these regulations, the National Party argued that educational decentralization allowed for greater control of schooling by those who had to pay and that it would enhance efficiency, effectiveness and quality (Badat, 1997:4).

The institutional autonomy implied by Badat's assertion is clearly demonstrated by the NP's conception of devolution, as explained by its proposal for a three tiers of governance; namely, central, regional and institutional. In terms of this proposal, the NP envisaged greater powers for the institutional level of governance. Perhaps the NP's proposal is not surprising if one considers its need to protect the minority interests, as exemplified by its recurrent themes of self-governance, neo-liberalism or individual competitiveness. The NP's position is opposed to the democratic movement' socialist tendencies like 'populist localism'. So, although both the NP and the Democratic Movement agreed on the policy of devolution, they disagreed on the level(s) to which power and authority should be devolved.

The ERS's reference to "freedom of association as the cornerstone for the new education system" (DNE, 1993:17) explains why the NP's notion of decentralization places self-governance at institutional and not local or district levels. The envisaged freedom of association was to see the schools' management councils empowered to take decisions about the education of their children and that of the communities they served. For the NP, this system of education would be the best way to preserve the minorities' educational privileges; particularly if one considers the notion of apartheid residential geography.

The autonomy which was to be accorded to different kinds of schools by the central state depended on whether the schools were state-run, state-aided or private. My point here is that unlike the democratic movement's political rationale for decentralization, the NP apparently equated educational decentralization with what Lauglo (1995) calls 'corporate federalism'. With regard to the objective of this 'management technology' (Meadmore, 1995), the idea is not only to get closer to schools but to also ensure that these schools are managed along the principles of corporate management. Derived from a financial lexicon, the notion of corporate management views schools as business units which assume responsibility for their income and expenditure. However, the notion of corporate management is underpinned by a political ideology as it is consistent with the discourse of federalism.

The shift of financial accountability from the state to the institutions is meant to ensure the saving and sharing of educational costs and to also improve the quality of education. Put otherwise, corporate management is a management technology premised on a market metaphor in education. In terms of this metaphor, education is conceptualized as a commodity which has to be produced by schools, then marketed and sold (through user fees) to consumers (parents). In congruence with the New Right ideology, the competition of individual business units (schools) for

interested consumers is believed to have a positive effect on the quality of education.

It is also worth noting that while the democratic movement views the individual as a member of a community, the NP perceives the individual as a consumer, as reflected in the discourse of 'parental choice', and 'consumer power' (Badat, 1997). The different conceptualizations of the individual further explains the NP's focus on the institutional level and the democratic movement's focus on the local tier of governance. It should also be mentioned that the usage of the market metaphor or business principles in the management of education is not only meant to ensure administrative efficiency and effectiveness but is, most importantly, meant to relate education to the global labor market. I will revisit the issue of the global labor market in my review of the effect of global pressures on the process of education policy formulation in South Africa.

I have thus far been trying to analyze how the democratic movement and the NP articulated the discourse of decentralization in their earlier policy documents. While the democratic movement's embrace of decentralization was meant to achieve participatory democracy and populist localism, the NP embraced decentralization in order to protect minority interests. Thus, while the democratic movement was concerned about the notion of a collective community, the NP was concerned about individual members of the community. However, it also emerged from my analysis that the two policy actors embraced decentralization, defined as devolution, albeit for different ideological and political reasons. But, what contributed to the apparent consensus of the policy actors to both embrace decentralization?

The International Pressures on the Process of Educational Policy in South Africa

Following the declaration by the international community that South Africa's dehumanizing policies of apartheid constituted 'crime against humanity', this country became *persona non grata* to a larger section of the globe. For a considerable period of time, we had to put up with the indignity of cultural, political and economic isolation. However, since the then president F.W de Klerk's 'Rubicon speech' on the 2nd of February 1990, the international community has gradually welcomed South Africa back to its fold. The country has, as a result, become a section of the chain in what is referred to as the "interconnectedness of cultural, political and economic activities across the globe" (Giddens, 1994:4).

As part of the 'integrated whole', our relations and activities are, directly or indirectly, coordinated by international agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. While this integration and international coordination is otherwise referred to as globalisation, Giddens calls it 'action at a distance'. Reference here is made to the way in which economic, cultural and political activities of various nation states are no longer territorially based but are rather interconnected across the globe.

While this notion of 'deterritorialization' (Giddens, 1994) generally views the world as an integrated whole, I think it particularly refers to the global influence of capitalism on the nation states' development and economic growth. The global influence has actually created a situation whereby "Western capitalism has become a reference point against which nation states entertain their policy options" (Taylor et al, 1997:56). Following the pressures of 'Western capitalism', "the policy of decentralization is currently the stated policy of most governments and is the central plank of major international efforts aimed at restructuring education

systems" (Sayed, 1997:1). The 'international efforts' are sponsored by international agencies such as the World Bank and IMF (Prawda, 1993:352).

Equally important, that nation states policies are congruent with international trends is observed from their embrace of "the new right ideologies of smaller governments, competitive individualism and self-interest" (Gewirtz et al, 1995:2). The motivation to adopt the ideology of liberal democracy is apparently to

> protect the rights of individuals, equality of opportunity and the virtues of the free- market, as opposed to values and programs of social democracy, as expressed in the idea of the welfare state or in such documents as the Freedom Charter (Kallaway, 1988:512).

The values and programs of a state-centered model of governance, or social democracy, as articulated in the ANC's Freedom Charter or through notions like 'People's Education for People's Power' and 'the doors of learning and culture shall be open to all', have always been in conflict with the values and programs of liberal democracy (i.e. smaller governments, free-market system and individualism). Elsewhere in this chapter, I have also argued that the reformed NP's ideological framework is evidently consistent with values and principles of neo- liberal democracy.

The point I am trying to illuminate is that there is a correlation between the context of education policy, whether local or international, and the evolution of education policy in this country. The international political trend relates to the role of the state in the provision of education. As the trend is consistent with a minimal state intrusion in the governance and administration of education, it propagates the dispersal of powers to national, provincial and local levels.

The redistribution and sharing of power is meant to enhance greater participation and also to provide local schools with the autonomy to address local needs or demands. There is therefore evident congruence between this international political

trend and the policy of decentralization, as embodied in SASA. The latter serves to disperse powers to national, provincial and local schools. In terms of participation, governing bodies (PTSAs or PTAs) have been afforded greater autonomy in the governance of their schools. The state merely acts from a distance by determining national frameworks and policies.

The congruence I am highlighting suggests that the South African policy actors most took their cue from the international community's overt preference for the policy of decentralization in restructuring the governance and administrative structure of education. This social arrangement for the distribution of power was, above all else, adopted in order to ensure that South Africa becomes part of the integrated international community. It was, however, not only the international political trend which seemed to have influenced the policy actors.

There is also evidence that the international economic trend had a major influence on the policy actors. This trend relates to the social arrangement for production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Giddens 1994). In particular, it relates to the usage or application of the market metaphor in the provision of education; as will become clearer as my argument unfolds.

I think I should introduce this point with what I consider to be obvious, viz., that this country is confronting the huge inequalities of the legacy of apartheid, unemployment, high inflation rate and economic recession (Kallaway 1988). Though we may well be dismissed for naiveté for not taking adequate cognizance of the state of the economy, I was one of those who naturally expected policy actors to embrace a 'social democratic project of transformation' (Kallaway 1995) in their pursuit for social justice, equality and redress. In this regard, I was impressed with the adoption of the Reconstruction and Development Project (RDP) because I believed in the intervention of the central state to, as it were, right the

wrongs of the past; or, put otherwise, 'level the playing field'. My seemingly welfarist illusion is short-lived by Chisholm's announcement that

> across the world, in both developed and developing countries, education systems are being restructured in line with neo-liberal, market-oriented strategies for economic growth and the discrediting of state-centered models of development (Chisholm, 1997:50).

Two deductions can be made from Chisholm's pronouncement. Firstly, that unlike in the case of a social democratic project, the market becomes the arbitrary provider of social justice, employment, and social services and welfare. The state merely provides activities for the market (Gewirtz et al, 1995:3). My major concern here is that the arbitrary operation of the market is likely to compromise goals of equity and redress; particularly because the ideology of the free-market system erroneously assumes that the competition field is level and that all competitors are equal. I will expand on this line of argument when I will be dealing with the notion of choice in education.

The second deduction one can make is that the effacing of the role of the state in a decentralized form of governance equally leads to a shift of financial responsibility from public to private sources; thus foregrounding a market conception of decentralization in education (i.e. cost-recovery, cost-sharing and the improvement of the quality of public education). The adoption of this new right ideology or the metaphor of the market signals how policy actors in South Africa were constrained by the notion of fiscal discipline and also that they intended to link education to economic growth. They were concerned with the success of this economy to compete on the global market.

Just like in the case of the international political trend, the South African policy actors could seemingly not withstand the international economic pressures. The publication of the *White Paper on Privatization and Deregulation* in 1997 was

probably the first major step in compliance. There are other examples as well. The adoption of free compulsory education for the first seven or nine years is almost common in the policy positions of the democratic movement and the NP. One notes that the World Bank's Policy on Primary Education reads

> ... adequate funding of a good-quality primary education system that is widely and equitably available is ... a critical priority for both national budgets and international aid (1988:2-3).

While the democratic movement and the NP may have voluntarily come up with the notion of free compulsory primary education, it is not far-fetched, to assert that the policy actors were not only influenced by the need for global competitiveness, but that they were also anticipating possible international aid. This indicates the influence that the global world has on the formulation of policy.

Kallaway (1988) also remarks that "the New Right policies on education stress vocationalism and training". Thus, the Minister of Education, Prof.Bengu's introductory remarks in the *White Paper on Education and Training* where he writes,

> education and training are central activities of our society.... The government's policy for education and training is therefore a matter of national importance second to none (DoE, 1995:5).

The point being made here is that this *White Paper*, in particular, and the other South African education policies in general, reflect compromises to the international pressures; particularly because notions of vocationalism and training are congruent with the international trend to produce skilled personnel who will raise levels of productivity. The most important issue for this research relates to the relationship between the New Right and the notion of decentralization. Dostal (1990) proclaims that some of the pillars of the New Right are cuts in public

expenditure, privatization and deregulation or reduction of the state's economic role. Though Bowe et al later took issue with the notion of the markets, they argue that "the theory of the market has been sponsored and advanced by a number of neo-liberal think-tanks" (Bowe et al, 1992:25).

The assertions of Dostal (1990) and Bowe et al (1992) serve to highlight a global neo-liberal trend to adopt a system of self-government and the introduction of market forces in education. I think the New Right bless decentralization because it does not only reduce the state's responsibility in the provision of education (in that parents will now take full responsibility in financing and improving the quality of education for their children), but the policy of decentralization is also more responsive and accountable to the consumer.

What worries me, though, is whether the discourse of decentralization, as linked to the notion of the New Right is likely to promote redress and equity or if it is likely to perpetuate the historical imbalances created by apartheid. The next section provides the first step towards addressing this concern.

Decentralization, Equity and Redress

I have always considered the three concepts to be related in that the manner in which the policy of decentralization is articulated is likely to affect the realization of equity and redress. The notions of equity and redress are based on the correct assumption that the previous education policies have resulted in huge disparities between learners, schools and communities. The presumption goes on to say that in setting out to replace the old apartheid legislation, the new education policy proposals should be aimed at eradicating the historical disparities created by apartheid. I will now relate the democratic movement and the NP's policy proposals on decentralization to the possible realization of equity and redress and their different conceptualizations of equity and redress.

With regard to the democratic movement, it proposed, through NEPI, the kind of governance which would serve to strike a balance between centralization and decentralization. The democratic movement's proposal of centralization was influenced by its objective to achieve equity and redress. As the democratic movement represents a constituency which was historically disadvantaged by apartheid legislations, it could surely not have mistaken the constituency's aspiration for the equalization of educational resources (human and material). In declaring its commitment to the equalization of resources, the ANC writes in its policy document:

> in the process of ensuring education and training for all, there shall be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among historically disadvantaged groups such as the youth, the disabled, adults, women, the unemployed and rural communities. (ANC, 1993:4).

On the other hand, the proposal of the democratic movement on decentralization was influenced by its need to provide room for participatory democracy. Thus the democratic movement intended to devolve some power and authority to local communities, in order to get them involved in the running of education.

Equally important, the democratic movement envisaged a mix of private and public financing options to cater for different types of schools. In redressing the educational inequalities, the central state would also ensure that there were nationally determined standards for accreditation and certification. With regard to his models of equality, Farrel (1982) contends that the state would not only ensure that there is equality in terms of access and opportunity, but it would also ensure that there is equality of outcome and attainment; as exemplified by the nationally determined accreditation and certification or as envisaged by a strong central state.

On the other hand, the NP, guided by its federal ideology, did not foresee the state interfering with the liberties of individuals and the autonomy of the regions and institutions. It also has to be noted that the NP subscribed to a free-market system. So, the NP believed that individuals (not as collective members of the community) are free to compete for a product (education) on the basis of the business principles of demand and supply.

Unlike the democratic movement's conception of a strong central state with powers devolved for democratic participation to lower levels, the NP's New Right ideology was based on the notion that the operation of the markets would best provide social justice, services, employment and welfare. The state was not expected to intervene in the operation of the markets but to merely ensure that conditions were conducive for the operation of the markets. In terms of this view, meritocracy supersedes redress and equity. Quiet clearly, the old adage of survival of the (financially) fittest would hold sway if the plight of the disadvantaged communities were to be left to the whims of the markets.

While the notion of decentralization, as framed by the then NP government would most likely perpetuate apartheid patterns of privilege, in that it makes no provision of redress and equity, the ANC's proposals "articulated and gave substance to an alternative discourse of equity, development and education within a broader project of moving towards state power" (Christie, 1994:50). Referring to Davie (1986), Samoff and Jansen, (1991), Buckland and Hofmeyer, (1993), Christie further argues that the international tendency on equity has been consistent with some measure of centralization.

The point being made here is not that the ANC argued for a gigantic central state which would from time to time dictate to other tiers of governance. It was through its Policy Guidelines (1992) that it clarified its vision for a balance between the role

of the central state and that of regional and local authorities. And, it is this proposed balance that distinguishes the democratic movement's proposal from the NP's government's 'freedom of association' thesis or federalism which was guaranteed by the negotiated constitution.

When one considers the NP's government's proposal of the three tiers of governance, its neo-liberal version of decentralization become evident. Particularly that this version of decentralization reflects the state's desire to protect specific interests of a particular races redefined as minorities. If the then NP government's proposal of freedom of association, its Model B and C regulations and its 'own affairs' thesis were anything to go by, then redress and equity are unattainable because there would be no provision to equalize the historical inequalities created by apartheid.

In other words, I tend to agree with the contention that the ERS proposals as they stand, "lend themselves towards perpetuating inequalities by not providing for equalizing and redistributive mechanisms" (Chetty et al, 1993:50). One need not forget too, that the maladministration of apartheid was geographically orchestrated. Therefore, given the management autonomy accorded different types of schools by the ERS proposal, how many white schools (or their management councils) would willingly submit to redistribution and the equalization of resources? What this effectively means is that

> ... in relation to equity policies, both versions of the ERS and CMSA made no attempt to address how their stated commitment to non-racialism, justice and equality might be realized, particularly in a context of profound historical imbalances (Christie, 1994:49).

Though reference is discursively made by the then NP government to deracialize the education system, there was no stated commitment to effective implementation. It could therefore be argued that the state, through its broad and general policy

options merely rearticulated its earlier racial ideologies in new forms. This argument is amplified by the earlier point I made about the state's proposal on the devolution of authority to institutions. It is also argued that the ERS policy text's pronouncements on freedom of association

> served to remove the best resourced, best functioning schools from the public pool and placed them in white hands at the time of transition (Christie, 1994:50).

Chritie's point enhances the claim about the then NP government's intention to preserve white privilege. It is common knowledge that Model B and C schools were amongst the best resourced and best functioning schools. Even though the then NP government argued that it was shifting the running of these kind of schools to those who paid the fees at these schools, the reason provided was a euphemism for removing white schools from the public sector for fear of a drop in standards.

What appears to be a compromise from the side of the NP proposal is its intended commitment to the provision of at least nine years of free and compulsory education. Coming from the state, this represented a major shift since no prior entitlements existed for African children (Chetty et al, 1993d: 51). The government's view on the provision of compulsory education was almost consistent with the one proposed by NEPI.

In conclusion, I have been trying to argue that the major policy actors' different historical backgrounds, ideologies, interests and aspirations of their respective constituencies largely influenced their articulation of the notion of decentralization in the period 1990 to 1994. It was my contention that because of its socialist tendencies, and its historical relationship with grassroots structures, the democratic movement equated the discourse of devolution with participatory democracy or 'populist localism'. This rationale was clearly demonstrated in the democratic

movement's proposal of four tiers of governance (central, regional, local or district level and institutional); with greater power resting at the local or district level.

In contrast, the then NP government, given its federal agenda, and its embrace of a version of neo-liberalism, demonstrated its conception of the policy of devolution with the three tiers of governance (central, regional and institutional), with greater power resting at the institutional level. So, while the NP's notion of decentralization was premised on individual consumers within the respective institutions, the democratic movement's view of decentralization revolved around the conception of the community as a collective group of people.

I also argued that the policy actors' conceptualization of decentralization has implications for the notions of equity and redress. In this regard, it emerged that the democratic movement envisaged a central state which would intervene to ensure the realization of equity and redress. Motivated by its belief in freedom of association and the free-market system, the NP felt that the autonomy of individual institutions should not be tampered with. Instead, the market should be left to distribute social benefits. I also analyzed the effect of international pressures on education policy in South Africa. I raised the contention that the education policy texts are congruent with neo-liberal, market-orientated strategies for economic growth and that they background state-centred model of development (Chisholm 1997:50). I again argued that although compliance with international pressures was inevitable, it also served to perpetuate in a subtle way, the historical inequalities in this country.

Chapter 3 was mainly focused on the process and content of education policy formulation between the period 1990 to 1994. As a strong basis for the next chapter, I have now managed to identify and outline the education policy tensions pertaining to the notions of decentralization, equity and redress between the

democratic movement and the NP. In chapter 4 I will shift my focus to the period between 1994 and 1998.

The objective of the shift in focus is to further trace shifts in the outlined tensions or whether there are shifting influences which are likely to affect the actors' earlier articulation of the notions of decentralization, equity and redress. The shifts and shifting influences will be traced through a textual analysis of policy documents produced between 1994 and 1998.

Chapter 4 will begin with a review of the context of policy influence. I will then move on to an analysis of the context of policy text production. The analysis will take the form of a tracer study and will be aimed at establishing the effect(s) of the context of policy text production on the tensions I have outlined in Chapter 3. In other words I will be aiming to explore the shifts and shifting influences from the context of policy text production which relate to the policy actors' tensions on the notions of decentralization, equity and redress. In the process of doing the tracer study, I hope to make an in-depth analysis of how the key policy text (SASA) articulates the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

CHAPTER 4

THE POST 1994 POLICY CONTEXT AND THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATION POLICY

In Chapter 3, I argued that the emergence and development of policy takes place within the context of certain values, competing objectives and discourses. Put together, these factors constituted the pressures and constraints which confronted the generation of the policy of decentralization in the period between 1990 and 1994. It also became clear that in response to the legacy of inequalities in education, the main policy actors, the democratic movement and the National Party, formulated policy positions which reflect competing needs, aspirations and intentions. As a result of the policy actors' different ideological positions and different expectations from the policy process, the policy texts which evolved from the context of policy text production reflect some tension, ambiguities and textual absence. My analysis in Chapter 3 was influenced by the fact that

> the analysis of policy is concerned with its origin and intentions, the complexities of competing and conflicting values and goals, the explicit and inexplicit representation of objectives which spring from diverse economic and social realities (Silver, 1990:213).

In developing my tracer study of the evolution of a decentralized education policy in South Africa, I analyzed in Chapter 3 how the transition period (1990 to 1994) influenced or shaped the policy actors' intentions, competing and conflicting values and goals. It should now be clear that the transition context has had a particular influence on the emergence of the policy options or positions of, in particular, the

two major policy actors, namely, the ANC (with its alliance partners) and the National Party (which shared the same federal ideology with parties like the Democratic Party (DP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Having analyzed in Chapter 3 the transition context (in South Africa) as the context of policy influence, I will now (in Chapter 4) analyze the period after the 1994 elections as yet another context of policy influence. In other words it is my objective in this chapter to analyze how the post 1994 context affected the education agenda, the policy priorities, the discourses and lexicon of the education policy. Central to my analysis is the question: how did the developments within the context of education policy influence and the context of education policy text production affect the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress? Of equal importance to my research are the shifts, shifting influences, tensions, continuities and textual silences which may or may not be reflected in the education policy texts which were produced from the context of policy text production.

As in the other chapters, my analysis will be guided by Ball's model of policy generation and policy analysis. Thus, I will consider the evolution of SASA as a 'cycle' of policy formulation, which is broken up into conceptual 'moments' or contexts (Bowe et al, 1992). Of specific relevance to my analysis will be the contexts of policy influence and the context of text production. Mindful that each context or arena involves struggle, compromise and ad hocery (Ball, 1993:16), and also that policy texts are rarely the work of single-authors or a single process of production (Ball, 1993:11), I intend to analyze the contexts of policy influence and the context of policy text production in order to understand the forces that have influenced or shaped the text and discourse of the SASA and its antecedent policy documents.

As Ball (1990:23) would put it, "logically, then policies can not be divorced from interests, from conflict, from domination or from justice". I will therefore focus my analysis on how the series of policy texts, produced after 1994, articulate the discourses of devolution, equity and redress. In the process of my analysis, I will look at the forces which contributed to the nature of particular discourses in the education policy texts.

I think an overview of the context of policy influence will serve to situate my textual analysis of policy documents produced after 1994.

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY INFLUENCE

"Context refers to the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of a specific policy" (Bowe et al, 1992:45). The antecedents and pressures referred to by Bowe et al denote the economic, social and political factors which determine the nature of issues to be placed on the policy agenda. In other words, the education policy agenda is largely influenced by its historical context and other related policy initiatives.

Surely, the policy players constitute an important aspect of the policy context. In the interest of a focused analysis, I will narrow the policy players to two main conceptual groups, as represented by the ANC and the National Party. Since the policy-making process in South Africa made no provision for the formal statutory participation of progressive mass-based education organizations like organized teachers' unions, the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the ANC, together with its alliance partners, COSATU and the SACP, represented in the policy process, a collective vision of the mass democratic movement. The latter was composed of sectors like parents, workers, students and NGOs. Organized teachers were represented by the

South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). In its representation of these sectors, the ANC was guided by the values and principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter. For the purpose of my analysis, the democratic movement will be regarded as a homogeneous group, on the basis of its commitment to displace apartheid education. Notwithstanding my perception of a homogeneous ANC and NP, an attempt will also be made to spell out the internal tension within the two main policy players. I will for instance look at the internal tension between the old and new trends, as exemplified by, amongst others, the tension between the old and new bureaucrats.

An analysis of the context of policy influence will be incomplete without an examination of the role played by the private sector, and in particular, the global/international forces. Even though I have already analyzed, in chapter 3, the role played by the IMF and World Bank in influencing the formulation of education policy I will continue to reflect on this role in the process of my analysis.

The theme of transition, its period and context, served to shape the emergence and development of the ERS and NEPI texts. By the same token, the April 1994 elections in this country, and the subsequent formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU), created a new political landscape which was to have a major effect on educational transformation in general, and in particular, policy formulation.

As a result of the elections, members of the ANC alliance assumed the majority positions of responsibility and power within the structures of the GNU. Equally important, the CODESA compromises, otherwise known as the 'Sun-set' clauses of the Interim Constitution, served to protect the incumbents of senior and middle management of government departments. The compromise position then created a scene of two camps within the same structures, composed of the newly elected but

inexperienced political office bearers, and the old, but experienced bureaucrats. So, though the elections and the formation of the GNU effected a decisive shift in the location of political power, the know-how and expertise of the operation of the education system still rested largely with the old bureaucrats. The situation was tantamount to a political stage on which internal ideological tensions or political contestation between the National Party aligned bureaucrats and the ANC aligned members was to unfold. The implied tensions were, however, not only between the newly empowered members of the ANC alliance and the old bureaucrats, but there were also internal tensions between

> the ANC aligned bureaucrats willing to accommodate the existing structures and adopt a cautious and gradual attitude towards change, and the advocates of radical change of [apartheid] policies (Greenstein, 1996:5).

The internal tension Greenstein alludes to was also demonstrated by the newly acquired lexicon. The language of those who had a gradual attitude to change was punctuated by words like 'continuity', 'stability' and 'consensus' while the advocates of radical change were fond of technical jargons like 'reconstruction', 'capacity-building' and 'stakeholders' (Greenstein 1996:6).

The scenario I have just outlined acutely highlights that unlike what 'the people' expected,

> negotiations were less about the transfer of power but more about a negotiated political settlement underwritten by a series of agreement, pacts and accords covering a variety of social spheres (Badat, 1995:141).

It is also true that as opposed to the total displacement of the then unpopular NP government, negotiations were about incremental reform and the reconstruction of government structures and institutions. Therefore, the formation of the GNU created a new political context within which the ANC's political power shifted from

mass-based structures of the democratic movement to the government institutions and structures. As a result of the ineffectual displacement of 'the regime', elected members of the ANC alliance's conceptualization of change was diluted by the politics of consensus and alliance. In making this point, Kahn (1996) argues:

> it must be realized that the very nature of the GNU demands a much greater level of political compromise than is usual, and this colors the policy environment accordingly (1996:281).

As regards the policy environment, or the formation of policy, the ANC alliance partners were certainly not experienced in the approach of research, drafting policy options and then guiding them through a passage of elaborate governmental procedures. Also, the ANC alliance partners got to realize that

> the main problem with many proposals for restructuring and transforming the education system in the past, is that they have not been framed in relation to the political and economic development strategies (Wolpe, 1991:87).

In apparently considering the economic and other political forces referred to by Wolpe, the ANC alliance partners shifted from what could be called political idealism. Thus, the alliance partners had to reconsider welfarist tendencies which were guided by values and principles enshrined in the Freedom Charter. In particular, the rhetorical discourse of 'People's Education', which gained prominence in the 1908s, was abandoned in favor of what is "desirable and possible in the process of educational change" (Badat, 1995). Put otherwise, the notion of 'People's Education' was replaced with a discourse of integrating education and training, "as a major vehicle for human resource development" (Johnson, 1995:132).

The ANC's embrace of pragmatism in formulating policies which were desirable and possible was influenced by two factors. Firstly, the newly acquired political

power brought about some degree of ambivalence within the ANC. While the political power provided it with an opportunity to realize the long-standing needs and aspirations of its historically disadvantaged constituency, it (the ANC) equally had a duty, in the interest of stability, to allay the fears of the historically advantaged tax-paying citizens of this country. Essentially, the shift in political power redefined the role of the ANC as a leading member of the GNU.

Secondly, in the interest of economic growth, the ANC had to reconsider the appropriateness and effectiveness of its socialist agenda, as opposed to market related reforms in general and education specifically.

> Like all other developed and developing countries, education systems are being restructured along neo-liberal, market-oriented strategies for economic growth and the discrediting of state centered models of development (Chisholm, 1997:51).

Perhaps the ANC's economic pragmatism was best demonstrated by its strategic shift from a people-centered program, popularly known as the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). The latter was initially described by the ANC as an

> integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilize our people and our country's resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future (ANC, 1994:1).

Clearly, the strong social reorganization theme articulated in the RDP relates to the notions of an increased role of the state in society. However, I think that the role of the state is not without its contradictions. "While it must work towards its own growth and reproduction, it must at the same time be working as a popular democratic state that is in the interest of the people" (Gordon, 1989:164). Gordon's assertion is consistent with a relative autonomy theory. Adherents of this theory, amongst others, Gordon (1989), Codd (1988), Fritzell (1987), perceive a

"functional connection between state activity and the structural problems of a capitalist social formation" (Offe, 1984:89). With regard to this theory, the state's dependence on the reproduction of capitalism is explained in terms of the perceived correspondence between education and the economy. The correspondence is perceived in the light that the economy depends on the relevance of education for its growth, and that education has to be sustained by a healthy economy.

It is not within the scope of this research to evaluate the sustainability or otherwise of the relative autonomy theory. I am simply borrowing a logic or conceptual tools from this theory in order to highlight that it is mainly due to the state's precarious mediatory role in the economic imperatives of capital and the political imperatives of civil society (Codd, 1988) that the RDP was abandoned in favor of a macro-economic strategy called the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). It has to be stressed that the shift from the RDP to GEAR was quite dramatic; particularly if one takes into consideration the fact that the RDP, deriving its ideology from the socialist and welfarist spirit of the Freedom Charter, revolves around the need for the state to intervene in the economy in the interests of equality (nationalization), redistribution of wealth, and secure social policy and educational provision for all (Kallaway, 1988: 517).

GEAR, however, is synonymous with global or neo-liberal tendencies like individual ownership, private entrepreneurship, and the privatization and deregulation of the free market economy (Kallaway, 1988). Actually, the government's shift to GEAR happened in June 1996. The shift was influenced by constraints and competing liberal and welfarist objectives of the major role players in the GNU. The international pressures, as propagated by institutions like the World Bank and IMF, played a major role in influencing policy making in South Africa. Likewise, the ANC's policy shift from RDP to GEAR is traceable to the

said international pressures. Amongst themes permeating the ANC's macro-economic strategy, GEAR, are the reduction of fiscal deficit, cost-sharing and incentives to stimulate investment, higher economic growth and significant job creation. (Briggs, 1997). There are also indications that the shift to GEAR was not an impulsive reaction from the state. While visiting (in 1991) the University of Pittsburg as a guest of Tony O'Reilly, the then ANC president, Mr. Mandela, is reported to have said:

> the rates of economic growth we seek cannot be achieved without important inflows of foreign capital. We are determined to create the necessary climate which the foreign investor will find attractive (Mail and Guardian, November 6 to 12 1998:16)

It is also worth noting that shortly after having revealed the GEAR strategy to parliament, the then Deputy President Mbeki provocatively remarked to the media - "call me a Thatcherite" (Sunday Times, June 16, 1996). I contend that his provocation amounts to a public acknowledgment of how the pressures of globalization had effectively swayed the ANC from its traditional socialist approach to a neo-liberal, market-oriented strategy for economic growth. However, the ANC still tried to maintain, in theory, a commitment to equity.

With regard to education, the adoption of the GEAR strategy signaled the introduction of the market metaphor of producers (individual schools), the product (quality education) and the consumers (parents). As will be seen later during my analysis of the context of policy text production, the embrace of such a 'New Right' ideology was meant to ensure that education policies in South Africa are congruent with the international trends.

However, it seems that the South African Communist Party (SACP)'s Jeremy Cronin was somewhat uneasy about economic growth relying entirely on the whims of the markets. While he, the Finance Minister Manuel and other government

officials visited the Washington based World Bank and Michel Camdessus, the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Cronin, in a manner that is to me, witty and sinister, said:

> they [bankers] came into our offices with laptops, filled in each figure - for inflation, foreign exchange controls, all the macro-economic numbers - then hit 'Control F1', and the answer would determine whether the country was acceptable (Mail and Guardian, November 6 to 12, 1998:16).

The point demonstrated by Cronin's implied misgivings about globalization is that while it may be important for South Africa to be 'acceptable' to the global economy, by way of subscribing to the international economic trends, power plays a crucial role in determining the acceptance or economic survival of countries. In other words, "Western capitalism has become a reference point against which nation states entertain their policy options" (Taylor et al, 1997:56). So, in order for South Africa to be accepted and thus participate in the integrated economy of the globe, her models of education, for instance, had to be market-based. This, despite the fact that markets are neither natural nor neutral, or as Ball would put it, despite the "imperfections of the markets" (1993b:9) I understand Ball to be saying that the operation of the markets does not take into consideration the historically uneven field of competition. It would therefore be interesting to explore (in my analysis of the context of policy text production) how the ANC-dominated GNU will propose to strike a balance between, on the one hand, the monetarist policies (Kallaway, 1998) which subscribe to the arbitrary operation of the markets, and, on the other, the implementation of policies aimed at redress and equity. In other words, I hope to establish in my analysis of the context of policy text production how education policy documents reconcile the adoption of monetarist tendencies with the need to, as it were, level the education playing field, otherwise referred to as redress and equity.

Perhaps I should conclude my analysis of the context of policy influence by looking at a major event which in my opinion, singularly influenced the tone, tenor and text of the education policy in South Africa.

The Effect of the 1994 Elections on the Process of Education Policy Formulation in South Africa

The 1994 elections effectively sounded a death knell to the 19 racially fragmented education departments and led to the installation and establishment of a single non-racial Ministry of Education. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the Draft White Paper (which I will later on explore), the Draft White Paper outlines the guiding values and principles of the new Ministry of Education as access, non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress (DoE, 1994: 11-13).

The new Ministry was organized along the notion of a devolved institutional management, as enshrined in the Interim Constitution. In terms of the federal discourse, the national ministry would formulate the national policies, norms and standards according to which the nine provincial sub-systems would run their education affairs. The national ministry would also be responsible for provisioning, be it financial, material or human (DoE, 1995).

The immediate responsibility of the new national ministry was to enact official education policies, guided by the values and principles referred to earlier. In enacting official policies the ministry had to comply with procedures of policy formulation, and implementation. The procedures constituted a major shift from the manner in which the pre-1994 interactions took place between 'the regime' and 'the people' (Greenstein, 1996). According to Greenstein, the two groups were then regarded as internally homogeneous and mutually exclusive. The shift in the

political landscape brought both 'the regime' and 'the people' together in a process of policy formulation. The new process was seen as

a) ... a process internal to the functioning of the state involving contestation over the locus of decision-making powers; [and]

b) ... as a process of knowledge production, in the course of which it is determined who is considered to be a legitimate producer, and what are considered to be useful and valid products of knowledge (Greenstein, 1996:1)

For the purpose of my analysis, the process referred to in (a) above takes place within the context of policy influence. The process referred to in (b) relates to the next section of my analysis, viz., the process of policy text production. Thus far, I have been trying to outline the nature of the context of policy influence. The contestation Greenstein refers to is inevitable in that policy actors with competing interests contest the definition of the social purpose or vision of education. The policy actors' relations of power, their articulation of narrow interests and their contestation of dogmatic ideologies (Bowe et al, 1992) will lead to the initiation and construction of policy discourses which are to permeate the evolution of a particular policy.

In finally concluding my analysis of the process of policy influence, I need to reiterate that my intention was to outline the environment within which the gestation of the SASA occurred; and how this context was to affect the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. I think I have been able to demonstrate thus far that policies emerge and are developed within the context of particular values, interests, pressures and constraints. The 1994 elections effectively altered the political landscape, in that they led to the establishment of an ANC-dominated GNU. The shift confronted the ANC with the political and economic realities which were to dilute the ANC's radical perception of transformation. First, following one of the Democratic Alternative for South Africa

(CODESA)'s compromise, which guaranteed positions of white bureaucrats, the ANC had to co-exist with the experienced old bureaucrats in the GNU. Second, the ANC had to shift form its traditional politics of confrontation and demands to the politics of consensus and alliance; most particularly because as leading members of the GNU, the ANC was no longer exclusively accountable to its 'popular constituencies' (Greenstein, 1996) but was now accountable to all the citizens of the country.

Third, the ANC had to learn new ropes of policy research, policy formulation and policy implementation. So, power shifted from the rank-and-file members of the democratic movement to departmental committees and elaborate departmental procedures. In engaging with the old bureaucrats, members of the ANC had to contend with the language of research, consensus and alliance; and this had disastrous implications for the long cherished socialist aspirations. Fourth, as the ANC, like other modern governments, could not resist the global tide, it had to reconsider some of the Freedom Charter-inspired welfarist tendencies like the rhetoric of 'People's Education', as well as its (the ANC) macroeconomic strategy, as articulated by the RDP. The latter was abandoned in favor of GEAR, a neo-liberal perception of reform and economic growth.

The four elements I have summarized constitute the context of policy influence. It is within this (post 1994) context that the emergence and development of education policy took place. My assertion is that the outlined context of influence would affect the text and discourse of the education policy. Notions of decentralization, equity and redress are shaped by the nature of the context of policy influence. In addition, my analysis of the next context, the context of policy text production, will further reveal several other factors which had an effect on how education policy articulates the discourse of decentralization, equity and redress.

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY TEXT PRODUCTION.

It is at this stage of the evolution of policy that social agency or social intentionality (Ball, 1993) of policy becomes evident. In other words, the influence(s) emerging from the context of policy influence begin to take shape at this level of policy generation. Put differently, it is within the context of policy text production that the agents (policy actors) construct a representation of the social intentions of policy in the form a policy text. Given the different political and ideological intentions of the agents, the textual construction will be characterized by struggles and compromises. The latter and the former are inevitable because encoding a text involves making choices in values and principles. In addition, the whole process of meaning production involves different authors of policy texts.

When policy formulation enters the conceptual arena of policy text production, policies take the dual conceptual form of text and discourse. It is in this context that agents selectively use signifiers (words or language) to produce coherent meanings (discourse). So, meaning production or textual construction is not quite a neutral activity but an essentially ideological exercise. After all, a policy "is the authoritative allocation of values: policies are the operational statements of values, statements of perceptive intent" (Kogan, 1975:55). In this regard, I share Ball (1993)'s sentiments that values do not float free of their social context. The social context involves the policy actors (the ANC and the NP) with different political and ideological expectations from the policy process. Considering that policies are not authored by one person and are also not a product of a single process, it is understandable that the construction of text with the idea of producing 'truth' and 'knowledge' (as discourse) cannot be separated from interests, conflict, domination and justice (Ball, 1990).

I will focus my analysis on a series of successive policy texts which were produced after 1994. The analysis will end with a key policy text, the SASA, 1996. The purpose of my analysis is to find answers to my research question, namely, how did the education policy process affect the representation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress? In my analysis of the evolution of education policy in the period 1990 to 1994, I have established that the main policy actors, the democratic movement and the NP articulated different discourses of decentralization, equity and redress in their respective policy documents. Inspired by its socialist tendencies, as enshrined in the Freedom Charter, the democratic movement's representation of decentralization was equated with participatory democracy or populist localism. Put otherwise, the democratic movement articulated the discourse of decentralization in terms of a balance between the roles of central state and the community. While emphasis on the community was aimed at entrenching participatory democracy, emphasis on a stronger central state was aimed at establishing redress and equity. The achievement of these goals were to be guided by the nationally determined standards and were to be funded through a combination of private and public financing options.

On the contrary, the NP's articulation of the discourse of decentralization was inspired by its political ideology of federalism. The NP equated decentralization with corporate management, in terms of which autonomy and more powers were to be devolved to individual institutions. Unlike the democratic movement's view of a community as a collective concept, the NP perceived the community as a composition of individual consumers whose 'buying power' determines the quality of the product (education) for their children. As a result, individual institutions would compete for consumers in order to sustain their quality services.

I have further argued that the NP's version of decentralization has served to introduce the New Right tendency of a market metaphor in education. In terms of

this global neo-liberal perception of decentralization, autonomy and meritocracy supersede the achievement of redress and equity. I subsequently concluded this section by contending that the NP's use of the signifier, decentralization, is likely to perpetuate patterns of privilege as it (the NP) has demonstrated no strong commitment to redress and equity.

In this section, I will be analysis how the production of a series of policy texts reflects the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. The policy texts to be analyzed are *the White Paper on Education and Training (31 March 1995),* the *Draft White Paper on Education and Training* (23 September 1994), *Report of the Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools* (31 August 1995), *Education White Paper 2*, entitled *The Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools* (14 February 1996) and the *South African Schools Act* (15 November 1996).

The White Paper on Education and Training (15 March 1995)

> For the first time in South Africa's history, a government has the mandate to plan the development of the education and training system for the benefit of the country as whole and all its people (DoE, 1994:9).

The newly elected ANC-led GNU correctly claims the legitimacy to transform the education system by formulating education policies on an inclusive basis. Guiding the process of policy formulation are values and principles like equality, redress and equity, democracy, liberty, justice and the provision of quality education (DoE, 1994). The WPET represents the new Ministry of Education's attempt to incorporate education and training, and to restructure the organization and governance of the education system.

Consistent with the spirit of the GNU and the notion of participatory democracy, the WPET was produced within the context of policy text production, following processes of consultation and public hearings involving roleplayers and stakeholders like "teachers and other educators, students, parents religious and other community leaders, education and training NGO's, and officials in the new education departments..." (DoE 1995:5). It has to be noted that naturally, these groups represent different values and interests, and that the group' struggles and compromises resulted in the policy text which is now referred to as the WPET. Given the interaction of the different role-players and stakeholders, how does the WPET articulate the discourse of decentralization, equity and redress? For decentralization, I will look at Chapter Eight (the National and Provincial Powers in Education and Training) while for equity and redress, I will look at Chapter Twelve (School Ownership, Governance and Finance).

National and Provincial Powers in Education and Training

The WPET makes an observation that the previous education system was characterized by a top-down, authoritarian and bureaucratic governance in all the departments. In an attempt to restructure the education system in line with the federal constitutional principle which stipulates the allocation of powers between national and provincial levels (or Co-operative Government as Chapter 3 of the Constitution states), the WPET states that the

> new system of education will be a single national system which is largely organized and managed on the basis of nine provincial sub-systems. The constitution has bested substantial powers in the provincial legislatures and governments to run educational affairs (other than universities and technikons) subject to national policy frameworks (DoE, 1995:47).

The amalgamation of the previously ethnically fragmented education departments into a single, non-racial national system of education signals the Ministry's clear

departure from a discriminatory system of education. It is also apparent that the Ministry of Education is committed to the form of decentralization conceptualized as devolution. The latter is defined as

> the most far reaching form of decentralization in that the transfer of authority over financial, administrative, or pedagogical matters is permanent and cannot be revoked at the whim of central officials (Bray, 1996:10).

That the powers evolved to the provinces will not be 'revoked at the whim of central officials' is guaranteed by the fact that "the constitution has vested substantial powers in the provincial legislature and governments to run educational affairs..." (DoE, 1995:47).

The WPET's articulation of devolution signals a shift from the ANC's earlier preference for a strong central state or what de Clercq (1997) calls 'the socialist rhetoric of the early days'. The shift is perhaps not surprising because unlike the NEPI process and other policy documents released by the democratic movement which were basically people-driven, the WPET is a product of a complex interaction of role-players and stakeholders with varied values and interests. The tension and complex interaction during the policy process was not only between groups of role-players and stakeholders but was also within the groups. For instance, there was some tension between, on the one side, the newly empowered ANC members of the GNU, who were themselves divided into the advocates of radical change and those with a gradual attitude to change. On the other side, there were conservative and moderate NP adherents, as well as the old or experienced bureaucrats who owed their allegiance to the NP. In the context of the interaction between the two supposedly homogeneous groups (the NP and democratic movement), tension became apparent from two schools of thought. The first was a social democratic redistributive discourse or a radical socialist discourse, both inherited from the Freedom Charter and the People's Education movement. In

contrast to this was a school of thought permeated with neo-liberal discourses like devolution, autonomy or freedom of association. The ANC' shift, or most specifically compromise on the role of the state is reflected in the manner in which the discourse of devolution is articulated, viz. "provincial legislatures and governments were to run educational affairs (other than universities and technikons) subject to the national policy framework" (DoE, 1995:47). So, the ANC's preferred intervention of the state in pursuit of redress and equity is counterbalanced by the envisaged autonomy of the regions and institutions. The ANC' shift or compromise can not only be traced to the forces or struggles within the context of policy text production but was (the shift) also in compliance to the global pressures on the 'appropriate' interpretations of change (Bray 1996). In other words the ANC had to reconsider its preference for a strong role of the state because "the policy of educational decentralization is currently the stated policy of most governments and it is the central plank of major international efforts aimed at restructuring education systems" (Sayed, 1997:1).

For the NP, the discourse of devolution, as articulated in the WPET, amounts to continuity. It must be noted that the discourse of devolution is consistent with the ideology of federalism, as propagated by political parties like the NP, the DP and the IFP. So, for the NP in particular, the discourse of devolution in education has long been on its education agenda. This discourse was a common denominator in the De Lange Commission (in the 1980's), the ERS1 and ERS2 (1991 and 1993) and the Model B and C regulations (1991 and 1992). Stated differently, the NP has always envisaged

> ... an education system with a central education authority and regional education authorities that have their own power and decision-making autonomy... such a system must naturally fit in a new constitutional dispensation (DNE, 1992:42).

In terms of this view, the role of the education state in education is almost effaced as more or substantial powers lie with the provinces. But perhaps the envisaged devolution would best be understood in terms of the rationales which informed it.

Rationales for Decentralization

Political Rationale

Central to a political rationale is the redistribution of power from the central state in order to enhance participation of other levels in decision-making. However, the political rationale for decentralization could also be used as a means by which certain groups

> seek to create buffers against central authority when they expect to lose power. For example, in its negotiations preceding majority rule in South Africa, the National Party sought to reduce the power of the central state and to devolve much power to provincial governments (Lauglo, 1995:8)

The claim made by Lauglo (1995) is certainly not far-fetched if one considers the ideological rationale of decentralization.

Ideological rationale

This rationale "focuses on an analysis of the sets of beliefs and values that underpin the policy of educational decentralization" (Sayed, 1997:3). The adoption of the notion of devolution by policy actors is in line with the dominant or global discourse of the New Right. In terms of this discourse, "the satisfaction of individual needs is a precondition for any ordering of society" (Sayed, 1997:3). Related to the dominant discourse of the New Right is the ideology of liberalism.

> Central to the liberal traditions belief in the value of freedom from restraint, of individualist 'liberties' values which historically were secured by struggle against state absolutism, against traditional social ascription and against the cultural hold of established religious orthodoxy (Lauglo, 1995:10).

The New Right discourse and the 'liberal tradition' have not only been at the center of the NP's education policy positions but are currently articulated in the WPET in the form of 'school ownership' and the establishment of governing bodies (DoE 1995). In essence, schools were to be 'owned' and governed by parents who were financing the education of their children. As I argued elsewhere in my analysis of the context of policy influence, the NP's values of individualist liberties are in conflict with the ANC's preferred political rationale, viz., populist localism, explained as the "advocacy of direct and very local democracy" (Lauglo, 1995:13). This apparent textual conflict will later on be linked to my analysis of the discourses of equity and redress.

Administrative Rationale

The administrative rationale is viewed as a "focus on structural issues relating to the education system, and are principally concerned with the way in which educational resources are distributed, managed and utilized" (Sayed, 1997:2). In pursuit of efficiency and quality in education, the administrative rationale makes provision for the market metaphor in education, as exemplified by discourses of choice or user fees, competition, consumers and producers. Thus the market metaphor in education together with the notion of 'management by objective'(efficient use and monitoring of resources) (Lauglo 1995), are represented as partnership between the state and the parents.

Another way of looking at the notion of partnership could be in terms of the 'new deal' which was introduced in the Scottish education in the 1990s. The 'new deal' was interpreted as the government's way of relieving itself of the fiscal overload. Hartley summarizes it thus

> faced with fiscal overload, the government is seeking to curb expenditure in such a way that both professionals and parents come to be complicit in that

endeavor, even though it may have adverse consequences for some of them (Hartley, 1994:126).

It should be recalled that the new Ministry of Education was confronted with an enormous task of equalizing the racially and ethnically skewed per capita expenditure without necessarily dropping the 'standards' in education. Added to this responsibility is the provision of free and compulsory education for the first ten years or so. Considering too, that the state had to maintain and build new schools, equating partnership with the 'new deal' is indeed not inconceivable.

As I round off my analysis of the WPET's articulation of the National and Provincial Powers in Education and Training, I need to highlight that the WPET represents the new Ministry of Education's attempt to strike a balance between the aspirations of citizens who were historically disadvantaged by the discriminatory system of education, and the fears of those citizens who benefited from the past education system. While one group's aspirations were articulated in terms of social democratic redistributive discourse or radical discourse, as inherited from the Freedom Charter, the other group's fears were articulated in terms of neo-liberal discourses like devolution, autonomy or freedom of association. The whole idea of a negotiated political settlement, as opposed to the total displacement of the previous regime, created space for education policy players or stakeholders to engage in contestation and compromises over the competing discourses I have referred to. Likewise, the very composition of policy players and stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students, parents, NGO's, business, old and new bureaucrats) provided room for appeasement as these groupings did not only have different backgrounds, values and principles, but most importantly, had different expectations from the same education policy process.

In addition, the expectations of stakeholders and policy players had to comply with global trends on policies in general, and education policies in particular. In other words, while the democratic movement would have liked the WPET to adopt

a radical socialist discourse, following the historical inequalities experienced by the majority of its members, this discourse had to be counterbalanced with international trends or what is desirable, achievable or affordable. Subsequent to these forces, the WPET opted for a neo-liberal notion of redistributing power from the central state to the institutions, effectively guaranteeing them autonomy within national parameters. That the WPET backgrounds populist localism in favour of autonomy or freedom from restraint, and yet provides room for the central state to formulate national frameworks implies a conciliatory or ambivalent tone. It is probably for this reason that Kruss (1997) and in particular Mkwanazi et al. contend that the

> WPET became increasingly contradictory because of its efforts to appease department officials disturbed by the unfamiliar direction education policies are taking (Mkwanazi et al, 1995).

The contention should be understood in terms of the diverse values and interests of role-players and stakeholders who interacted to influence the meaning of policy texts which were produced within the context of policy production. The conciliatory tone of the WPET is also implied from its proposals on the envisaged funding of the education system.

Funding of the Education System

It does not take an exceptional memory to recall that the per capita expenditure of the previous education system was ethnically and racially skewed. It is precisely for this reason that the WPET expresses "the need for a managed process of change" (DoE 1995:68). However, change has meant different things for policy actors within the context of policy text production, as it has been seen with regard to the discourse of decentralization. While the ANC, influenced by its sense of the concept of a community, articulated decentralization in terms of socialist tendencies like participatory democracy and populist localism; the NP, influenced by its sense of individual liberties, articulated it (decentralization) in neo-liberal themes like autonomy and freedom of association from restraint. So the same forces which

influenced the representation of the discourse of decentralization were to influence the WPET's proposals on the notion of funding.

In keeping with the federal discourse of the WPET, funding of the education system is a provincial competency. However, it has to take place within the national parameters. Also, funding has to be guided by guarantees of Fundamental Rights like equality, non-discrimination (except for purposes of redress) and equal access to educational institution. The idea of a provincial competency, with its focus on individual liberties somewhat dilutes the central state's interventionist role of equalizing educational resources. For instance, based on the Ministry of Education's belief that "schools must be owned by the communities they serve" (DoE, 1994:50) more powers and autonomy were to be devolved to institutions. Governing bodies were expected to determine user charges and to also ensure that individual members of the school communities, except in exceptional cases, pay such fees. My contention is that the increased provincial powers and authority reduces the central state's role in equalizing education resources.

In particular, the issue of the ex-Model C schools has proved to be contentious when it comes to the formulation of policy by the new Ministry of Education. The Model C schools were by far the best resourced, be it financially, physically or in terms of qualified teachers. The schools also boasted the lowest pupil / teacher ratios. While teachers' salaries are subsidized by the state, fee charges and sponsorships are handled by an elected governing body. In actual effect, "the Model C system has involved a radical devolution of state ownership and management to parent governing bodies" (DoE, 1994:49). So, in terms of financial resources, the quality of the teachers, class sizes and the power devolved to governing bodies, Model C schools were in a class of their own as compared to state schools. In view of these disparities, the WPET remarks:

> the present pattern of organization, governance and funding of schools contravenes the right to equality and non-discrimination which the constitution guarantees. It is dysfunctional and cannot continue unchanged (DoE, 1995:68).

Although long overdue, the Ministry of Education's pronounced determination to transform the skewed pattern of organization, governance and funding of schools is not as easily achievable as it may appear to be. By the Draft WPET's own admission, the communities who benefited from the previous regime's racially and ethnically skewed education system "may be particularly apprehensive about what is in store" (DoE, 1994:50).

> Equally, parents, teachers and students who have had to cope with appalling conditions, the result of decades of under-resourcing, instability, wasted human potential and low morale have high expectation from a government they believe rightly is committed to redress (DoE, 1994:50).

I am actually building the contention that the WPET's silence on the future of Model C schools denotes a degree of tension between the state's intention to redress historical disparities and the need to allay the fears of those communities whose privileges are traceable to the previous government's racially skewed per capita expenditure. The other tension complicating the Ministry of Education's resolve to redress historical inequalities is its policy provision which encourages school governing bodies to maintain the quality of education by raising additional resources through, for instance, sponsorships. It must also be noted that devolution guarantees the parents and governing bodies ownership of the Model C schools. In the context of South Africa, Model C schools are owned by middle class parents (who are mostly white). Therefore, their autonomy as guaranteed by the policy of devolution, will ensure that the schools' best resources escape redress and equity.

In addition, if one considers the management skills and competence of middle-class governing bodies to raise sponsorships and to encourage and collect fee charges, it

is obvious that the historically best resources of the school will be enhanced; thus effectively perpetuating the historical inequalities that the state sets out to eradicate.

There is therefore some ambiguity or inconsistency between the proposed New Right aligned funding of the education system, and the need to eliminate historical disparities in education. While state-aided schools will rightly benefit from the state's equitable allocation of resources, the autonomy and authority devolved to institutions will serve to secure the best resources of these institutions; thus, making the achievement of redress and equity difficult or impossible. In addition, the governing bodies' powers to charge user fees and raise sponsorships do not bode well for the elimination of historical disparities in education. Having not resolved the future of Model C schools, the Draft and the WPET similarly did not clarify the ambiguity I have just alluded to. Instead, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to set up a Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools. The establishment of the Committee was, above all else, the Ministry's implicit acknowledgment that the policy frameworks of the Draft and WPET could not provide for a substantive resolution of the policy problems on the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools. Put otherwise, the ambiguities and omissions of the WPET signify that "developing frameworks permits extensive consultation, debated, and review without committing to specific courses of action" (Samoff, 1997:1). Considering Samoff's point, I am therefore inclined to ask - does the Hunter Commission's Report manage to go beyond the symbolism of the Draft and the WPET - and what course of action does it commit to?

Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (31 August 1995)

In an attempt to resolve the problematic issues of governance and funding in the new education system, the Ministry of Education commissioned a Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools. The Committee, under the leadership of Prof. Peter Hunter, was meant to include different constituencies, sectors, political positions, with due recognition to race and gender considerations (Greenstein, 1996:10). Amongst the Committee's important terms of reference was

> to recommend to the Minster a national framework of School Organization, Funding and Ownership, and norms and standards on school governance and funding which, in the view of the Committee, are likely to command the widest possible support, accord with the requirements of the Constitution, improve the effectiveness of Schools, and be financially sustainable from public funds (DoE, 1995: ix).

It took the Committee five months to complete its task. Its recommendations were guided by the principles of redress, quality, efficiency, local ethos and national coherence and democracy. The Committee's report was published on the 31 August 1995. In terms of the Organization and Governance of Schools, the Committee recommended two categories of schools, namely, public schools and independent schools.

With regard to the discourse of decentralization of powers to schools, the Committee enhanced the WPET's position of a strong form of devolution by specifically outlining the possible core roles and functions of the school governing bodies. The Committee further recommended that the additional powers of public school governing bodies could be allocated in relation to their respective management capacities (DoE, 1995). Thus, additional powers could only be

devolved to governing bodies if the Provincial government is satisfied that such governing bodies are competent to execute the additional roles and responsibilities.

On the related issues of governance and management, the Committee recommended three levels of governance, namely the macro-level (where national policies will be decided), the provincial level (responsible for admission policies and school education within the national framework) and the institutional level (where governing bodies, representative of all stakeholders, will be operating on the basis of their stipulated functions and where applicable, additional negotiable functions) (DoE, 1995).

The recommendations of the Committee on the notions of devolution, governance and management of schools should be understood in the context of the numerous stakeholders who were consulted, as well as the two hundred written submissions (DoE, 1995) it received. My observation is that the policy process through which the Committee activities went, and specifically the context of policy text production of the Committee's recommendations, could be said to have vindicated the NP's neo-liberal notion of devolution. Be reminded that it was in the context of policy influence that the NP propagated (through the ERS) a neo-liberal notion of devolution. In terms of this notion, power was to be shared between three tiers of governance, namely, the central, regional and institutional. Furthermore, a great deal of power and authority was to be devolved to the institutional level as this level was believed to be more responsive to the needs of the school community. On the other hand, the democratic movement propagated an education system with four tiers of governance, namely, the central, regional, local or district and institutional. While the democratic movement needed more power and authority to rest with the local or district level in the best interest of participatory democracy or populist localism, the NP, on the contrary, needed more power to rest with the

institution in order to create room for autonomy, responsiveness and individual competition or meritocracy.

Perhaps the dominance of a neo-liberal ideology, as reflected in the Committee's recommendations on the governance and management of the envisaged education system, is not only traceable to the contestation throughout the policy process, but is, as I argued in Chapter 3, traceable to macro factors like the pressures of globalization. So, irrespective of idealistic policy provisions like the notion of 'People's Education' which policy players may have to contest in a micro context like an education policy process, the ultimate test is seemingly whether or not the produced policy text, or provisions thereof are pragmatic or consistent with the global trends in education policy.

If the recommendations of the Committee on governance and management of the education system reflect primarily a neo-liberal notion of devolution, what about the Committee's recommendations on the Funding of the education system?

The Committee's Options for Reforming School Financing.

On the notion of funding, the Committee recommended three broad approaches for the Ministry to consider. They are

1) The Minimalist - Gradualist Approach

The basic object of this option was to follow a cautious approach to the transformation of funding patterns which existed. The option

> ... would involve doing away with all existing state and state-aided school models by name, but allowing most of the current models to continue existing, some with major amendments, under a broad "public school" rubric.

> This would mean maintaining, amongst others, a school model closely resembling the current Model C Schools with some of their governance powers reduced, and permitting (perhaps encouraging) many more schools from the other ex-departments to follow suit. (DoE, 1995:68).

The cautious tone of the option explains Professor Bengu's introductory remark that "the establishment of the Review Committee was a decision backed 100 per cent by the GNU". In other words, the Review Committee, due to the nature of its establishment and its composition, represented wide-ranging views from business, academics, those who were wronged by the previous system of education as well as those who benefited from it.

It seems likely that this option was meant to appease middle-class parents; particularly if one considers the Committee's recommendation to maintain Model C Schools and also that the governing bodies of such schools would be empowered to own the schools and to raise additional resources. In responding to the release of the WPET (1994), the NECC criticized it

> for being extremely cautious and vague on the measures needed to achieve greater equity, redress inequalities and redistribution of resources (Greenstein, 1995: 202).

I consider the criticism equally appropriate to the minimalist-gradualist approach to the transformation of the racially skewed funding patterns in South Africa. Considering that the strong form of devolution proposed by the Committee would serve to protect the autonomy of the best resourced schools for instance, the Ministry's adoption of the Minimalist-Gradualist Approach would have equally served to perpetuate the historical inequalities in education.

2) The Equitable School-Based Formula Approach.

This approach is not considerably different from the first option. However, unlike the first option, which was silent on the notion of equity, the second option is meant to achieve per capital equity which would be phased in over a period of four to five years (DoE, 1995). Over the said period of time, the option hopes to achieve equal access, minimum quality and basic education for all learners. In order to achieve equity, a prescribed formula, designed to determine state allocation to schools, was to be implemented.

In actual effect, this broad approach was meant to achieve the new Ministry of Education's policy values of redress and equity. However, had this Funding option been adopted by the Ministry, its intricate application would have certainly been beyond the competence of most governing bodies, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities. It should be noted, though, that had this funding option been without its implementation problems, it would have allayed both middle class parents's fears of a 'drop in education standards' and the historically disadvantaged's aspirations for redress and equity. In the interest of a uniform, effective and efficient implementation of the Funding option, the Ministry was realistic not to have adopted this Option.

3) The Partnership Funding Approach.

The approach is guided by principles of equity, redressing past imbalances, advancing quality, and improving efficiency (DoE, 1994:72) Moving from the assumption that the state cannot afford free quality education, the option proposes that there should be a partnership between the state and the community in order to fund public education. In trying to mobilize additional resources, there will be a voluntary and obligatory parental contribution, depending on the income of parents.

Parental contribution is to be set on a sliding scale, as guided by the income of parents.

In assessing the three approaches, the Committee expressed preference for the partnership funding approach. The main reason for the Committee's preference for the approach is that it serves to strike a balance between the achievement of redress and equity on the one hand, and, on the other, improving the quality of education. Also, unlike Option Two, this Option would not be difficult for governing bodies to implement. Unlike Option Two, this Option could practically strike a balance between the state's equitable distribution of resources and the need to achieve equity and redress. In other words the Committee seemed to have considered as beneficiaries of this Option, the historically disadvantaged and the historically privileged.

My General Assessment of the Options

The activities of the Hunter Commission, in particular, the wide range of consultation and written submissions which became part of the context of education policy text production, demonstrate that as representations, policy texts are encoded via struggles, compromises and authoritative public interpretations (Ball, 1993). The policy process through which the activities of the Commission went also serve to explain the role of ad hocery and negotiations in the formulation of policies. However, it seems that "only certain influences and agendas are recognized as legitimate, only certain voices are heard at any point in time" (Ball, 1993:16). The committee's apparent adoption of a neo-liberal ideology in the management , governance and funding of the education system is a case in point as it amounts to what Ball calls authoritative public interpretation. Not that I disapprove of the Committee's authoritative choice but I am only relating the Hunter Report to Ball's conceptions of policy as text and policy as discourse. In

terms of the latter, the Hunter Report presents neo-liberal tendencies or the New Right (in education) as 'truth' and 'knowledge' (Ball, 1993) and thus fixing the possibilities of thought on the notions of management, governance and funding of the education system.

The neo-liberal 'language' that is used to articulate the recommendations of the Report of the Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools, the unfolding of the education policy process in South Africa did not end with the policy text of the Committee's Report. This is because "a policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite'...." (Ball, 1993:16). The fact that policies are always in a state of becoming foregrounds Samoff (1997)'s concern about the recurrent focus on frameworks in South Africa. In other words, the Hunter Report, just like the Draft WPET and the WPET, is yet another 'architectural skeleton' or a set of guidelines whose intention is to "shape programmatic and managerial decisions".(Samoff, 1997:1). But perhaps the recurrent focus on educational frameworks, which are characterized by consultation, debate and careful consideration of policy options is unavoidable in view of the extent of historical inequalities in South Africa. It is for this inevitability that the policy process in general, and the context of policy text production in particular, has been such a protracted process. It has been shown in my analysis thus far that certain forces within the contexts of education policy influence and policy text production did not only lead to the emergence of the WPET and the Hunter Report but they (the forces) also shaped them in one form or the other. It is then my further intention to analyze how the emergence of the text and discourse of the Hunter Report has influenced the text and discourse of the White Paper on the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools, which was released in February 1996.

The White Paper 2b (14 February 1996)

The White Paper 2a, released in November 1995, and the White Paper 2b, released in February 1996, are essentially responses to the recommendations of the Report of the Committee to Review the Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools, published on the 31 August 1995. In terms of the policy process, the two White Papers, together with the South African Schools Bill (April 1996) constitute antecedent policy documents for the key text, the South African Schools Act, released on the 15 November 1996.

In summarizing the principles underlying a new framework of educational restructuring, the White Paper 2b declares that

> the new structure of school organization would create the conditions for developing a coherent, integrated, flexible national system which advances redress, the equitable use of public resources, an improvement in educational quality across the system, democratic governance, and school-based decision-making within provincial guidelines (DoE, 1996:10).

A closer scrutiny of the summarized principles reveals massive challenges which confronted the new Ministry of Education. It was certainly not going to be an easy task to amalgamate the racially fragmented education departments of the past into a 'coherent, integrated flexible national system'. The fact that the racially fragmented departments reflected different historical experiences and varying degrees of wealth served to compound the problem of amalgamation. Equally important, the Ministry of Education had to strike a meaningful balance between, on the one hand, the objective to achieve equity and redress, and on the other, the improvement in educational quality across the system. I will probe the apparent inherent tension between the intervention of the state (in pursuit of redress and equity) and the federal ideology or neo-liberal tendencies permeating the education policy of the new education system.

Just like in the policy documents I have analyzed thus far, my analysis of the White Paper 2b will be focused on two main areas, namely, the Organization and Governance of Schools, and Financing of Schools. The two areas are important for the purpose of my analysis in that while the section on the Organization and Governance of Schools will provide me with scope to probe the notions of redress and equity, as they relate to the discourses of devolution and participation, the second section (on the Financing of Schools) will provide me with scope to probe the notions of redress and equity, as they relate to the issue of funding. This kind of approach also enables me to trace, along the policy process and specifically within the context of policy text production, the tensions, ambiguities, shifts and shifting influences regarding the discourses of devolution, participation, redress and equity.

The Organization, Management and Governance of Schools

The Review Committee Report recommended two categories of schools; viz., public and independent schools. In accepting the recommendation, the Ministry declared that "there shall be just two broad categories of schools in future; public schools and independent schools" (DoE, 1996:13). While private or independent schools would fall under the category of independent schools, public schools would comprise all other schools.

As regards the management and governance of public schools, it should be recalled that the Hunter Commission recommended three tiers of governance, these being, the national provincial and institutional. The notion of a strong form of devolution is clearly continued in the White Paper 2b. The Commission recommended more powers and authority to be devolved to the institutional level. The White Paper 2b

also states that governing bodies will have "substantial decision-making powers, selected from a menu of powers according to their capacity" (DoE, 1996:16). In addition to the issue of a strong form of devolution, the White Paper 2b reflects an endorsement of the Commission's recommendation on the structure or composition of school governing bodies and their roles and functions. The only difference on the composition of governing bodies is that instead of the community electing community representatives, as the Commission recommended, the community representatives, according to the White Paper 2b, were to be elected by the governing body. This provision was meant to ensure that community leaders, albeit without voting rights, were acceptable to the school-based constituencies (Sayed, 1997). The realization of redress, as it relates to the issue of stakeholder participation in education, has been a long-standing demand of the democratic movement. Therefore, the role of governing bodies in the governance of education, as guaranteed by the White Paper 2b could be said to have addressed the democratic movement's consistent demand for community involvement in the process of decision making. However, a closer observation of the kind of participation guaranteed by the White Paper 2b reveals some deep seated contestation and tension. In the first instance, the structure and role of the governing bodies amount to representative democracy, as opposed to the democratic movement's preferred participatory democracy. Thus, governing bodies are representative structures whose expertise is limited to the formulation of policy at an institutional level. This notion of representative democracy is clearly not consistent with what Sayed (1997) calls 'grassroots democracy', 'community control' and 'empowerment'. These catchphrases are consistent with the notion of populist localism, and are also reminiscent of the democratic movement's popular rhetorics like 'The People Shall Govern'. Actually, the discourses of devolution and that of stakeholder participation are related to the contested definition of community. For the democratic movement, the notion of community is

> rooted in the very trajectory of resistance politics. Such politics operated on an oppositional discourse which drew upon local community support and participation.... In the educational sphere, the most poignant illustration of this notion was the call for 'structures of dual power' in the discourses of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) and the formation of Parent, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs) which were conceived as vehicles of community expression. (Sayed, 1997:4).

In contrast to the democratic movement's collective perception of the concept of community is the NP's view which foregrounds the idea of choice or self-interested-individual members of the community. This neo-liberal notion of community is premised on the idea of freedom of association of individuals and a strong form of devolution. This notion of community is also consistent with the New Right discourse of the marketization of education. So, for the NP, the notion of participation in the governance of institutions is tantamount to a democratic representation of the consumers (parents) who have 'consumer power' (Sayed, 1997). The direct involvement of parents in the education of their children would ensure that education is responsive to the needs of the school community. However, the responsiveness of education to the community could have a negative impact on the realization of equity and redress. It has to be noted that communities are fragmented on the basis of class race, and ethnicity. Given the market metaphor in education (which I will come back to in my analysis of the financing of schools) parents, as consumers, exercise choice in favor of the product (education) for their children. Also, on the basis of the notion of partnership, parents would then contribute to the quality of the product through user fees.

When one considers the class, racial and ethnic fragmentation of communities, the notion of choice will be constrained and conditioned by the parent's ability to afford user fees and what Sayed (1997) calls soft-zoning. The latter refers to a demarcated area or community which is believed to be serviced by the school. In other words middle class areas, as school communities would be entitled to own

and govern best resourced schools. Consequently, middle class children would acquire the best merits or marketable credentials; thus perpetuating the historical inequalities in this country.

The point I am making is that while the notion of partnership was obviously intended to involve parents and communities in the process of decision-making and the provision of education, the notion of the school community has come to be equated with "a collective resource for self-aggrandizement" (Sayed, 1997:9). Thus, school community is not defined as a collective concept but rather in terms of neo-liberal notions of self interest and meritocracy. The White Paper 2b's adoption of a neo-liberal notion of the community signals the bias of education policy towards the New Right ideology. The federal ideology and other neo-liberal tendencies like school ownership will ensure that such (middle class) school communities see minimal or no state intervention.

Financing of Schools

In terms of the recommendation of the Review Committee, schools were to be financed on the basis of partnership between the government and communities. Partnership meant that

> school operating costs would be funded partly by subsidy, and partly by income-related school fees which would be obligatory for all parents who would afford them (DoE, 1996:29).

In an effort to examine the implications of the Review Committee's proposed partnership funding, the Department of Education sought the advice of international technocrats. These were Professors Christopher Colclough of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, and Luis Crouch of the Research Triangle Institute, North Carolina. In the opinion of the economic consultants, the

Review Committee's recommended pursuit of redress and equity through budgetary allocations would lead to the 'flight' of middle class parents from public schools to independent schools. In their 'flight' the middle class parents would probably take with them their financial, managerial and persuasive capacities (DoE, 1996).

> The remedy, according to the consultants, would be to find an acceptable means of enabling school communities to raise sufficient resources to maintain school quality at levels acceptable to the parents who would otherwise drift away (DoE, 1996:34).

The remedy proposed by the consultants is articulated as the 'fourth option' for reforming school financing. Sayed (1996:12) calls this option the Middle Class Mandatory Fee Clustering (MMFC). With regard to this notion

> all students in public schools will attract equal per capita expenditure. However, in order to ensure that the middle class does not flee the state sector, school governing bodies will be able to raise additional user fees to subvert the formula following an accepted procedure (Sayed & Carrim, 1997: 94).

As an apparent compromise aimed at the realization of equity, governing bodies were not expected to insist on payment of user fees from parents who could not afford to pay. In implementing this compromise position, governing bodies would decide on a sliding scale of fees as a general guideline for the parents to pay the expected user fees. In its initial response to the technocrats' fourth option, the Ministry indicated that it had engaged (international) specialist advisors to assist it in the process of clarifying the financing options. One notes thus far that the policy process had been largely characterized by consultation and debate. As I am about to focus my analysis on yet another policy text which emerged from the context of education policy text production, I am tempted to ask - what effect did the intervention of the international consultants have on the nature and process of education policy formulation in South Africa in relation to the financing of the new education system?

The South African Schools Act (15 November 1996)

Governance and Management of the Education System

The commitment of the Ministry of Education to the democratization of the education system is clearly reflected in its articulation of the notions of governance and management of the education system. As one policy text after another was produced by policy actors from within the context of education policy text production, the Ministry's articulation of a strong form of devolution did not get diluted. In a clear attempt to institutionalize and enhance the notion of participation, the role and functions of governing bodies, made up of the majority of parents, are spelt out. However, analysts noted that "... community representation on governing bodies is becoming weaker in the recent policy texts" (Sayed and Carrim, 1997:94). With regard to the notion of community participation, the ministry proposed a weaker role of the community in that community members were not to be elected but co-opted by governing bodies and they also do not have voting rights. The weak role of community members in governing bodies denote a number of factors.

Firstly, the administrative rationale for devolution. It is clear that the Ministry regards governing bodies as statutory bodies which would best administer the distribution, management and utilization of educational resources. They are therefore not only viewed as bodies providing expert services to institutions but are also perceived as legal bodies with recourse to the courts of law. This idea was best demonstrated by the governing body of Grove Primary School which successfully contested (in court) its right to participate in the selection and hiring of redeployable teachers.

Secondly, the weakened role of communities in governing bodies denotes the state's ideological rationale for devolution. In contradistinction to the discourse of populist localism, the role played by governing bodies is consistent with neo-liberal trends like corporate management. Put otherwise, "elements of the New Right discourse assert the supremacy of the individual in matters of social service provision" (Sayed, 1997:3). Ipso facto, governing bodies are perceived as representative structures which articulate, with little state intervention, the interests of individual parents who have an interest in a specific institution. It is for this reason that the majority represented in the governing body are parents. If there are indications of the neo-liberal discourse in SASA's articulation of the notions of governance and administration of the education system, how does SASA articulate the notion of funding?

Funding of Public Schools

In the previous policy text, the White Paper 2b, the Ministry announced its intention to seek the advise of technocrats in selecting an appropriate funding option for the education system. As a clear departure from the Hunter Report's recommended three funding options, the Ministry adopted the technical experts' Fourth Option. The latter is articulated in the SASA as follows:

> a governing body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school (DoE, 1996: 24).

The Ministry's adoption of the Fourth Option exemplifies the effect of international pressures on education policy formulation. The adoption also demonstrates a shift from public policy making to the kind of policy making which is determined by experts. Put differently, the adoption of the Fourth Option signals the Ministry of Education's embrace of the New Right ideology which seeks to

> protect the rights of individuals, equality opportunity and the virtues of the free-market, as opposed to values and programs of social democracy, as expressed in the idea of the welfare state or in such documents as the Freedom Charter (Kallaway 1988:512)

In fact, the international consultants' recommended funding option indicates the Ministry's attempt to strike a meaningful balance between the achievement of equity and redress, and the improvement of the quality of education. The funding option adopted by the Ministry, on the Fourth Option, denotes the idea of 'give-and-take'. The adopted funding option meant that the state would, unlike in the past, allocate resources equitably. Logically, the historically disadvantaged communities or schools stood to gain from the adopted funding option. In an apparent attempt to allay the fears of the middle class parents or to encourage them to, as it were, 'stay put', they were not only given the latitude to raise additional funds but were, in line with the federal ideology, also guaranteed "public ownership of school land" (DoE, 1996:43). This apparent compromise was meant to ensure middle class parents that there would be minimal state intervention in the running of their schools.

The notion of partnership in school financing, as exemplified by parental contribution of user fees, and the ideology of federalism, articulated as school ownership, are consistent with neo-liberal tendencies or market related reforms in education. The introduction of the market ideology, through user fees, serves to commodify education. As a result, access to the commodity (education) is then limited to those consumers (parents) who can afford to exercise choice. It is logically the social class of the consumer which determines the quality of education they can afford.

However, regardless of the quality of education provided by a particular school, the governing body of a school may, "by process of law enforce the payment of school

fees by parents who are liable to pay..." (DoE, 1996:26) . The commodification of education, and the lawful enforcement of payment of user fees by liable parents, demonstrates the congruence of the education policy with what Kallaway (1997) calls the New World Economic Order. Reference is made to the arbitrary or uninterrupted operation of the market forces. The congruence is further enhanced by the Ministry's notion of partnership, which signifies global discourses like fiscal discipline, cost recovery and free-market system. By the same token

> internationally, cost recovery, 'user pays' and cost-sharing schemes have been a vital dimension not only of making resources beyond those of the state available to education, but also of changing the relationship between public and private provision of education in such a way that the burden of educational provision is carried by parents and communities (Chisholm, 1997:60).

In using Chisholm's argument to analyze the articulation of the discourse of decentralization, some observations become apparent. Firstly, the discourse of the Act effectively institutionalizes and legislates the notion of shifting the burden of educational provision from the state to parents and communities. The shift is signified by the devolution of larger degrees of authority and powers over to governing bodies of schools. Added to the idea of devolution is the federal notion of school ownership. Secondly, the policy of decentralization, specifically through its embrace of the Fourth Option on user fees, has actually introduced the New Right monetarist ideology in the South African system of education. Perhaps the changing relationship between public and private provision of education has long been on the education agenda - particularly if one takes into consideration Prof. De Lange (1981)'s pronouncement on the issue. He is reported to have said:

> as the whole trend in South Africa in recent years has been towards... the involvement of private enterprise ... I do not see why education should be excluded (Sunday Times, 26 June, 1981).

Kallaway has succinctly pointed to the legacy of the De Lange Commission:

> while the WPET and the Schools Act clearly represent a break with many aspects of past education thinking, it also needs to be noted that the documents display a great deal of continuity with their historical predecessors from reformist apartheid era, in particular, HSRC (De Lange) Committee Report of 1981, the Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS) (1991 -2) and the whole process of National Party initiated educational reform that was implemented during the 1980s (Kallaway, 1997:41).

Fine (1995), Johnson (1995) as well as Adelzadeh and Padayachee (1994) also allude to the consistency of the ideology of neo-liberal reform throughout the generation of education policies in South Africa. The education policy process since 1994 has been characterized by a contrast between the neo-liberal perception of reform and the social welfarist tendencies. Despite the contrast, the policy texts analyzed here have reflected a growing dominance of the neo-liberal tendencies, as demonstrated by the notions of devolution, school ownership and the funding option in education. Amongst factors responsible for the dominance of neo-liberal tendencies of reform are the involvement of the private sector as a stakeholder in education, and the policy actors' inevitable response to international or global pressures, as demonstrated by the intervention of the international consultants in the Ministry's decision about the funding options. Perhaps I should draw from Prunty's representation of policy as an authoritative allocation of values (1985:136) in order to argue that neo-liberal tendencies have increasingly become authoritative in the Ministry's policy documents (i.e. from the WPET to SASA). The consistent dominance of neo-liberal tendencies in policy formulation was caused by the dominance of the federal agenda, as subscribed to by the NP, the DP and the IFP. As I highlighted in my analysis of the context of policy influence, the Ministry's adoption of the federal ideology or neo-liberal tendencies of reform was unavoidable in view of the effect of international pressures, the shift in the political landscape in South Africa (i.e. through the 1994 non-racial national elections) and the ANC's pragmatic approach to transformation in the education system - or as

Gerwel (1992) puts it, the ANC's hard choice between popular expectations as opposed to achievable goals.

The outcome of the contestation within the South African context of education policy influence has not only led to the dominance of the ideologies of federalism and the New Right in the education policy process, but has also contributed to the adoption of these discourse in the SASA. In other words, the SASA as a policy text reflects representations which are "...encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) ..." (Ball, 1993:10). So, because of the sets of values, pressures and constraints (Hough and Helm, 1984:17) which characterized the context of education policy influence in South Africa, the ANC could not offer alternative and sustainable discourses in the place of federalism and the New Right.

It is evident that the ANC's adoption of these ideologies signals its shift from its historical socialist and welfarist values and principles, as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. In particular, there was a shift in the ANC's economic thinking from public ownership, as derived from the Freedom Charter to compromises around mixed economy and growth through redistribution. The shift in the ANC's general approach to transformation and reform signifies a shift

> from politics of race and apartheid to a division between free enterprise politics/pro-marketers supporters of privatization and those who support soft or hard forms of the politics of redistribution (socialist / social democracy, or communism... (Kallaway, 1997:39).

Greenstein (1996) conceptualizes the 'free enterprise politics' group as those ANC aligned bureaucrats, under the leadership of the ANC President Mbeki, who have a cautious and gradual attitude towards change. The other group is comprised of those ANC members who propagate a radical change of policies, as eloquently articulated in the RDP. In essence, the general approach of the second group is that

of a strong notion of redress and equity. The advocates of the RDP were effectively silenced by the intervention of the international consultants in the process of education policy text production. It should also be realized that the Ministry's invitation of the international consultants was definitely a conscious decision in that

> the use of non-elected "expert" advisors both national and international, in the formulation of national policies has become increasingly common world-wide (Mc Ginn, 1996:345).

Equally important, the intervention of consultants in education policy making in South Africa adequately confirms that "once a country buys into a global economy, a broad set of decisions is removed from national debate" (Mc Ginn, 1996:350). Clearly, the introduction of consultants in education policy making marked the Ministry's considerable departure from a people-driven process to one developed and imposed by international consultants. The consultants' intervention indicates the Ministry's resolve to reform education in congruence with international trends. These discourses are fiscal discipline, public expenditure priorities, financial liberalization, deregulation, foreign direct investment, privatization, exchange rates, property rights, tax reform and trade liberalization (Dale, 1999). The congruence of various countries' policies to international trends is aimed at what Dale refers to as harmonization or international integration (i.e. globalization role propagated by institutions like the World Bank and the IMF).

The departure also confirms the notion that adherents of globalization view participatory democracy with skepticism. The latter is based on the thesis that participatory democracy constitutes a limitation to economic development. This skepticism was also implied by the ANC's departure from the RDP, "which was drawn up by the ANC-led alliance in consultation with other key mass organizations" (ANC, 1994:1) to the sudden adoption of GEAR. While GEAR was publicly frowned upon by COSATU and other mass organizations on the basis

that they were not involved in its conception, and that it led to job losses, the market oriented macro-economic strategy (GEAR), conceptualized by Mbeki and other technocrats, attracted public praise from the Democratic party, economists and other neo-liberal oriented organizations.

The point I am making is that there is a correlation between, on the one side, the Ministry's shift from an education policy process which was characterized by consultation and debate to the one determined by international consultants, and on the other side, the ANC's shift from the policy framework of the RDP to that of GEAR. The apparent shifts were influenced by

> ... the tension between the social democratic redistributive discourse inherited from the Freedom Charter and the People's Education movement, and the free market vision of individual rather than state responsibility (Kruss, 1997:88).

In the light of the tension between the socialist rhetoric and the free market ideology, the WPET reflects a potential compromise while the SASA reflects a firm or legislated compromise to the neo-liberal or New Right ideology. How does this legislated compromise affect the articulation of the discourses of equity and redress? In order to lay the basis for an informed conclusion, I will first reconstruct the objective and findings of my textual analysis.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my minithesis was to analyze the representation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress during the evolution of education policy in South Africa. The main objective of my analysis was to trace the shifts, continuities, influences and shifting influences, and the tension around the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress. In the interest of a focused and systematic analysis, I separated the evolution of education policy into two major periods, viz., the period between 1990 and 1994 and the period between 1994 and 1998. My distinction of the two major periods was guided by the different education policy contexts of the two periods. In other words, the education policy contexts of the two periods had different influences on the articulation of the discourses of decentralization, equity and redress.

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY INFLUENCE (1990 -1994)

In this period, I analyzed how the context of education policy influence (i.e. the social, economic, political and cultural forces) affected the evolution and nature of education policy options formulated by the main policy actors, the democratic movement and the NP. Thus the education policy options of the democratic movement were guided by a socialist ideology derived from the Freedom Charter, and from values such as non-racialism, democracy, equity and redress. On the other hand, the NP shifted its ideology after 1980 from an apartheid conservatism to notions of neo-liberalism, as exemplified by devolution, federalism and the New Right.

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY INFLUENCE (1994 -1998)

In this period I specifically looked at how a shift in the South African political landscape (following the 1994 national elections) led to the democratic movement' shift from socialist and welfarist notions of transformation to pragmatic programs of the GNU. For instance, the democratic movement's rhetoric, the 'People's Education' was abandoned in favor of the neo-liberal market tendencies like user fees and consumer choice. Equally important, the democratic movement shifted from its socialist pronouncements, as embodied in the RDP and embraced the neo-liberal paradigm of GEAR.

My analysis of the contexts of education policy influence was then linked to an analysis of the context of education policy production.

CONTEXT OF EDUCATION POLICY PRODUCTION.

In this regard I looked at the effect of the role played by parliament, the Ministry of Education and civil society on the production and content of the education policy texts. I specifically looked at the shifts, shifting influences, continuities and tensions in the education policy texts which were produced by policy actors in this context. I argued the democratic movement's education policy documents like NEPI and the ANC education policy documents were guided by a popular democratic ideology which represented devolution in terms of a balance between a strong central state and participatory democracy. The notion of devolution was articulated in terms of four tiers of governance, namely, central, provincial, local and institutional. The purpose of the four tiers of governance was to further the aims of participatory democracy and populist localism. In other words the

democratic movement intended to institutionalize its long-standing demand for community involvement in the governance of education.

As regards the NP, it produced education policy documents which were guided by its neo-liberal variants like federalism and the New Right. In its education policy documents, the NP articulated devolution in terms of three tiers of governance, namely, central, provincial and institutional.

I argued that the democratic movement and the NP's representation of devolution reflects tension, and that this tension is evident in their perception of the concept of community. While the democratic movement perceived community as a collective concept, and that power and authority had to be devolved to the local community, the NP, guided by its ideology on individual liberties, perceived the composition of community in relation to individual consumers who have a stake in the education of their children. As a result, power and authority was to be devolved to autonomous institutions in the interest of competition and meritocracy.

With regard to the policy texts produced after 1994, I argued that due to the complex interaction and struggle of the policy actors in the context of the education policy text production, the policy documents reflect the tension between the social democratic discourse and notions of the free market ideology. I went on to argue that, in particular, that the WPET reflects a potential compromise to neo-liberal notions of transformation while the SASA reflects a firm or legislated compromise. Then, how is the legislated compromise likely to affect the articulation of equity and redress?

Equity and Redress

The recurring debate on equity and redress, particularly with reference to the financing of the education system, has since been complicated by elusive conceptualizations of the notions of equity and redress. In addition, there also seems to be a tension between differing notions of equity and redress. The first conception of equity is that of "leveling the [education] playing fields" (Sayed & Carrim, 1997:98). This conception refers to the equalization of education opportunities (i.e access to schools) for all learners, irrespective of race, class, religion, etc.

> In tension with this notion of equity is the claim that the legacy of apartheid had generated gross disparities and distortions in education and that there therefore should be specific strategies to correct the historical imbalances. This implies targeting some groups above others, specifically the African population (Sayed & Carrim, 1997:98).

The conception of equity as redistribution was eloquently articulated by the RDP. The objective of this notion of equity was to effect redress in the economic, social, political, moral and cultural spheres of the South African society. This notion of equity was later abandoned in favor of growth through redistribution, as articulated in the GEAR strategy. Perhaps the tension between the two discourse of equity is sharply demonstrated by the point that while 'equal opportunity' discourse is oblivious to the historical legacy of apartheid, the redistribution discourse may well be viewed as 'apartheid in reverse'. A detailed conceptual outline of models of equity, as discussed in Chapter Two, would surely demonstrate the tension I have referred to.

The first conceptual model is that of equality of opportunity. This equality guarantees equal access, equality and participation. The second conceptual model is that of equality of outcome; which

> guarantees equal rates of success for different groups in society through direct intervention to prevent disadvantage, for example via positive discrimination or affirmative action programs (Gewirtz, 1998: 472).

All the education policy texts guarantee the learners' equality of opportunity. The guarantee was signaled by the new Ministry's paradigm shift from racially and ethnically fragmented education systems of 'own affairs' and 'general affairs' to a single non-racial and non-sexist national education system of education. Unlike in the past, all public schools are now open to learners of all races and ethnic groups.

In practical terms, however, access to schools is not unconditional. The very policy of devolution of powers and authority to schools, together with SASA's provisions on the notion of school ownership constitute unintended barriers to the realization of equality of opportunity. Simply put, the policy of decentralization essentially limits the powers of the state to intervene in pursuit of equality of opportunity. It should also be borne in mind that public schools are located in communities which are predominantly of the same racial or ethnic ancestry. Most importantly, best resourced schools are located in mainly white middle-class suburbs. In terms of the principle of 'soft-zoning' (Sayed, 1997), the school is expected to serve learners from its immediate locale. The principle therefore jeopardizes the access opportunities of those school age students who may migrate from townships "in order to seek school access, or to seek access to institutions perceived to be of better quality or that offer a wider range of curriculum choice" (Paterson & Kruss, 1998:149). I use Samoff (1995)'s conceptual difference between stated policy (i.e. what the ministry has promulgated) and policy in action in order to highlight the

apparent tensions between the legislated policy of decentralization and the situation or problem the policy is trying to address.

The other obstacle to achieving equality through a principle of equality of opportunity is the introduction of the market discourse in the provision of education. In terms of the market ideology, education is perceived as a marketable commodity and parents are viewed (in a neo-liberal sense) as a group of individual self-reliant and self-interested consumers (Sayed, 1997) For these consumers, user fees guarantees them the unfettered choice of a value-driven product (education). The choice means that the privileged consumer community's conception of community involvement simply becomes the expression of strong consumer rights (Sayed, 1997:9). The introduction of the market metaphor in the provision of education is the greatest source of inequality in that there will always be "unequal purchasing power among the customers" (Lauglo, 1995:20). The inequality is likely to affect the students' life beyond school because in exchange for high user fees, the school, which happens to be in competition with other schools, guarantees to provide its learners with marketable credentials. The marketable credentials will serve to guarantee the privileged students with access to the best job opportunities, thus perpetuating inequalities.

Considering that governing bodies, in consultation with parents, decide on the amount of user fees, it stands to reason that the amount of user fees at middle-class schools or best resourced schools will be substantially higher than those at schools which serve the historically disadvantaged communities.

Subsequently, the consumer's exercise of choice will entirely be dependent upon his/her bank balance; particularly if the learner is one of those few who migrate from elsewhere. I therefore see logic in the assertion that user fees are but " a class screening mechanism..." (Sayed, 1997). While you may contend that the SASA

forbids governing bodies from excluding those who are unable to pay, the admission of a learner to a particular public school, and the subsequent payment or non-payments of fees are issues of status and social class for consumers. Non-payment is not only an act of humiliation to the learner's parent but it also affects (negatively) the learner' social relations with his/her peers at school. In other words, it is only in extremely exceptional cases that parent at best schools would be seen not to afford to pay user fees. Again,

> governing bodies will simply attempt to attract those who can pay to ensure that they do not have to in fact directly 'refuse' places to those who cannot afford (Sayed and Carrim, 1997:98).

While the Ministry has evidently guaranteed and enacted the notion of equality of opportunity, or equal access to public school, devolution, ownership of schools and 'soft zoning' inadvertently collaborate in excluding, in a subtle way, those learners who do not make the financial grade. After all, the market metaphor, in general and specifically in education, is premised on the idea of social competition on the basis of merit or bluntly described as survival of the financially fittest.

On the other hand, even if equality of opportunity for all was without indications of subtle exclusion, the equality could still have unintended effects like unequal output, as indicated by unequal results or outcome. The misleading motivation for the justification of unequal outcome would be that since all learners are exposed to the same access opportunities, an equal rate of success is expected of them. This view would be oblivious to other factors which affect the success rate of learners, despite their exposure to equal opportunities. The matric results are an example in point. Although access may be open to all, only learners with a solid social and financial background, normally from white middle-class families or privileged families, tend to register good grades on their matric certificates. This then shifts my focus to an analysis of the feasibility of an equality of outcome.

It must be noted that with regard to the legislated equality of opportunity, the role of the state is almost peripheral while factors like 'soft-zoning' and the notion of choice play a central role in the realization of equality of opportunity. However, when it comes to the equality of outcome the effective intervention of the state becomes crucial. Aimed at achieving equal rates of success for all learners, the state's allocation of resources should be biased in favor of the historically disadvantaged learners. Thus, the state's per capita expenditure is not only determined by the teacher pupil ratio, but the allocation is also guided by what Gewirtz (1998) calls positive discrimination. In a clear attempt to realize the equality of outcome the SASA states that

> the Minister must determine norms and minimum standards for the funding of public schools after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, the Financial and Fiscal Commission and the minister of Finance. (DoE, 1996:24).

This provision denotes the Ministry's concerted effort to stop the flight of middle class parents from public schools to independent schools for fear of a drop in education 'standards'. Most importantly the provision also creates fertile ground for the perpetuation of the historical inequalities. It should be borne in mind that the skills and capacities of the various governing bodies to raise additional resources depend largely on their social class.

Predictably, the quality of grades and marketable credentials to be obtained from Westerford, a school associated with an affluent community, will not even compare to those obtained from Hector Peterson, a school serving an informal settlement community. Even if parents from the Wallacedene community could be envious of the quality of education offered at Westerford, the transport cost and the amount of school fees paid at the school, let alone the notion of soft zoning, their children's access to the school (Westerford) is radically compromised.

The Ministry's objectives around equality of opportunity and equality of outcome are, at best, constrained by the very policy of devolution which propagate them, and at worst, unachievable. The observation I have just made could be put differently - that

> despite such far-reaching policy initiatives and integrating education and training and introducing compulsory education, the extent to which the new government can demonstrate change, particularly in a manner 'visible' to deprived communities remains a crucial test (Johnson, 1995:131).

Equally important, the ideology of the market in education, together with the devolution of powers to schools, serves to dilute the realization of the equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. Marketization of education and devolution of powers also promote the perpetuation of historical inequalities in education. It should, however, serve as a consolation, the fact that as text, the policy of decentralization is subject to the notion of agency in policy making. In this regard, like all other policies, the education policy of decentralization is, as Codd (1985) puts it, always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and not quite... . By the same token, the policy of decentralization, as enshrined in SASA, is certainly not a finished and ultimate product but is still in the process of 'becoming'.

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