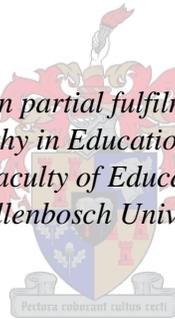# School principals' experience of the decentralisation policy in Zimbabwe

by
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*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education Policy Studies at the
Faculty of Education,
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Summary/Abstract

The decentralisation of power in education is part of a global process that has become part of the education reform policies of most countries. Decentralisation, which is typified by the redistribution of power to local levels, is claimed to serve a variety of ends from democratization to efficiency, empowerment of stakeholders to improved quality of education. It is, however, a complex process that is difficult to capture as power is seen to manifest in multiple ways. During the nineties Zimbabwe, against the background of a massive increase in enrolments, for a variety of reasons including the improvement of the quality of education, embarked on the re-distribution of administrative and financial power in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. The implementation of this policy revealed major discrepancies between the intentions of government and the way it translated in educational sites.

The aim of this study is to explore how the intentions of decentralisation in education as a policy aimed that the improvement of the quality of education is experienced by school principals. An interpretative methodology with in depth interviews, focus groups, some observations and document analysis were employed to engage in the debates about decentralisation. Although this was a small study the findings concurred with studies of decentralisation in other countries where it was found that the re-distribution of power in education manifests differently in different contexts in the same country. In countries such as Zimbabwe where resource limitations and restructuring concomitantly took place the experience of principals revealed that conditions arose that could not be seen to be conducive to the improvement of the quality of education such as the ambiguity of the meaning of who is responsible for what, the power struggles as government was seen to recentralise crucial roles, increased workloads of principals due to the devolving of administrative and supervisory functions to school level, loss of teachers and other specialist functionaries conducive to a drop in standards and the challenge to parents who had to contribute increasingly to enable schooling of their children. These findings are indicative of the claims from studies in other countries that decentralisation as a policy for whatever reason is seldom more than political rhetoric to decentralise conflict.

Exploring the intersection between the literature on decentralisation and parental involvement of education, however, revealed the opening up of other spaces that enabled local power relations to develop in creative ways as parents got increasingly involved in schools. Apart from the challenges related to the redistribution of power as authority delegated, devolved or deconcentrated from government, this study revealed that power manifests in relations and interactions not necessarily ascribed to the intentions of policy, neither as a substance or function only.

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Opsomming

Die desentralisering van mag in die onderwys maak deel uit van 'n wêreldwye proses van onderwyshervorming. Desentralisasie, wat deur die herverspreiding van mag na plaaslike vlakke gekenmerk word, is veronderstel om aan 'n verskeidenheid doele te beantwoord – van demokratisering tot die verhoging van doeltreffendheid, die bemagtiging van belanghebbendes, en die verbetering van onderwysgehalte. Desentralisasie is egter 'n komplekse proses waaraan moeilik uitvoering gegee kan word, aangesien mag in verskeie gedaantes voorkom. In die negentigerjare het Zimbabwe, teen die agtergrond van drastiese toename in inskrywings, die herverspreiding van administratiewe en finansiële mag in die Ministerie van Onderwys, Sport en Kultuur onderneem. Dié stap is aan verskillende redes toegeskryf, waaronder die verbetering van onderwysgehalte. Die toepassing van die beleid het egter groot teenstrydighede aan die lig gebring tussen die regering se voornemens, en hoe dié voornemens uiteindelik prakties in onderwysinstellings ten uitvoer gebring is.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om skoolhoofde se ervaring van onderwysdesentralisasie as beleid te ondersoek. Die studie is vanuit 'n interpreterende benadering gedoen met diepte-onderhoude, fokusgroepe, 'n paar waarnemings sowel as dokumentontleding. Ongeag die beperkte omvang van die studie, stem die bevindinge ooreen met dié van navorsing oor desentralisasie in ander lande, waar bevind is dat herverspreiding van mag in dieselfde land in verskillende kontekste verskillend realiseer. In lande soos Zimbabwe, waar herstrukturering te midde van hulpbronbeperkinge plaasgevind het, het skoolhoofde bepaalde omstandighede ervaar wat nié die verbetering van onderwysgehalte sou kon bevorder het nie. Dít sluit in onsekerheid oor die onderskeie partye se verantwoordelikhede; die magstryd toe die regering kernrolle sentraal beheer; swaarder werklaste vir skoolhoofde nadat administratiewe en toesigfunksies na skoolvlak afgewentel is; 'n verlies aan onderwysers en ander spesialisamptenare, wat op sy beurt standaarde laat daal het, en ouers se groter verantwoordelikheid om al hoe meer by te dra ten einde hulle kinders se opvoeding te verseker. Hierdie bevindinge strook ook met dié van studies in ander lande, naamlik dat desentralisering as 'n beleid om watter rede ook al selde meer is as politieke retoriek ten einde konflik te desentraliseer.

Nadere ondersoek van die verband tussen navorsing oor desentralisasie, en dié oor ouerbetrokkenheid by onderwys het egter daarop gedui dat desentralisering wel nuwe moontlikhede kan ontsluit vir die skeppende ontwikkeling van plaaslike magsverhoudinge namate ouers al hoe meer by skole betrokke raak. Buiten die uitdagings met betrekking tot die herverspreiding van mag namate regeringsgesag gedelegeer, afgewentel of gedekonsentreer word, dui dié studie daarop dat mag soms ook in verhoudinge en wisselwerkings geopenbaar word wat nie noodwendig met die voornemens van die beleid verband hou nie, en dit mag voorts nie as net substansie of net funksie tot uiting kom nie.

Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically , I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own ,original work ,that I am the owner of the copyright thereof(unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

March 2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEd - Bachelor of Education

BSA Co. - British South Africa Company

DEO - District Education Officer

ECEC - Early Childhood Education and Care

GNP - Gross National Product

LEA - Local Education Authority

LMS - Learning Management System

MOESC - Ministry of Education Sport and Culture

MOHET - Ministry of Higher Education and Technology

NGO - Non-Government Organisation

PTA - Parent-Teachers Associations

RA - Responsible Authority

RDC - Rural District Councils

SDA - School Development Association

SDC - School Development Committee

SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency

SIRDC - Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

ZIMPREST - Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social transformation

ZJC- Zimbabwe Junior Certificate

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CHAPTER ONE: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCE OF THE DECENTRALISATION POLICY IN ZIMBABWE

1.1   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The government of Zimbabwe has systematically implemented various elements of decentralisation in all its line ministries from the 1990s to date. This study focuses on the re-distribution of administrative power in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. The government maintains that decentralisation is intended to redress the imbalances of access and equity to education and the unsavoury legacy of the dual education system that governed the education system until Zimbabwe's independence from Great Britain in 1980. Following independence, the government gazetted compulsory primary and secondary education. As a result, the education system experienced phenomenal expansion in enrolments for which, according to Zvobgo (2000:60) and Moyo etal (1998:6), simply could not be matched with adequate financial, material and human resources. This invariably affected the quality of education offered in Zimbabwe.

Speaking at a press conference in 1998, the former secretary for the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Chifunyise, publicly admitted the challenges government was facing in its attempt to deliver on quality education for all. It was put forward that the issue of quality education was in direct correlation to the unprecedented surge in enrolments. Enormous enrolment had resulted in a critical demand for effective supervision to maintain high standards of education in schools.

Decentralisation policy was designed to empower local administrators who were closest to points of delivery. It was thought that the supervision of teaching and learning was to be stepped up considerably as a result.   McGinn and Welsh (1999:94) acknowledge the decentralisation of power closer to service delivery as a leading universal principle held by a growing body of researchers on the performance of organisations. They suggest that the most effective governance of any organisation occurs when authority for decision-making power is located as close as possible to the site where actions are taken. Theirs and other similar perspectives likely form the pervading rationale for the adoption of decentralisation policy in Zimbabwe and in other countries around the world.

It seems probable that the implementation of decentralisation policy in education emerged as a response to the impact and pressure of globalisation. In step with global trends, it is likely that the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe envisaged decentralisation to be an appropriate policy to address the widespread challenges.

MacBeath (1998:2) describes globalisation as "kinds of movements that have power to override national frontiers and cultural identities". At a time when proponents of decentralisation worldwide were claiming its effectiveness as a necessary part of reform, the Ministry had reasonable theoretical basis and considerable global bias for the adoption of decentralisation. However, the true merits of the policy could only be proved in practice. According to the report given by Nziramasanga (2000:39), the Zimbabwean government implemented decentralisation to align its education system with other global standards, but the country was not economically stable enough for this.

1.2   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In practice, implementation of decentralisation policy in Zimbabwe's education system has introduced challenges to school principals who perform the keystone administrative function at schools. Before the decentralisation policy was introduced and additional responsibilities transferred to them , according to Moyo D. ,Shumba S. , Musara S. P. ,& Mupande C. P.   (1998:11) Zimbabwean school principals were widely overloaded. Decentralisation left principals of secondary schools with immense additional workloads (De Grauwe 2001:26).

As previously noted, the government of Zimbabwe explained that the main objective for the implementation of decentralisation was a quest to provide quality education for the Zimbabwean child (De - Grauwe, 2001:30). This was meant to accommodate the bulging enrolments that were a response to compulsory and free primary education. According to the government, quality education should be achieved through the distribution of power to lower levels, a matter decentralisation policy sought to address.

Chifunyise (1998:3) expresses what he views to be the problems that the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture encountered as a result of unprecedented expansion in enrolment: namely, the inadequate supply of inputs in the schools like infrastructure, textbooks, desks and lack of effective supervision to maintain high standards and quality education. Moyo et al. (1998:6) point out that, because of the expansion in the enrolment, the education budget also increased from Z$120 437.00 in the 1979/1980 financial year to Z$11 171 786.00 during the 1997/1998 financial year. To compound the problem, Moyo et al. (1998:10) further explain that the budget shrunk from its 1979 value because of the depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar against the United States dollar, effectively seeing to the increase in educational unit costs were increasing year-on-year.

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The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture was forced to reduce its budget after 1985. It dropped from 22% to 8% of the National Budget. Because of these challenges, Chifunyise (1998:4) submits that it was worthwhile for the Ministry to consider surrendering some of its functions to local authorities who are nearer the point of service delivery through the distribution of power; to allow for speedier and more effectual decision-making.

According to Chifunyise (1999:2), government's decentralisation policy was based on the principles and policies of the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) that make specific reference to decentralisation and transfer of some functions within a specific and limited period. The formulation of this time-sensitive strategy was based on the thirteen principles adopted by Cabinet and announced by the Minister of Local Government and National Housing as a guideline to the decentralisation processes in all line ministries in 1996.

The principles were to be seen as a broad guideline for sector Ministries to develop their strategies for decentralisation (Chifunyise 1999:2). These were to ensure the harmonious implementation and management of decentralised functions, while guarding against the creation of parallel structures at district level. The principles encompassed the need to improve the human, financial and material capacities of the local authorities, and hence create an enabling environment for sector ministries to transfer some of their functions to the local authorities.

In the analysis of government circulars on decentralisation, it is apparent that policy-makers are rather vague regarding strategies for implementation. Chifunyise (1999:4) highlights what he perceives to be a weakness in the implementation process. He points out that the government policy had clearly spelt out, in the Rural District Councils (RDC) Act of 1988, that, in its first schedule, it permitted RDCs to undertake up to 64 separate functions. Chifunyise goes on to argue that this approach ignored several critical aspects of decentralisation that require clarification. Before implementation in 1999, Chifunyise makes three observations which should have been clarified:

The transfer of functions did not imply total replacement of central government's role in most of the 64 functions. For instance, government's role in the provision of critical inputs, the provision of overall strategic directives on general aspects of services, maintenance of the monitoring and evaluation of standards was not clarified. This is essential because in

some cases, central government may opt to retain important parts of the functions that it may deem inappropriate for individual RDCs to perform.

The 64 functions could not be transferred simultaneously but would require an agreed phased programme. It is important to appreciate what effective policy change and adaptation is impossible overnight, and perhaps plan phased implementation to avoid unnecessary 'shocks' to the system.

Detailed policy specifics with regards to aspects of finance and staffing along with legislation governing all such transferred functions regarding the resolution of conflicts should have preceded implementation.

Despite glaring oversights in those areas, the implementation of decentralisation policy forged ahead. According to Moyo et al. (1998:42), the Ministry was keenly aware of the urgent need to improve the quality of education by improving teacher supervision and support services. Moyo et al (1998:42) argue that these aspects had to improve in keeping with international trends to retain relevance.

The government revisited its decentralisation strategy by restructuring the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. Some positions were eliminated and many were rationalised. The rationalisation process involved the Ministry either systematically redeploying or forcing the retirement of some of its education officers. The initial plan was to retire officers aged 55 and older, and redeploy those aged 54 and younger. However, the former regional director of Matabeleland North stated in an interview on July 6, 2007, that the retention of education officers was later based on qualification and competency. As such, it was mostly education officers who were not degree holders who were either redeployed to schools or retired with packages.

Restructuring was implemented in four phases: in 1995, 1997, and 1999 and 2002. The restructuring of 1999 was widely viewed as the most resolute attempt to reduce government's education budget as planned. It is also widely blamed for critically lowering the education quality and contradicting the objectives of the decentralisation policy. Moyo et al. (1998) contend that it was in 1999, that an unprecedented thirteen subject education officers were replaced by one education officer in each district.

Following the dramatic changes in 1999, in 2002 education officers who were subject specialists in secondary schools were given the additional load of monitoring the teaching of

their subjects for all levels of education. These additional levels were Early Childhood Education (Kindergarten), Primary Education and Secondary Education. Presently, only three education officers supervise a district, which is made up of an average of about one hundred schools. Before the implementation of decentralisation, thirteen subject specialists monitored the same number of schools.

It is apparent that the task of supervising schools has become increasingly difficult and inefficient, due in part to limited and diminishing resources. This is compounded by the country's ailing economy. Travelling is very difficult because the education officers are provided no vehicles to visit schools, and where cars are available, fuel is very scarce. There are times when it is possible to buy fuel in local currency, but it is usually prohibitively costly. Most fuel stations require foreign currency, but the Ministry of Education cannot afford to use foreign currency in funding operations.

Chifunyise (1999:4) argued that the restructuring exercise has had a gravely negative impact on the supervisory structure. It reduced the number of supervisors and some of the supervisory functions were devolved to the principals of secondary schools. Because of that the re-definition of the function of the Education Officers in terms of standards control means that heads of schools have to assume a new role of 'inspectors of teachers' in their schools in order to help both teachers and heads of departments achieve quality education. Given the fact that heads of schools will now head the teacher appointment committees, this role of quality controller becomes paramount over and above that of general administration of the school.

It should be noted that responsibilities of principals prior to the implementation of decentralisation policy were not reduced to make way for new roles. It is therefore these additional workloads and numerous additional functions devolved to them that result in overwhelming overloads. Since the inception of this policy in August 1999, these principals have worked under stressful conditions (De Grauwe, 2001:26). As the principals who are at the centre of policy implementation are overloaded, the situation may affect the quality of education that is sought.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Decentralisation policy is an extremely contentious issue in the realm of education provision, not only in Zimbabwe but around the world. The topic is by no means one-dimensional, with valid arguments for and against its adoption, but perhaps not debated

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adequately in the Zimbabwean context. This study aims to make worthy contribution to understanding the dynamics of decentralisation policy as implemented and experienced by Zimbabwean principals.

RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

As a seasoned educationist in Zimbabwe for nearly four decades who continues to be active in the field, I have vested interest in the positive evolution of education policy in that country. It is my intension to make a diligent contribution that will benefit the next generation of teachers and principals and empower them in preparation for the challenges they are likely to encounter. The study should inspire critical debate in determining what elements need to be added, altered or eliminated from education policy in order to ensure the consistent delivery of quality education in Zimbabwe.

1.5   RESEARCH AIMS

This research project was undertaken with the following objectives in mind:

Investigate how the decentralisation programme impacted on principals of selected secondary schools in Matebeleland North, Zimbabwe

Critically engage with theoretical and ideological approaches to decentralisation policy.

Shed light on the on-going debate for and against the adoption of decentralisation policy in education, globally and in Zimbabwe**.**

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

I have selected interpretive methods of research for this study. These methods allow the researcher to hear respondents' experiences of the implementation of decentralisation. Researchers also benefit from observations and analysis of government documents which are part of the methods of investigation used by interpretive researchers. It means that, in addition to what interviewees say, the researcher is able to find out how the Ministry of Education implements decentralisation through personal observations. Government documents studied for this particular investigation provided the text of this policy, which will be compared with what is happening in schools.

Terre Blanche & Kelly (2004:1) suggest that interpretive methods try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurement. I planned to use interpretive methods which would give me in-depth information of lived experiences of the principals' day to day activities. Mason (2002:1) explains that one can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of the participants through qualitative research.

1.7   DELIMITATIONS

For practical purposes, this study was confined to schools in the Matabeleland North Region of Zimbabwe. International case studies are explored to provide suitable comparison to the Zimbabwean context.

1.8   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This research study and its findings are presented in six chapters, the contents of which are set out below:

1.8.1   Chapter One

This chapter explains the background of the study and provides the statement of the problem. It also provides the research aims, the justification, rationale and motivation for the study. It summarizes the research methodology used and delimitations. The effects of the unprecedented enrolments which led to the challenges that confronted the government of Zimbabwe in education funding are discussed. The implementation of deconcentration through the distribution of power that opens the discussion for this study is outlined in this chapter.

1.8.2 Chapter Two

This offers a review of literature that explores various interpretations of decentralization and its related concepts. It discusses the redistribution of power from a structural - functionalist perspective. The distinction between power and authority is discussed. The discussion focuses on decentralisation in selected international countries and the challenges governments encounter in implementing this policy in their education systems. The intersection between notions of decentralization of authority and home school partnership forms part of this chapter. Both political objectives as well as contradictory objectives for decentralization are also discussed. The impact of the redistribution of power in education systems both positive and negative are revealed.

1.8.3   Chapter Three

The chapter is a review of literature on the history of education in the pre-independent Zimbabwe. It positions decentralization during that period and compares conceptual arguments of decentralization brought forward from Chapter two and how these relate to post-independence decentralization. In addition, the chapter discusses the Education Acts that informed the education of pre and post independent Zimbabwe. The challenges of the re-distribution of power and how they impact on education improvement is included in this chapter. The economic status of Zimbabwe and its negative impact on education is also covered by the discussion.

1.8.4   Chapter Four

This chapter discusses the selection of the research design and methodology of this study. The rationale for the choice of the interpretive methods and the use of triangulation in the methods of investigation are outlined in detail. The chapter also covers validity and reliability in qualitative research as well as various methods of analyzing qualitative data and it presents ethical issues in research.

1.8.5   Chapter Five

The chapter deals with the interpretation of results that are generated from the research methods. The methods used are semi-structured interviews, simple observations and the analysis of government documents on decentralization and other circulars that speak to the distribution of power to the local levels. Responses by the interviewees have been presented without prejudice whether they appraise or criticize decentralization. Their own thoughts and experiences have been allowed to emerge without subjectivity from the researcher's interpretation. Major themes drawn from the responses are outlined and analyzed.

1.8.6   Chapter Six

This chapter presents major findings of the study. The chapter also offers recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO:

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE CONCEPTUALISATION AND DEBATES ON DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION

Decentralisation and parental involvement – reviewing the literature

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In a critical engagement with the notion of decentralisation and evaluation in education Weiler (1990:430) argued that it is not an exaggeration when Polsby calls the issue of centralisation and decentralisation 'one of the great, resonant themes of contemporary politics'. Undoubtedly, the complex nature of power makes it difficult to (re)distribute. The decentralisation debate constitutes a continuous argument on the (re)distribution of power in education from the state (as the centre of power) to the periphery or local settings. This chapter will therefore be introduced by a brief engagement with a functional structural notion of power. This will be followed by an exploration of different meanings of decentralisation as it is revealed in the literature. As it is difficult to separate meaning from its purpose and effects attention will be drawn to the debate on the relationship between the political rationales, policy development and implementation. The intersection between literature on parental involvement and formal decentralisation in education policy will be explored to enrich the structural functional notions of power.

2.2   THE REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER FROM A STRUCTURAL-   FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

Apart from a critical reflection on the rationale for and consequences of decentralisation (cf. Weiler 1990 and Lauglo 1995), early research on decentralisation was fairly extensively based on a functional analysis of the related concepts such as devolution, deconcentration, privatisation and reconfiguration and the distribution or redistribution of decision-making powers and resource allocation in education (Bray 2000; Hanson 1989; OECD 1995; SARA 1996 & 1997; Winkler 1989).

Ncube(2007) in his inaugural lecture on The Dynamics of Power (2007) explores five types of power to illustrate the functional analysis of power. The first, rather elementary form of power identified by Ncube is physical power. This form of power, however, problematic still forms part of the deployment of power. In schools this can be seen in the exercise corporal punishment. In Zimbabwe, an education officer, referred to as an inspector in the pre-independence era, was typically a powerful individual who visited schools and if he would find teachers doing something wrong, he could abuse them physically.

The second type of power discussed by Ncube (2007) can be found in referent power that refers to power by association. For instance, a classroom teacher may be related to a school principal making it awkward for the department head to supervise his/her activities because of this association. Students may wield power over teachers and may demand preferential treatment because of some kind of association with a senior authority at a school. This power is also evident in the society where police may not enforce the law because the lawbreaker is related to a high-ranking police official or politician. This kind of power may be at the root of many discriminatory practices.

The third form of power is constituted by control over resources. It follows that control over resources is accompanied by the power to distribute them. This situation is central to many debates over the efficacy of decentralisation policy. In many countries, it is argued that resources are not fairly distributed and allegations of corruption by those with power over them are common. In the pre-independence era, Zimbabwe's racially discriminatory education system was the perfect embodiment of the abuse of power over resources; as the lion's share of the government's education budget was reserved for 'white' schools while 'black' schools were neglected.

In modern Zimbabwe, the government's land redistribution policy is often cited as a blatant abuse of power over resources. It is alleged that much of the country's prime territories were claimed by high-ranking government officials, while the masses continued to remain landless. The fourth type of power is expert power that resides in an individual who possesses skills and knowledge that others do not have, yet required for success. Ncube distinguishes a fifth type of power that is seen as legitimate or official power that attempts to distinguish power from authority. Authority related to a particular position in an institution associated with an individual's status in an organisation, and accompanying rewards, remuneration or privileges the person is entitled to. This power is attended by rules, regulations and policies. The boundaries of this type of authority are clearly delimited. The hierarchical distribution of power in the education system reflects this kind of power

and forms the basis for most arguments on the decentralisation of power in education. This is furthermore linked to the notions of legitimacy of power. He furthermore argues that power, such as authority, is legitimate when exercised within the confines or structures of the organisation. For instance, at a denominational school, the head of the institution may not have authority over church functions. Official power may be withdrawn if an authority violates set rules, regulations and policies constraining governance. An offender may be demoted, dismissed or redeployed. Such discipline must be administered responsibly through well-defined channels. Due diligence is required to avoid legal reprisals

In the structural-functional approach a distinction is usually made between power and authority. The exercise of power is seen to be coercive and therefore unacceptable, while authority refers to the formal power a person has by virtue of his or her position in an organization, bureaucracy could easily be used here to typify the organization. Authority would therefore be vested in the person's position and not in personal characteristics; accepted by subordinates because the individual lawfully has the power and therefore the right to 'enforce' it and used vertically in the organizational hierarchy where it is exercised top-down. In an organizational hierarchy power or authority is furthermore vested in access to and control over resources, information and support. In most cases it relates to what Hindess (1996:5-11) regards as a form of capacity of the potentate, the one with the power. The possibility of one form of power to rule over another relates to the capacity of being able to exercise power in relation to others.

Power or structural and/or situated power relies on the assumption that the structure is the method or mechanism used to exercise power or control. It refers to both the manner of ruling and the way in which it is implemented or realized. It is postulated that this form of power vests in the following bases, namely access to and control over resources, human and other, currently 'information/knowledge', the ability to influence decisions, access to or control over compiling the 'agenda' creating the space in which decisions are taken and ways of influencing the participants in the decision-making process.

A functional structural analysis of power, such as the above, is primarily based on views that see it as a force or authority that results in behaviour that would not have occurred if the force had not been present or the ability to get others to behave in ways that they ordinarily would not. This implies that power is not something that exists separately as a substance but is a characteristic of human relations as structurally situated. This view of power is often accompanied by the idea that the best way of obtaining power is to gain control over

or access to persons (referent power as described by Ncube (2007), information and other resources such as funds, technology and equipment, and to maintain and ensure such control.

The analysis of decentralisation as a form of redistribution of power is primarily based on functional-structural analyses of power as *authority for decision-making* based on a juridical and administrative analysis such as would be revealed in the policy that speaks to the competences or authority to be decentralised. Decentralisation viewed from this perspective would reveal differences in terms of the geographical areas and politically related arenas such as the central or federal level, intermediary levels such as provincial, 'state' or other regions, the district or municipal level, the institutional level and classroom level (teacher) or group of teachers. It would also have to be related to education related notions such as decision-making with regard to various constituent aspects of education such as curriculum, learner access, teachers, assessment, organisation, physical facilities, maintenance and learning materials. If power is viewed as a the power to decide, decentralisation policies reveal complex combinations of influence that could be seen as more or less participative such as advising, consultation or other modes.

This brief functional-structural analysis of power, it is argued, underpins most of the studies on decentralisation of education where arguments are posed with regard to 'what' power resides where in the governing structures of education. Legislation on the decentralisation of power provides extensive finely nuanced description of functional linkages to the various aspects of education such as the curriculum, assessment, teachers, access and where authority or particular rights to power is located in the hierarchy. Against this background some of the most prominent 'meanings' of decentralisation will be explored.

2.3   EXPLORING MEANINGS OF DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation is a highly ambiguous concept that has been variously defined and interpreted (Govinda, 2003; Litvack et al. 1998; Lauglo & MacLean 1985; Manor, 1999; Patrinos & Ariasingham, 1998; Rondinelli et al, 1981; Sayed, 1997; Weiler, 1990; McGinn & Welsh, 1999). There are also perplexing differences in its implementation, with decentralisation and centralisation often occurring simultaneously; and often not implemented as an independent sectoral policy but embedded in larger state reforms. Furthermore, it is often implemented haphazardly, and decision-makers don't always control the pace or genesis of the process.

While decentralisation covers a broad range of concepts and each type has different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success, a basic conception common to most definitions is that decentralisation is a transfer of some form of authority from the centre to the local level. Accordingly, it may be defined in terms of the form (functional activities), the aspect involved and the level (national to sub-national) as well as the nature or degree of power that is transferred.

The process of decentralisation is furthermore a strongly contested terrain that is easily misrepresented and distorted if approached from a rational, objective perspective, where the translation of legislation into practice is seen as the logical follow-up phase in the policy process. The implementation of decentralisation policies seldom realised as intended, resulting in the introduction of rational measures to assure the more effective implementation of the policy (such as the reconsideration of the distribution of resources, training or capacity building and quality assurance or accountability mechanisms). The more effective use of resources as a result of decentralisation according to Weiler (1990:51) depends "on premises, which, when studied more closely, are rather precarious". The policy process is more contradictory and discontinuous than models with such a clear-cut differentiation between phases, functions, competencies and/or rights apparently indicates as it overlooks what Raab (1994:14) describes as the powerful interactive force of networks and/or other structures and actors in a world of pluralistic policy-making.

While interpretation of what constitutes implementation of the decentralisation varies widely, the objective of its adoption as policy by governments around the world seems to

revolve around the need to provide improved service delivery through various levels of governance, filtering through to grassroots level.

Official government ideologies governing policy-making and expert perspectives on decentralisation policy gleaned from the review of literature take on the challenge of defining decentralisation and debating the merits of the distribution of power. Because implementation varies from one context to the next, a universal concept seems elusive. Different interpretations of decentralisation and difficulty of establishing a universal understanding that decentralisation policy is meant to improve education standards is the complexity around implementing genuine distribution of power (Caldwell & Spinks, 1965; Clune & Wilte, 1996; Prawda, 1993; Varghese, 1996; Fiske, 1996; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Lane, 2000).

Decentralisation based on functional-structural analysis is accompanied by related concepts such as, privatisation, deconcentration, delegation and devolution (Berkhout, 2005:315). For the purpose of this discussion, only three of these concepts will be explored, namely deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Most governments tend to choose the simplest form of decentralisation, which is deconcentration. This involves the transfer of certain tasks and work, but not authority to other units in an organisation (Hanson, 1998:12; Naidoo, 2002; Lauglo & McLean, 1985). Where governments implement deconcentration, the distribution of power may be problematic. Rondinelli et al. (1989:7b) suggest that in its weakest form, deconcentration merely involves the shifting of workloads from the centre to lower levels. Often central governments give local government responsibilities but retain decision-making power. Deconcentration does not result in empowerment but rather a move to either ease work pressure, or to reduce budget constraints.

Although Rondinelli et al. (1981:76) suggest that de-concentration is often the first step that leads to increased decentralisation later, according to their view, this may not necessarily facilitate improvement in education standards. Litvack et al. (1998:28) and Hanson (1998:14) argue that de-concentration does not involve any transfer of authority to lower levels of government, but instead involves the distribution of responsibilities for certain services from the centre to branch offices. McGinn & Welsh (1999:18) suggest that de-concentration involves delegation of authority for the implementation of rules, but not for making them. Rondinelli (1981:133-145) further suggests that more extensive forms of de-

concentration include creating field offices for national agencies and establishing local or provincial administrative units.

Berkhout (2005:315) suggests another related concept linked to decentralisation, namely delegation. According to Litvack & Hanson (1998), delegation implies the temporary transfer of authority. It involves the transfer of decision-making authority to lower hierarchical units; authority that can be withdrawn at the discretion of the delegating unit. This definition might explain the perceived push-pull decentralisation/centralisation scenario experienced by educationists in performing certain tasks in schools.

The third concept to be explored is devolution. Hanson (1998:12) describes devolution as the transfer of authority to a unit that can act independently or without first asking permission to make decisions within a pre-specified scope. In Zimbabwe, many central education governors claim to have devolved power to local authorities, but the circulars that define this empowerment go to schools with red tape outlining bureaucracy requiring that school heads apply for central government's approval or permission to take actions on the ground. It is difficult to imagine how such measures are meant to assist in streamlining distribution. In this case, devolution in its pure sense has not occurred, but this scenario bears testament to the complex attributes of power and the snags of redistribution. Once again fairness dictates the observation for this scenario in context. Given the bizarre political and socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe, balancing policy ideals with sound implementation is an on-going complexity, especially while the country's government attempts to fulfil its mandate to make basic education fully accessible to every citizen irrespective of class. In this light, it may not be surprising that many of the desired outcomes of decentralisation may not be present in Zimbabwe's education system.

According to Rondinelli et al. (1989:74) devolution implies a shift in responsibility from the central government to local governments and must see local government given autonomy and independence that is clearly perceived as a separate level over which central authority exercises little or no direct control. The element of professional distrust on the part of the central government that denies meaningful powers being devolved to local governments can be argued as paranoid power-grabbing. Central government cites cases of nepotism and other forms of corruption as some of the reasons for limiting the reach of local government. Central government openly reserves the right to limit the devolution of power as part of its mandate to govern strategically at a macro-economic and broad political scale. Often, the inability to secure good faith, poor communication and a lack of transparency on the part of central government leads many to wonder whether decentralisation policy is in fact focused

on the improvement of education or whether it is meant to consolidate the strength of the state.

Fiske (1996:10) states that central government through devolution creates units of government that are outside its control and have the status and power to secure resources to perform their functions. Permanent authority is transferred over financial, administrative or pedagogical matters and may not be revoked at the whim of central officials. Working through concepts of decentralisation discussed in the preceding paragraphs, reveals that notions of delegation or transfer of power is a complex one.

The tables that follow summarise the desired outcomes and challenges faced by governments that have introduced decentralisation to their education systems, beginning with Hong Kong.

Table 2.2: Decentralisation in Hong Kong

Country	Desired Objectives	Challenges	Alleged Political Motives
Hong Kong	To enhance quality education and stakeholders to participate in governance and share expertise in school decision	Lack of trust between sponsoring bodies, e.g. Christian groups, the government, therefore quality education through decentralisation, and the promotion of participants in decision-making rhetoric gimmicks centralised	To tighten its control in the aided school sector by redefinition of the roles of various stakeholders
			To strengthen control and ensure education through managerial techniques

Source: Weng (2001), Leung (2001)

Relative to other nations, parents in Hong Kong do not participate in decision making. This fuels the notion that decentralisation has not occurred in a true sense despite the government's claims. This leads some to question the viability of achieving desired outcomes if power has not been redistributed to the ground. The Hong Kong government retains decision-making powers over key elements of education, offering limited autonomy to localised governance.

The following table illustrates the situation found in selected African countries.

Table 2.3: Status of Decentralisation in Selected African Countries

Country	Types of Descent/ Status on ground	Challenges
Tanzania	Status of decentralisation	Suffering from poor relations and inadequate

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		coordination between Minister of Education and Local Government authorities.
	More advanced reforms	Ministry of Education has difficulty devolving power and reorienting itself towards policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation
	Deconcentration instead of devolution	Local governance has little influence on education issues. Even the earlier permission for local authorities to adjust school terms to the agricultural practices has been removed.
	Top down decentralisation	Fiscal and administrative controls remain firmly centralised. The centre has retained most of the decision-making power.
	No further decentralisation	Lack of clarity concerning the role of local governments.
Uganda	Most advanced decentralisation in Africa, won international praise, increased participation, transparency and accountability, improvement of capacity building, etc.	Central government transfers are still insufficient.
		Local government is neither involved nor consulted on the national budget.
		Devolution may be reproducing centralisation because of roles and expectations for sub-regional responsibilities are not well articulated in the decentralisation legislation.

		Role of local governments is poorly defined and it is overlapping in terms of the assignments, functions and responsibilities.
		There is significant divergence between legal statement of roles and reality.
		Confirms the contradiction between objectives (theory) and implementation in schools.
		Lack of skills training of authorities
		Lack of resources, both manpower and major financial resources.

Source: Gershberg and Winkler (2004)

There seems to be shared challenges in implementing decentralisation in most African countries. Local governance is not given enough decision-making authority because central government is very reluctant to transfer authority to local levels and there is neither involvement nor consultation on the national budget. The little, if any, devolution that there is, reproduces centralisation and strengthens the power of the central government. Almost all African countries have the same permission to adjust school terms to the agricultural practices, but that has been withdrawn, resulting in divergence between policy texts in theory and the reality at implementation. This becomes a major challenge for implementers. Again this scenario confirms the contradiction between objectives (theory) and the implementation in schools.

There is also a critical lack of skills training of local authorities. The central government could invest in empowering manpower through training, but perhaps the major problem holding them back is readiness for transferring power or the fact that improving the quality of education is not amongst the main objectives of decentralisation, as the comparison of political objectives and the claims of decentralisation show. In Senegal there is lack of personnel to supervise instruction; four inspectors, for example, have to evaluate 796 teachers, which present a ratio of 1:99. As a result, it is reported that many teachers may go up to four years without inspection. Benin faces a similar challenge. When teachers are not supervised, they tend to relax and this compromises the quality of education.

The lessons learned from developing countries are that their education systems face challenges. According to Deem (1994:586), most of these international school reforms have been on-going for the last three to four decades. England reforms, for challenges shown in table do not seem very promising. In spite of considerable power devolved to councils, Wallace and Paulson (2003:66) report that government in Australia still lack radical reform in schools. The implications might be that the system is not effective and therefore educationists have to search elsewhere for improvement of quality in education. Chicago public schools were tasked by the government to improve three areas, as shown in the table, through devolution of power to raise standards. Going by the national level, Chicago schools still rank low. In Kentucky, the challenges range from overworking because of additional duties and having to attend many meetings (identical with our African experience), the lack of support from central authorities, and non-conducive climate for change. The bottom line is that the implementers are under pressure, therefore little progress is seen.

England seemed to move from one self-governance policy to another. The development towards the establishment of Grant-Maintained School (GM) was a significant one. According to Williams (1997:15), the Grant-Maintained schools were introduced under the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Education Act of 1993 reinforced it. There is role conflict among governors in New Zealand. Teachers find devolved responsibilities too demanding. They complain that the work piles up and diverts them from their classrooms responsibilities (Squelch, 2003:16; Wallace & Paulson, 2003:67). Clearly, this defeats the purpose of decentralised governance as a way of improving education standards.

Gershberg & Winkler (2004:329) suggest that decentralisation of real decisions can significantly increase parental participation in the school. It is, however, one thing to increase the voice of local government and yet another to listen to the voice. By the rhetoric of the distribution of power, the central government could easily claim an effort in increasing the voice of local government, but this is not happening in practical terms. Decisions that meet the needs of the clients are still centralised in the midst of decentralisation. Heads of schools and parents are loud and clear about strategies that will improve education, but the central authorities are not listening (see Tables 2.3; 2.4; 2.5).

Listening attentively to the needs of learners may mean understanding the culture of schools and their communities, and considering the strategies they use to keep their organisations operating efficiently. It will mean that central authorities will work together with local authorities, allow them to have real decision-making power and support them for effective and improved education. Both the centre and local authorities might form a synergy. Katz (1984:201-225) suggests that the term synergy describes a pattern, a particular way in which phenomena relate to each other, including how people relate to each other and to phenomena. This explains the synergistic pattern that could link central government and local authorities in the implementation of decentralisation for effective results.

Decentralisation seems to offer the promise of a new and more effective mode for organising the delivery of education. It also strengthens the role of regional and district and education offices and increases school autonomy in resource management (De Grauwe, 2004:16).Decentralisation in education continues to be a challenge at implementation level because, as Hanson (2000:408) contends, it is true that improving the quality of education is a desired outcome of decentralisation policy adoption, but is rarely if ever, the principal goal. It tends to be born in political arenas and driven by many motives which are mostly informal and frequently hidden. Sited are examples of national budgets abridged by

transferring educational costs to lower levels.Central governments are accused of distributing responsibilities to local levels but withholding power for real decision making. In essence, local authorities in fulfilling their responsibilities could aid the strengthening of central control. Hence Weiler (1990:42) observes that there seems to be a basic tension between decentralisation on the one hand and a tendency to resort to centralised control over the system by the state on the other.

Developed countries offer the lessons illustrated in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Lessons from Developed Countries

Country	Type	Status on the ground	Challenges
Australia	Devolution	Power devolved to local authorities, school councils.	Ten years later governments in Australia still need effective reform.
Chicago, USA	Devolution	One of the best-known initiatives, but its education standards declined.	After the assessment on the three outcomes legislation, Chicago showed little improvement.
		Considerable decision- making power was devolved	No progress noted.
Kentucky, USA	Devolution	Government is to distribute power to lower levels.	Schools have more work and more conflict.
			Teachers and principals no longer dominate the decision making.
			Lack of support from authorities after rhetoric devolving power.
England	Restructuring Devolution	All schools to have a governing body with full decision-making powers under the (LEA). Government decentralised through LMS. Soon there was loss of power and diminishing authority and control by LEAs.	No fair distribution of financial resources because the grant-maintained schools who opted out from the beginning received larger financial allocations than those who remained with LEAs.
		Moved from self-governance policy to another. There was a development towards grant-maintained schools for	Government has total responsibility for every aspect of the running and functioning of those schools. The

		operating outside LEAs central government.	introduction of these schools met with mixed feelings and reports on the success paint varying pictures.
New Zealand	Reforms through decentralisation launched in 1980, later the Picott Committee recommended a more efficient system that promoted challenges.	Decentralised school governance does not bring about the radical change that is desired	
	Conflicts among roles of principals, teachers and parents.	Evidence for success is not abundant	

Source: Gershberg and Winkler (2004)

The fact that the rhetoric concerning the decentralisation of power is undertaken without any change in the organisational structures may confirm the lack of decentralisation of power in practice. Lundgren (1990:27) propounds that, while reforms are directed towards increasing the influence of the clients who are the local authorities and the students themselves, the basic organisational structure is not changed at the same time. Influence and control follow the same forms and are organised in the same way as before. Everard et al (2004:50) consider the change of structures in implementing a policy a significant aspect to facilitate smooth progress. They argue that implementation depends on structured implementation and the commitment of those at the local level.

Everard et al (2004:71) add that the structures that facilitate the participation of local entities must be distinctly different from those that work best in managing the status quo. They suggest that a suitable management structure is likely to need the following: the authority to mobilise the resources necessary to keep the change moving; respect for people to persuade them rather than coerce them, and the time required to do the necessary planning. The question that arises then is to what extent have structures changed to facilitate the implementation of the decentralisation of power to local levels? The implication is that the distribution of power may be problematic to implement if the power structure remains the same. Weiler (1990:433-448) warns that central government authority for educational decision making is never totally surrendered. Other researchers who argue in favour of the decentralisation of education are also doubtful whether decentralisation engenders a transfer of power (Monkoe & Maynes, as quoted by Sayed, 1997:355; Ndegwa & Levy, 2004:317).

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Burki S. J . ,Perry G.E. & Dillinger W.R. (1999:51) warns that it is necessary to be very careful when designing education decentralisation strategies, otherwise undertaking a sectoral decentralisation dialogue without examining the intergovernmental landscape can lead to unintended consequences, such as local corruption and growing geographic disparity.While wisdom can be gleaned from experiences in other countries, a one-size-fits-all approach to adopting decentralisation policy cannot be found. Policy decisions aiming to raise educational standards are best handled contextually, by each government, with a specific attention to local needs.

Brown (1991:42) suggests that decentralisation is not a universal remedy and should be introduced wisely on a case-by-case basis. He advises that there are situations when decentralisation may not be ideal and therefore shares serious considerations to bear that may render it unwise for decentralisation policy to be adopted. For instance, if a district is busy undertaking major improvement initiatives of its own or in response to a state request; such as curricular changes, personnel will be burdened with the job of implementing them. Additional responsibilities may serve only as negative stress and adversely affect their ability to provide quality service to learners. The introduction of decentralisation demands some restructuring that often leads to job losses. Restructuring is meant to increase efficiency and streamline service delivery, but often lapses in communication and adequate up-skilling, some employees feel disempowered and threatened. They may begin to associate decentralisation with budget cuts and mass layoffs. This may contribute to a feeling of uncertainty and disgruntlement that negatively impacts implementation efforts. Brown further warns against a blanket approach to policy-making citing that small-sized districts with small enrolments (fewer than 1000 pupils) already have the advantage of close connections and streamlined coordination between the schools and their central offices, especially when school personnel work directly with central office.

One may then ask the question, is decentralisation necessary to achieve those objectives? Glickman (1990:68-75) warns that the pressure to be trendy may overwhelm the sober thought required to make such a long-term decision. He explains that it is important to think about improvement strategies in the context of local problems and the best way of solving them, not necessarily about how other education systems are doing it. If policy-makers move thoughtlessly, neglecting to take unique situational issues into consideration, they may ultimately fail to improve education for students.

2.4   THE POLITICAL MOTIVES OF DECENTRALISATION

The decentralisation of *power (*or authority) as argued above have become a part of the education reform policies of most countries, where similar advantages or disadvantages are often ascribed to contradictory rationales (cf. Lauglo 1995). The debate for and against the adoption of decentralisation policy is lively. There seems to be some consensus that decentralisation policy, rightly applied, should assist in improving efficiency and the quality of education in their executive summary Gershberg & Winkler (2003:ii) confirm that efficiency and effectiveness are most likely to improve under decentralization when service providers like schools, local government or regional governments are held accountable for results. This observation is evidenced in the Zimbabwean private schools where the responsible authorities, board of trustees and parents require statistics for the final examinations results each year. The exercise involves rewarding teachers that have produced 100% pass rate and the renewal of their contracts as well as reassessing low performers and decisions taken.

Ndegwa & Levy (2000:334) allude to the celebrated benefits decentralisation policy adoption experienced in Uganda. However, Gershberg & Winkler (2004:37) speak to the limited success of decentralisation policy adoption in Tanzania while Gershberg & Winkler (2003:iv) report from their research findings that the experience in Africa and elsewhere in the world shows that it is easy to design decentralization policies and often difficult to implement them. They argue that for decentralization to schools to be successful principals must acquire new skills in leadership and management – financial, of teachers and with the community. Winkler and Gershberg & Winkler (2003:ii) suggests that decentralization requires that national and/or regional ministries of education be restructured; failure to restructure ministries is a serious obstacle to realizing the benefits of decentralization. Falleti (2005:327) states that both advocates and critics of decentralisation assume that decentralisation invariably increases the power of subnational governments. However, a closer examination of the consequences of decentralisation across countries reveals that the magnitude of such change can range from substantial to insignificant. In both cases, these views are accompanied by cautionary remarks regarding the desperate need for more reform and reorientation at the highest level of governance.

However, some detractors contend that dubious political motives drive the adoption of decentralisation policy. As cited by Nziramasanga, Zimbabwe's central government has decentralised responsibilities to local levels but retains financial power in terms of the resources that local governments need to function. This is used to validate the view that the government has ulterior motives for adopting this policy. It is also frequently argued that the merits of decentralisation policy are desirable, but suffer in practice due in part to the

complexity of power and the external impact of social, economic and political factors influencing perceptions.

Prawda (1993) presents the status of education decentralisation in six sub-Saharan African countries and argues that while improvement in teaching/learning process is always desirable, it is not generally the primary objective of most decentralisation initiatives. Instead, political and economic objectives such as transferring costs from the national to regional budgets, bringing stability to divided regions and addressing demands for local autonomy seem to drive reform.

This view suggests that educationists may need to look at decentralisation policy as less of a panacea for addressing problems in education systems. Lauglo (1995:2) suggests the following political motives for decentralisation:

Vested interests that ruling groups have in augmenting or defending their power and its legitimacy.

The quest for political expediency needed to redistribute authority; to concentrate authority, distribute it more widely or defend existing scope of distribution.

In polarised political environments national government may be induced to retain tight control of education. Controlling the state apparatus tends to create more identification with it.

Critics of decentralisation policy allude to the strengthening of the central power through its implementation. This is therefore viewed as a reinforcement of the central power that defeats all desired ideological outcomes that are used to enact adoption of decentralisation policy.

A case study on decentralisation in Hong Kong by Malen et al (1990) and Prawda (1993) goes a step further by arguing that administrative decentralisation in schools does not necessarily result in an improvement in education quality. Fiske, quoted by Leung (2001:17-35) suggests that policy implementation in Hong Kong involves a shimmy of managerial restructuring where the main motive is alleged not to be to redistribute power or to empower the stakeholders, as is officially proclaimed. Fiske (1996:12) argues that decentralisation has political implications, even if it is function of management.

Leung (2001:18) stresses that to understand a decentralisation reform it is important to examine such issues as why decentralisation policy exists, who the stakeholders are, what degree of decentralisation is proposed, and the extent to which there is disagreement and consensus among stakeholders. Also key is determining the extent to which all affected stakeholders have been engaged regarding proposed policy amendments. The study of these questions leads Leung to an understanding that any alteration to school organisation and management is not merely an administrative activity but also a political function.

The questions that Leung (2001:20) raises are very pertinent to the decentralisation debate. Attempting to answer these questions may inch educationists to determining whether improvement of quality in education is a reasonable and achievable outcome through the adoption of decentralisation policy. It is also useful to establish the stakeholders who actively participate in, and are directly impacted by policy changes complexities arise in determining the required extent of power redistribution and subsequently identifying and measuring evidence of improved service delivery. Ball (1993:24), who defines politics as the "resolution of disagreements", seems to affirm the relevance of some of the questions raised by Leung and others. The contention that resurfaces questions most governments' abilities to perform effective redistribution of power from the centre to local entities in schools and consequently facilitate for improved education quality.

According to Leung (2001: 21), the main motive behind the Government's decentralisation policy in Hong Kong is to tighten its control in the aided school sector. Table 2.1 may suggest why the government in Hong Kong would seek to tighten its control on aided schools. In that constituent, the ration of aided schools to public schools is unusually high. As a result, Leung suggests that a government, that views schools as a vital instrument to shape moral values and political views finds itself in a compromised position as a majority of schools in Hong Kong are not under their control. This is despite the fact that aided-school model in Hong Kong is described as "a decentralisation-centralised mix" (Leung, 2001:21). Thus, decentralisation policy is used by central government to address political concerns and not to improve the quality of education.

From the management perspective, the school system in Hong Kong is relatively "decentralised". Yet, in terms of resource allocation, it is centralised. A relatively decentralised system of direct management by non-governmental organisations provides flexibility and sensitivity to local variations, on the one hand; however, the aided schools are within the ambit of central control as they depend on the government for financial assistance (Leung, 2001: 23).

Table 2.1: Types of Schools in Hong Kong

	Government	Aided	Private	English School Foundation	Total
Primary	41	677	88	9	815
Secondary	37	363	88	5	493
Total	78	1040	176	14	1308

Source: Leung, 2001:21

The Hong Kong government claims that reforms in Hong Kong are firstly meant to re-regulate the aided school sector by a redefinition of the roles of various stakeholders, thereby improving systems of accountability in schools. Secondly, with suitable accountability government intends to maximise available resources by improving efficacy in government spending on the school service (Leung, 2001:18). Despite this Leung maintains that the pursuit of "school initiative", "school effectiveness", "quality education" and the promotion of "participatory decision making" are rhetorical gimmicks used by the government to legitimise its managerial restructuring and the attempt at revitalisation of its power.

This case study goes a long way towards understanding the complexities of decentralisation policy and seek out the root of the dissatisfaction expressed by critics. To sum up Leung's research and response regarding decentralisation policy and applied in Hong Kong: he advocates that the aims of the government decentralisation reform are to strengthen control and to ensure education quality through management techniques, Leung (2001:33). It is alleged that improvements in quality as defined in terms of an efficient management of resources, output assessment, performance indicators and external evaluation are difficult to espouse.

The results of a study on decentralisation in Taiwan also attributes the adoption of decentralisation policy to political manoeuvring. Ford (1999:6) perceives many of the policy changes in favour of decentralisation during the past decade to be motivated by political concerns. According to Law (1997:50), the ruling party in Taiwan began to institutionalise representative government by incorporating two major national opposition parties into the

legislature and introducing popular election up to the presidential level in 1987. Since then, democratisation in terms of forming a representative administrative structure has become a driving force and part of reform in the government, legislature and education sectors in Taiwan.

While many of these attacks are well-argued, given the complexity of distributing power, it is not surprising that its implementation is a challenge. Again, it is apparent that much issue is taken at implementation. It seems that many critics of decentralisation policy not only distrust the motives of central government, but also government's ability to translate eloquent ideals into reality.

Implementation of decentralisation has been and will always be a delicate matter. There is sufficient evidence for intended objectives not realising when applied. For instance, in Zimbabwe, sometime in the late 1990's, a circular was sent out by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture to schools and chairs of student bodies. The circular outlined policy amendments designed to empower parents to contribute positively to the delivery of quality education to their children. *Statutory Instrument,* (1998) stated that School Development Associations (SDAs) or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) could undertake to raise funds for and on the behalf of the schools they represented, and distribute them as they saw fit.

An interview with a parent of a child schooled in that era revealed that SDA's and PTA's used their newly-endowed powers to go as far as hiring extra teachers where a shortage would result large classes requiring hot sitting for children to share key infrastructure. Hot sitting is a situation where two or more classes alternate use of classroom space, teaching resources, furniture and other infrastructure. Other parent bodies raised money for building extra classrooms where overcrowding was an issue and engaged in many other useful constructive activities.

Later, the liberal delegation of powers was later limited when parents were informed that they could only disburse funds raised for schools with right-off from the school head who was the signatory for all accounts. Furious parents were adamant that they should retain power to act as stated in the previous circular from the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture. The case was appealed to the Minister of Education, who on revisiting the issues in the circular, agreed that parents should retain the right to make decisions unilaterally.

This case both demonstrates the positive outcomes possible when decentralisation is adopted while fuelling questions regarding the legitimacy of delegated power and authority if decisions made on the ground can be vetoed at will by central government. Providing a slightly varied but cynical view, Sayed (1997:2) argues that decentralisation is an attempt by the state to operate at a distance. By doing so, it simultaneously portrays itself as champion of the people and exercising calculated control at implementation level. His study of decentralisation policy in El Salvador and Nicaragua, lead Sayed to ponder the extent to which local governance structures are prepared and suitably equipped to harness authority devolved to them. This leads him to question the true readiness or willingness of central government to genuinely redistribute power. With little in the way of preparatory training and up-skilling for local authorities endowed with new responsibilities, he argues that government knows that such policies are doomed from day one. Prud'homme (1994:23) and Lauglo (1995:2) also suggest that it may be a political strategy of ruling elites in some countries to retain most of their power by relinquishing some of it. Examples are cited in Asia and in Africa where some regimes view decentralisation as a substitute for democratisation at the national level, and a safe way to acquire legitimacy and grassroots support.

Naidoo (2002) proposes that the major general arguments supporting decentralisation policy in developing countries may be grouped under two broad categories: economic-with a focus on increasing resources, efficiency and relevance; and political- with a focus on increasing democratic participation, equity and stability. The economic rationale is that decentralisation is necessary to accelerate the pace and spread the benefits of growth, integrate diverse regions in heterogeneous countries, and use scarce resources more efficiently. The other suggests that decentralisation brings government closer to the people, allowing poorer groups to get a bigger share of government services and involving beneficiaries in planning and decision making at the local level. This rationale also theorises that decentralisation assists in diffusing conflict and ensuring political stability by providing layers of insulation between the centre and the rest of the system.

Ndegwa & Levy (2004:326) hold that decentralisation policy in education may be adopted as part of broader moves to shift accountability by offloading central government's responsibilities. This usually follows failures by the state to provide educational opportunities in remote areas and other forms of poor service delivery, and passing the buck to the community to source funding and provisions for schools. In other cases the government subsidises and supports community schools as an especially cost-effective means of expanding educational access or as part of a strategy to improve accountability through local involvement. For example, Ndegwa & Levy (2004:334) explain that, in Ethiopia, part of the impetus behind the effort to decentralise after the war was to give

voice and equitable representation to all the country's ethnic groups. Education decentralisation then took place more as part of a wider governmental decentralisation than as a sector-specific reform aimed at improving school reform.

Lauglo (1985:15) concludes that what appears to be decentralisation when viewed from the centre, may seem like centralisation when viewed from the periphery. Policies of regionalisation, when viewed academically, assume the shape of reinforced external control and the presence of an additional layer of external intervention. According to Boffo (1997:175), decentralisation may be hidden reintroduction of national steering that is used to reinforce the role of the state. Lauglo (1995:2) argues that, with regard to the scale and complexity of a national education system in individual countries, strengthening the power of the state could be one of the major motives for decentralisation.

2.5   THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN NOTIONS OF DECENTRALISATION OF AUTHORITY AND HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

So one can point out that the intercession between notions of decentralisation and home school partnerships has been facilitated by both decentralisation as well as the failure of the state to deliver education. Gershberg & Winkler (2003:ii) advocate that decentralisation of education to sub-national governments does not in and of itself empower parents and improved school performance. However, further decentralisation to schools (school councils or school boards) or local communities does empower parents and can improve school performance. According to the literature review, parental bodies that have been empowered with decision making power make contribution to support their children's learning. Decentralisation of real decision making power to schools or school councils can significantly increase parental participation in the school, and further high levels of parental and community participation are associated with improved school performance (Gershberg & Winkler (2003:ii)).

In the African context because of inadequate resources and illiterate parents and less well developed banking system. Gershberg & Winkler (2003:ii) suggest that administrative capacities are weaker, and democracies are more fragile on the other hand, the failure of the state to fund education has taught people to be more self-reliant and draw on their cultural strengths, and the tradition of mission schools provide a familiar, alternative model. Gershberg & Winkler (2003:iii) further argue that a few countries have evolved the delivery of education to regional governments, and others have devolved it to local governments

and community boards. The most common and most successful decentralisation is not the result of government policy but, rather the consequence of government failure to deliver the most basic services, the community school where local citizens finance and manage their schools is a community response to the lack of access to schooling for its children

Gershberg and Winkler (2004:342) argue that decentralisation alone seems to be insufficient to assure improved accountability of schools. The largest gains in this area appear to have come from complementary reforms that empower parental committees. Gann (1998:37) argues that schools cannot rely on a reservoir of unquestioned authority and goodwill. It is however, impossible to ignore that people expect their voices to be heard and their input integrated, and a system that allows for this should reap benefits. After all, most teachers prefer to teach children who go home to a family who encourages them to do well, complete the homework and do extra work. It follows that any child from such a home will learn better because of the alliance between home and school.

Ndegwa & Levy(2004 :214)point out that sometimes the excuse given for not devolving power to the parents or the community is illiteracy or poverty. Gershberg and Winkler (2004:330), however, argue that there is evidence that poorly educated parents and communities can manage schools. Examples emerge from a study of selected countries in Africa, El Salvador and Nicaragua in Central America where high levels of parental and community participation have been consistently associated with improved school performance. In several cases parents play a role in monitoring teacher absenteeism in rural schools and sometimes they have the power to authorise payment of a teacher's salary or salary supplements. In such cases, teacher absenteeism largely disappears as a problem. Sayed (2002:36-37) submits that the extent to which the local levels become effective mechanisms of participation for the instructional level needs to be factored into the decentralisation debate. With additional support and training, parent bodies may be better equipped to make a meaningful contribution to schools. The next challenge could also be the solution of new and unique problems that might need more experience and the expertise of professionals. In this instance Sayed's point that local authorities might not be ready to take some responsibilities or authority for decisions in schools is very valid, but perhaps not an excuse for denying them the right to participate.

Despite the challenges involved in building bridges between schools and communities, many educators have come to embrace the value of parental involvement in schools (Gold, Simon & Brown, (2005:241). While indicators such as family income and educational level are associated strongly with children's educational outcomes (Clark, 1993; Epstein & Sanders,

2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002), studies now acknowledge that, despite the challenges of poverty and lack of formal education, families of all backgrounds have the potential to encourage high achievement for their children and will become involved in education if schools reach out to engage them. However, the current school reforms argue that home-school partnership result in effective teaching and learning. McGinn & Welsh (1999:40) point out that many professional educators agree that the community, and parents especially, make an important contribution to their work. The kind of participation that is sought may not necessarily be in governance or school management, but parents can participate in activities that leadership deem suitable.

Irrespective of social class, when parents strongly support their children, they do much better at school than when parents show no interest (Wragg & Partington, 1989:135). The involvement of parents is crucial in facilitating effective learning. Kruger & Van Schalkwyk (1997:148) contend that parents are the primary educators of their children. The care, development and education of the child are the parents' responsibility and not that of the school, the teacher, the community or the state. They believe that the involvement of parents in their children's schooling is associated with higher academic achievement, as well as better attendance and more positive attitudes and behaviour.

First-hand experience has cultivated the view that most successful schools have excellent home-school relationships. Children whose parents frequent the school and help in areas as diverse as cataloguing in the school library, help in remedial reading classes or assisting with sporting activities or field trips and many other chores that the school may require, have a positive attitude towards school. It also follows that children between whose parents and the school there is mutual respect and a positive relationship, in most cases display high performance behaviours. They get motivated by the thought that their parents are knowledgeable about their progress and contribute to other school activities and functions.

Weinstein & Mignamo (1993:226) suggest that educators who work with families derive many benefits to facilitate their work. Not least, knowledge of a child's home situation and drawing from it to provide insight into the child's behaviour in class. Once families are on the same page about goals for their children, they are often most willing to provide valuable support and assistance. Families can develop and implement crucial behaviour management plans and parent volunteers can make classroom management easier.

The relationships between home and school do not only benefit learners and educators. According to Chrispeels (1996:302-303), there are many accounts of research indicating benefits for all involved: for learners, for parents and for educators. Chrispeels describes a number of associated benefits that accompany improved academic performance. These include: Improved learner attitudes, conduct and attendance, better understanding of learner's needs by parents and teachers, increased self-confidence and personal satisfaction for particular parents and grassroots support for positive school improvement initiatives that pave the way for effective implementation of education policies. Parents are the stakeholders who have the greatest interest in the effective learning of their children. It is apparent that both the state and educators would do well to elicit their support.

Most educational leaders need to be convinced that parental participation in education is central to productive educational outcomes, but it is also important not to burden the parents. Bray (2000) and Williams (1997) point out that many current theories regarding the relationship between community involvement and increased school efficiency and student learning are based on the premise that, in traditional society, the community is the primary provider of children's education. White (1917:50) states that the home is the first school and parents the first teachers a child has. This is also true from the sociological point of view. In connection with this view, Cummings and Riddel (1994: 215-246) shows that a number of scholars contend that trends toward centralised state control of education, while responsible for the expansion of educational opportunity in developing countries, impedes understanding of local needs and has limited ability to distribute resources in a way that favourably influences school outcomes. Cummings adds that, according to this theory, the limitations of the centralised model have stalled education expansion and quality improvements in many developing countries.

Swift-Morgan (2006:350) canvassed students and teachers across several subjects from all the schools that she sampled to list different ways parents and other members of the community contribute to schooling. She reports that all subject groups in all respondents listed monetary payment as a key example of the ways in which parents contribute. The irony in this situation, as revealed in the study, is that the community is very economically challenged in this part of Ethiopia. In that country, fees paid by parents directly cover teachers' salaries and necessary teaching aids. This is because the government usually only meets teachers' salaries. More often than not, salaries are often are often paid late and do not constitute a living wage. Parents are frequently required to direct cash pre-payments to schools, in order to cover operational supplies and infrastructure improvements and occasionally to supplement salaries for teachers and other personnel. One student is quoted as having stated, "Sometimes teachers ask us to contribute money and if we don't bring the

money they kick us out of class." Many parents submit that regardless of how much they value education, they simply do not have the money to pay what is needed.

It is then clear that monetary contribution cannot and should not be the only consideration when determining the support parents can offer to a school. Particularly where financial resources are scarce, other ways in which parents could contribute must be sought. In Southern Ethiopia, focus groups brought out the value of contributions in kind, parental monitoring of students, and by attending meetings at the school, Swift-Morgan (2006:351).

Specific examples of "in-kind" contributions could include collection and transportation of building materials by those who have their own transport; donation of free labour for construction, because some communities have qualified builders; and the provision, preparation of food, etc. Such contribution gives every member of the community an opportunity to participate. Frequently observed is a significantly greater willingness of parents and community members to contribute in kind was than to contribute cash.

Below is an additional list of activities in which parents contribute as presented by a Swift-Morgan (2006: 352)

Contribute cash (for capital improvement, teacher salaries, supplies, etc).

Contribute labour and materials for infrastructure projects

Monitor student attendance

Respond to teacher requests for meetings regarding monetary contribution or student behaviour.

Monitor and/or support study outside of the classrooms

Meet with school staff to share ideas in general about school reform

Participate in community meetings about improvement of the school

Advocate for the needs of the school to government and NGO actors

Elect members of the PTA

Meet with teachers regarding student academic performance

Organize to enrol and keep girls in school

Hire and pay teacher salaries

Conduct/manage income generation projects

Help protect the school against intruders

Evaluate and fire teachers

Visit the school to check on progress of improvement projects

Support teachers by providing residence nearer the school

Proposed forms of engagement for the future

Participate in more meetings and ongoing dialogue with school staff on issues of enrolment, academic performance, and school improvement in general

Participate in awareness-raising activities such as community presentation on HIV/AIDS

Assists with teaching, e.g. On topics such as Ethiopian culture (idea protested by others)

As an educator, I have noticed with keen interest that students whose parents frequent the school tend to do better in their performance, both academically and in their behaviour. The mutual relationship between home and school seems to matter to them and that becomes intrinsic motivation for meeting the expectations of teachers and parents.

Kruger (2003:9) suggests some of the ways by which parent involvement may contribute to better teaching and learning and to the improvement of the culture of teaching and learning. Cited is the engendering of a more positive spirit between parent and educator and the cultivation of a sense of trust between the home and the educator. Also, knowledge of the home circumstances of learners is vital in assisting the educator in instructional tasks. Kruger believes there is a strong correlation between a strong home-school partnership and improved learners' performance. Accountability improves both for learners who display improvement in school attendance and for teachers who are less frequently absent for class. An improved sense of well-being has been observed, accompanied by healthy sense of security and emotional stability in learners, and fewer behavioural problems. Morgan (2006:350) even suggests that the participation of a community's women, in particular, assist in boosting girl-child enrolments and improve attendance because the girls feel more secure and valued.

The positive impact of home-school partnership is indeed a strong argument for the adoption of decentralisation policy. There is much evidence for the view which holds that the closer parents are to the education of the child, the better a child develops academically and as a holistic individual. Fullan (1993:227) goes as far as suggesting the most powerful instrument for improvement in the education of a child resides in the participation of parents. The statistic that children from more privileged homes do better in school seems to be linked to the extent of parental involvement. Epstein and Sanders (2000:) offers that there is consistent evidence that parental encouragement and their participation in schools affect the quality of a learner's education. However, as with any argument for or against decentralisation, one must take care to acknowledge other influencing factors that may affect implementation. In this case, these include socio-economic standing and academic background of parents. Both affect parents' ability to participate meaningfully in their children's education.

In summary, it is difficult to ignore the positive potential a decentralised system that allows parental involvement can bring, but the extent of that involvement is predetermined by the powers that be. Could this be a situation that speaks to subtle centralised control or simply be written off to Foucault's complex view of power and the obscurity of its devolution?

2.6   CHALLENGES OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF POWER

Given the complexities regarding the definition of power, one should expect that the challenge in defining power will translate further to challenges in its distribution.Some local authorities in schools hold that decentralisation of power does not necessarily improve the quality of education. The World Bank (1999:10) argues that there are perplexing differences in its implementation, with decentralisation and centralisation occurring simultaneously because power is not distributed and often policy is not implemented as an independent sectoral policy, but imbedded in larger state reforms. Furthermore, it is implemented haphazardly, and decision makers do not always control the pace or genesis of the process.

The challenge is for local authorities to be given decision-making power beyond rhetoric of that they have been empowered. Authority from the centre does not seem to give actual autonomy at   local level. It can be argued that those in power seem to find it difficult to redistribute power, but also argued that careless devolution is not in the best interest of the learner.Support for both claims exists. On one hand, proponents laud the benefits of decentralisation and write off complications that arise in implementation to the complex

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nature of power and the trickiness of devolving it wisely. While on the other hand detractors maintain that decentralisation policy is a tool used by central governments that lack the true will to improve education standards, but rather seek to assert and consolidate influence. There is sharp criticism for government failures in implementation that does not match up with rhetoric regarding striving for the improvement of education standards.

Unwillingness to transfer power from the centre to the local entities presents a critical challenge to both the state, which crafts policies that contradicts their intentions, and to the local governments who lack power and authority to make decisions that may improve service delivery for education clients. Ndegwa & Levy (2004:317) allege that there is a gap between rhetorical advocacy for decentralisation and a genuine readiness on the part of central governments to develop or delegate authority and resources to local governments and that the actual design and implementation of decentralisation reforms inherently are political processes.

Many continue to argue for decentralisation, to allow for significant decisions about educational reforms to be made by the people who work on a day-to-day basis in educating children. This view has gained acceptance among many educators such as Goodman, Baron & Myers (2005:300). In their study of African countries, Gershberg and Winkler (2004:342) argue that officials on the ground are better-acquainted than their regional and central counterparts with the demands of their constituencies and thus better able to respond with adequate service provision. Gershberg and Winkler (2004:342) also argue that restructuring may be an imperative for successful decentralisation. Restructuring may call for readdressing the role that government should undertake at regional, district and school level. Failure to restructure adequately and re-orient governance may impede the implementation of decentralisation and negatively impact results. Sergiovanni et al. (1992:2), in their discussion on school autonomy and governmental control in the 1990's, argue that increased consolidation of power and authority for schooling at the state level has not been reversed. They explain that the state delegated the responsibility to local authorities in the 1950's but much of this authority was recaptured during the seventies and the early eighties.

Among the major reasons for the state to centralise, as given by Sergiovanni et al. (1992:25), was that categorical grant programmes of various kinds connived with the state for compliance and civil rights regulations also helped in the erosion of local authority by increasing the demands and constraints on local administration. From this explanation it is understandable that local authorities did not get either financial or moral support from the

state. Available financial resources came with strings attached and the law did not protect local authorities from attack by the public. They were bound to fail in Fullan & Baliew (2004:101) suggests that effective leaders are known to build the trust necessary for effective change. Sergiovanni et al. (1995:25) contend that, even though there appears to be a widespread loss of confidence in local authorities, many experts who study school improvement efforts are convinced that, despite the importance of both federal and state efforts, the battle for excellence must be won school by school. These experts are convinced that, although adoption of school improvement ideas can be mandated, sustained implementation and institutionalisation of changes must be school site-based. The issue of the release of power still rages, hence Naidoo (2002) argues that centralisation and decentralisation occur simultaneously. According to the preliminary review of literature, this is the trend in most of the organisations that are implementing the decentralisation policy.

Despite formidable criticisms for decentralisation policy, its adoption and effectual application has led to some laudable contributions to education service delivery. Not least of these is the increased participation of parents and immediate community in the education of their own children; with involvement spanning fund-raising for such key teaching resources and infrastructure, to influencing the acquisition of teaching and management staff.

2.7   CONCLUSION

The chapter has explored the varied notions of decentralisation in education through the re-distribution of power. The complex nature of power makes it difficult to achieve this objective as revealed by literature. Although power relationships are not overt, it is difficult to claim that a power relationship does not exist. This informs part the complexity of power, and the ambiguity in defining decentralisation. The redistribution of power in the education systems is therefore generally characterised by centralisation and decentralisation.

The functional-structural analysis of power is the basis of most studies on decentralisation. The debate often centred on questions such as 'what' power exists and 'where' it resides in government structures of education and 'who' has the power forms the argument of power relations in education institutions. The functional-structural analysis of power is primarily based on views that see power as sanctions that may take the form of coercion or authority that result in the holder of power seemingly having the capacity to make another person behave in a manner that he/she was unwilling to do before the force.

The marked difference between power and authority was extensively explored. The exercise of power is seen to be persuasive and therefore viewed negatively while authority refers to the right to act or to require the others to act on behalf of an organisation. The subordinates are willing to comply based on the belief that it is legitimate for the wielder of power to impose on them.

To illustrate, the functional analysis of power: physical power, referent expert, legitimate and power, constituted by control over resources were discussed. Legitimate or official power is established as being the basis for the struggle for power (authority) in decentralisation.

Because of its ambiguity, decentralisation is interpreted differently in different contexts. The discussion in this chapter also focused on the debates on the political rationales, the development of the decentralisation policy and how it manifests in education systems. Frequently, the objectives of decentralisation as revealed in interaction mean one thing in their texts, but they shape differently at implementation. In unpacking concepts of decentralisation such as devolution, deconcentration and delegation, it was revealed that most governments employed deconcentration, which did not produce the desired results in the re-distribution of power.

There are many challenges encountered in the implementation of decentralisation. The re-distribution of power is problematic because of its complexity. Decentralisation is understood differently in different institutions because of the ambiguity of the definition of power. Implementers are unclear about their roles with functions tending to overlap. One could conclude that the main objective put forward by supporters of decentralisation; that of improving service delivery in education to achieve quality education has been thinly achieved with tremendous challenges. There are, however, notable successes and positive outcomes that have been reported from countries like Tanzania and Uganda; not least being the increase in positive contribution by parents and heightened community involvement in the education of children; both of which contribute significantly to improving the delivery of quality education.

CHAPTER THREE: DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION IN PRE- AND POST-INDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE

3.1 INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

This chapter will discuss certain policies informing the system of education in the pre-independence era of Zimbabwe, along with those that guide the present system of education in that country. We will attempt to chart the distribution of power over time in both pre and post-independence Zimbabwe, ad unearth evidence for decentralisation policy in practice. The chapter will assist in determining the extent to which the distribution of power contributes to improved and consistent delivery of quality education. A keen eye will be kept for apparent gaps between theoretical and ideological objectives for decentralisation as outlined by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe and efficient implementation on the ground. This review will present views arguing that decentralisation, like many widely-adopted policies, may not yield desired results at implementation (Lauglo & McLean, 1985; Berkhout, 2004; Naidoo, 2002).

The Regressive Education Act of 1979, strongly favouring decentralisation, was to be the last pre-independence education policy to be enacted. This Act is widely viewed as the most significant piece of legislation influencing post-independence education policies. However, the famous Report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training led by Nziramasanga (1999-2000) suggests that the people of Zimbabwe were not economically ready for the implementation of the decentralisation policy as outlined in the Regressive Education Act of 1979. The study implies that the hoped outcomes of systemic transfer of functions to local levels by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture are inconsistent with experiences of the principals in schools at grassroots. The question that surfaces is, is decentralisation constructive to empowering principals to improve education through streamlined service-delivery?

Brief coverage of the organisational structure of Zimbabwe's education system should allow for a deeper understanding of decentralisation in Zimbabwe. It is impossible to ignore the prevailing state of Zimbabwe's economy. The impact of the country's socio-economic environment on the delivery of education will form a necessary part of the discourse.

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3.2 THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE DURING THE 21ST CENTURY

It is difficult to deny that the curious characteristics of Zimbabwe's economy defy all text-book definition. Making sense of the situation in the country seems to require living in it and closely monitoring everyday developments. The inflation rate as of June 2008 is at 1.7million percent, perhaps a record level for a country not at war. Regrettably, the declining economy has a profoundly negative impact on education. The Chronicle of Monday, 7 May 2007 quoted a statement from the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture saying that an estimated 35 000 teachers had fled to South Africa, and by the same time the following year, an additional 30 000 teachers had emigrated. The Ministry was in a serious state of panic because this finding was released a day before schools commenced for the second term. There was fear that many classes, especially in secondary schools, would have no teachers the following day, with the disciplines of Mathematics and Science to be affected most severely. This critical shortage of teaching staff was echoed by Bulawayo Central's District Education Officer who expressed that one of the high schools in his district had lost 9 teachers.

The second term, which runs from May to August each year, marks the last term before the final examinations begin. At that time, O-Level and A-Level candidates are preparing in earnest for all-important public examinations. Most teachers use the second term to complete the work prescribed by the syllabus and still require the students to go back to school for 50% of their August holidays to do revision. Some practical examinations start as early as the first week of September, immediately after the third term commences. Students whose teachers left in May would need a new set of teachers to assist them to complete their syllabi. This last minute adjustment usually disadvantages students and many of them risk entering examination season unprepared. In many cases, the Ministry of Education does not find suitably qualified secondary school teachers to fill vacant positions comprising the quality of teaching and learning for the examinable classes.

O-Level examination results are used for lower sixth-level student selection. O-Level students were invariably affected negatively because their results became available unusually late. They were released in March 2007 – two weeks before the end of the first school term. Results are usually out by the first week of February each year. Lower sixth level students usually have six weeks of learning in the first term, which ends early April. The knock on effect of this scenario is blindingly obvious. That year students in that stream lost four weeks of learning, compounding the negative effects brought on by the flight of skills. Students faced the real possibility of going through the rest of the year being taught by

unqualified teachers; a poor start to their campaign to pass A-level examinations the following year. The third school term that started on 3 September 2007 would usher in a myriad of fresh challenges.

At a meeting of principals convened by the District Education Officer (Bulawayo Central) on 6 September 2007, he disclosed an agenda topped by meeting the challenge of inadequate water-supply in schools. Schools opened despite many major towns in Zimbabwe facing serious water crises, not least Bulawayo. The DEO related that that some headmasters were calling the District office for authorisation to send the students home because of the potential health hazard of keeping them at school without running water. The DEO announced that principals were to source drums to store water and cooperate with UNICEF, which was transporting clean water to schools for relief. He informed the gathering that the same organisation was supplying replacement engines to those schools that had dysfunctional boreholes pumps. In cases, UNICEF had plans to sink new boreholes at some schools.

Despite the fact that students in all public schools were required to pay tuition fees prior to the commencement of the school term, principals reported that few had paid and suggested that many parents could not afford paying for their children's tuition due to the prevailing economic hardships of the time. Further, they reported a knock-on effect on service delivery. Much needed financial resources were lacking to secure learning materials like text books, stationery and materials required for the practical examinations in subjects such as Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics, Woodwork and Metalwork. Even in the face of these challenges, the DEO reminded the principals of their responsibility of setting the Zimbabwe Junior Certificate paper (ZJC) in their school clusters. In response to this, principals suggested that setting exams might require paper. The DEO also announced that the government was introducing attractive incentives for Science, Mathematics and Computer teachers as a retention strategy, to take effect in January 2008. This news was not very well received by the principals who argued that these incentives should apply across the board and not only in critical areas.

With the cream of Zimbabwe's education professionals quickly diminishing it is frequently suggested that the government needs to offer better remuneration packages to stem the tide and discontinue the decline in education standards. The Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre (SIRDC) released the results of a study on 23 July 2003 that it had undertaken to measure the rate and level of the so-called 'brain drain' in

Zimbabwe. They reported that "an examination of the professions of those who are leaving the country shows that a sizeable proportion of them are doctors, teachers and nurses". This report suggests that the health and teaching professions are the worst affected by the brain drain, and points out that the country will be hard-pressed to advance any development if the majority of its qualified people continue to leave Zimbabwe.

This study (SIRDC, July 23, 2003) warned that if the Zimbabwean government did not do something to make staying in the country more attractive and rewarding for skilled individuals, the brain drain will continue unabated. SIRDC researchers assert that the forces driving people out of the country were as powerful as the opportunities luring them away. They also concluded that, if the brain drain is a valid concern the main thrust of public policy in Zimbabwe should be driven by efforts to stem the tide and target should be set to achieve domestic equity, efficiency and growth (SIRDC, July 23, 2003:32). Chapter two presented a discussion on decentralisation in selected international countries, but the focus of this chapter is the application of the theory in Zimbabwe. We will proceed to trace the application of decentralisation in the pre-independent Zimbabwe to the present day.

3.3   POSITIONING DECENTRALISATION IN A PRE-INDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE

A historical sketch of education in Zimbabwe is essential may lend valuable insights that may assist in understanding some of the issues raised in the literature in the previous chapter. To start, there is an assertion that improvement of education without the distribution of power and the allocation of resources yields negative outcomes. This view is countered by te argument that decentralisation has been used to solve political problems and that the theoretical objectives of decentralisation are rarely if ever achieved at implementation. Some would suggest that in Zimbabwe the government employed systemic deconcentration; delegating tasks and responsibilities while opting to avoid the transfer power and retaining centralised control.

Historically, early attempts to develop formal education in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), in the 1930s, were initiated by the missionaries long before occupation by white settlers (Sibanda, 1990:47). The missionaries realised that the success of their teaching was dependent on basic knowledge in literacy and numeracy that their new converts could master. Apparently, these humble efforts created great interest among the local people in schools offering a more academic education. Atkins(1977:40) has stated that missionaries, from their meagre resources and donations from their overseas well-wishers, began to spread their influence

and in the process opened up more schools amongst the new converts, offering literacy education and religious dogma. This set the stage for the eventual power struggle between the mission institutions and central government.

For instance, the central government would not devolve any power over resources for the education of the black populous. While mission schools where privately funded, they had no decision-making power concerning the curriculum. The curriculum, which was in line with the government policy of segregation, was an imperative from central government. Kadhari & Ridell as quoted by Sibanda (1999:24) explained that the pre-independence administration, through the British South Africa Company (BSA Co.), was gaining control of decision making and began to put in place policies designed to create separate racial development in the 1980s.

3.3.1 Pre-independence Policies in Zimbabwe from 1899-1979

This eighty year period yielded many policy adoptions that would greatly influence government's current approach to strategy. Selected policies adopted in that period will be looked at closely.

The Pre-Independence Education Structure

This period was characterised by policies that promoted the two-tier system of education juxtaposing Europeans, Asians and Coloureds with the African education system. These systems developed separately, with unequal distribution of resources, with little clarity regarding who was responsible for the supervision of instruction. The emphasis of mission schools was on religious teaching, but the education structure below will show that central government officials wielded administrative power.

Figure 3.1, below, is a graphic representation of the two-tier system of education following the Education Ordinance of 1899.
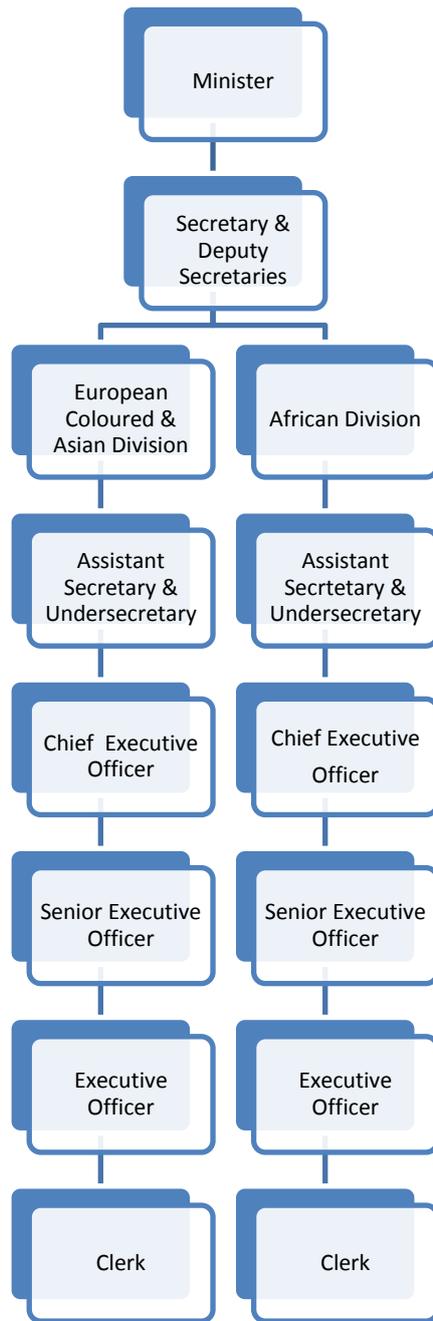
Figure 3.1: The pre-independence education structure

Source: Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 1980

The 1899 Education Ordinance policy ushered in a segregated system of education. It directed that the Africans be offered industrial training only. The curriculum included farming, bricklaying, road making, building and carpentry for boys; and for girls it involved domestic work such as cooking, sewing, knitting and any other handwork (Parker, 1960; Taylor, 1970; Atkins, 1982, & Makura, 1978 as quoted by Jaji, 1988:1-2).

According to Zvobgo (2000:56), the 1899 Education Ordinance, apart from creating a racially segregated education system, can be credited with introducing disproportionate emphasis by the State on the education of the white learners as compared to black learners. The education of the indigenous population, by default, became the mandate of poorly funded mission schools. There was unfair distribution of resources in favour of white schools as the central government had nothing to do with African Education. Zvobgo (1994:14), in explaining why the task of educating Africans was left to the missionaries prior to the 1930s, suggests (Zvobgo, 1994:14) that the state did not have interest in African education because they sought to limit Africans to unskilled labour. The cost of educating the few African chiefs, clerks and policemen that the colony needed was borne by mission institutions.

All education ordinances that followed that of 1899 had to be in line with the segregatory system of pre-independence governance. Jaji (1988:22) argues that all future education ordinances supported the dual system along racial lines because the Education Ordinance of 1899 had established it. It should also be noted that any amendments or additions to the 1899 ordinances were worded so as to make it clear that separate systems would always prevail. Taylor (1970:43) quotes the Director of Education (1919:3) as having said.

A judicious combination of scholastic and industrial education has been found, not only in Rhodesia, but throughout Africa, to be the best method of raising the native in the scale of civilization and of making him a more useful member of the state.

The 1899 Education policy was followed by the 1901 Education Ordinance which for the first time included the meagre distribution of resources through grants-in-aid for schools for black learners. These were funds that schools could get from the government when they fulfilled certain requirements in terms of the curriculum taught, and other demands of the ministry of education in terms of meeting the number of hours scheduled for industrial training. Each pupil was required to meet a stipulated period of attendance before grants were disbursed. Superficially, this sounds like a supportive and a fairer redistribution of resources, but it came with strings attached. These funds could only be released on condition that schools fulfilled certain criteria, which read as follows:

Where a Native School is kept for not less than four hours daily, of which not less than two hours shall be devoted to industrial training by a teacher approved by the administration and the average daily attendance is not less than 50, there shall be allowed annually for and in respect of each pupil, who shall during the preceding year have attended the school on at least two hundred occasions, the sum of ten shillings provided that no such annual allowance exceed fifty pounds (Atkins, 1972:59).

It seems likely that the introduction of the grants-in-aid policy was laced in political intrigue. The system allowed for central administration to retain centralised control of resources. By ordering the redistribution of resources through a complex shimmy of procedures, central government could claim to be meeting the need of the African majority, while in practice the disbursement of grants was difficult to achieve and eventually allowed for very few learners to access funding. Needless to say, this resulted in massive budget savings for the government. The two hundred days of annual attendance required by the 1899 ordinance was far too high for most village schools to achieve. Consequently, only a few schools were able to qualify for this kind of funding. This became one of the major shortcomings/setbacks of the 1899 Ordinance. Because of this, another education ordinance was passed in 1903, reducing the number of pupils required to attend school daily from 50 to 40 and the annual attendance figure per child from 200 to 150 days (Native Affairs Report, Education Ordinance, 1903). The government's claim was that 1903 Education Ordinance was designed to improve the distribution of resources through grants-in-aid that would allow more students to access education. Whether this aim was achieved in practice is questionable.

 The 1903 Education Ordinance contained the additional requirement that pupils should be taught functional English to ensure that the African would be able to follow instructions from his/her white master once he/she found work in the European areas. This ordinance was short-lived. Atkins (1972:62) explains that, even if the 1903 Education Ordinance were an improvement over the 1899 ordinance, the requirements to qualify for the grant-in-aid were still far beyond the reach of many village schools.

There was great demand for education as the number of school-going children increased after the requirements for granting aid was reduced. This weighed very heavily on the mission schools' burdened budgets. The Native Affairs Report (1949) points out that several missionary societies, on realising the magnitude of the problem, agreed to submerge their denominational rivalries and collectively started schools in several urban centres. Such

unions were not free of political in-fighting, with some officials denying some students access to education by only accepting members of their own denomination in schools.

Despite such efforts, it was not possible to absorb all eligible children into the black schools. Ridell as quoted by Sibanda (1990:46) explains that the situation persuaded the government to raise its grants towards assisting the mission schools in 1949 and also decided to participate in the provision of primary schools in certain urban areas. The ruling party realised that equitable distribution of both resources and decision making had become imperative. Both the mission schools and the government institutions were sharing education funding, although the percentage of their funding was insignificant in comparison with the financial resources the government was spending on white education.

3.3.2 Government-Missionaries Partnership in African Education

The government gradually took over responsibility for providing primary schools in towns in 1949. This marked the genesis of a partnership between the government and the mission institutions. Government progressively took full responsibility for African primary schools in the urban centres and decentralised direct responsibility for schools in the Tribal Trust Lands to missionaries. An anomaly here was that primary schools in urban centres offered free tution while those under missions were required pupils to pay fees (Sibanda, 1990:53). This unfair distribution or resources groomed discrimination towards rural African schools – with most rural schools servicing mostly black constituents. The influx of enrolments and acute demand for education among African children of school-going age, forced the government to set up a number of Commissions of Inquiry. The Judges and Care Commissions of 1952, for instance, were asked to carry out investigations into government policies on African Education.

Following the publication of the report by the Kerr Commission in 1953, the political landscape in Central Africa was altered because of the formation of a federation comprised of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This led to the decentralisation of responsibilities by the Federal government when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was established. European Education of the three territories, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became a responsibility of the new Federal Government which controlled the overall finance portfolio. Territorial governments were given the responsibility of administrating their respective African Education systems (Sibanda, 1990:54) without financial resources. The Federal government continued to allocate

finances along colour lines, with segregation of white and black children continuing. The Judges Report of 1962 had also made some recommendations that are listed below.

3.3.3 The Contributions of the Kerr and the Judges Commissions

The Kerr Commission's recommendations, as presented in Nziramasanga's Report (2000:4) include "the need for compulsory education in all areas for all citizens". The report warned against decentralisation of education or even experimenting with the policy, citing the organisational nature of the country's communities, capacity building and the levels of administrative know-how and experience as prohibitive to effective decentralisation. In spite of these valid reasons, the Zimbabwean government still decentralised. The emphasis of the Judges Commission Report of 1953 was on access to education.

The Commission, according to Sibanda (1990:54), observed that African Education in the primary sector had grown sevenfold since 1952. In spite of the growth rate, the children on farms and rural areas were still the most marginalised. It also recognised the existence of a deliberate bottleneck policy affecting African children only. This was abuse of power by the central government. The Commission recommended the provision of primary education for all up to seven years, but did not require it to be compulsory.

In dealing with some form of decentralisation involving local authorities of the time, the Judges Commission recommended the establishment of "Local Advisory Committees" to advise the central government through regional offices in relation to pre-vocational training for employment and training facilities in their areas. The central government diluted the recommendations on vocational Technical Education for African schools into the F2 secondary school system. That government developed highly financed and equipped comprehensive secondary schools for white children in 1955, an example being the rise of the Allen Wilson High School (Nziramasanga, 2000:6)

One of the most controversial pre-independence policies was the Education Policy for African Areas (1973). It was deliberately calculated to slow down the expansion of primary education by the missionary agencies. The power struggle between central government and the missionaries was still raging. This policy called for immediate reduction of the annual allocation of funds for African Education from 8 percent to 2 percent of the Gross National

Product (GNP). This decision clearly centralised the resources that had been re-distributed to local authorities and made it difficult for the missionaries to run the system.

The extensive recommendations by the Judges and Kerr Commissions, as discussed by Nziramasanga, (2000:4) were suggested to improve standards of African Education and the conditions of service for the teachers. There was also pressure to decentralise power to the local authorities (school boards). As evidenced by the Education Policy of 1973 and the Education Act of 1979, central government seemed determined to maintain the central control of power and resources. Zvobgo (1994:36) pointed out that the total expenditure of the government account on education was $74.6 million in the financial year of 1977-1978. Of this amount, $31.7 million was for White children's education and $42.9 million was for Black children's education. On average, this translates to government spending $552 on every white child and a shocking $52 on every black child.

Sibanda (1990:59) states that the 1973 Policy also declared that the expansion of African primary education was to depend on local initiative with immediate effect. The Ministry of Education decided to implement the recommendation of the Commission by giving responsibility for African primary education to the African Councils. These Councils were to be responsible authorities in those areas that could open new grant-aided primary schools. The policy spelt out that councils were to negotiate the take-over of schools from the missionaries on a voluntary basis. Most schools transferred from missions to councils, but the few that opted to remain mission schools were allowed to operate on an unaided basis. They were denied access to financial power. Later the financial burden forced the remainder of schools to transfer to African Councils. The responsibilities of the African Councils were spelt out. These responsibilities were transferred from central government but were withdrawn before implementation.

3.3.4   Responsibilities of African Councils as laid down by The Education Act of 1973 (Sibanda, 1990:58)

According to the Education Policy for African areas (1973), the African Councils had three distinct responsibilities:

They were encouraged to accept responsibility for educational services and facilities at primary school level in the African areas in Rhodesia.

African Councils were to be the responsible authorities for grant-aided primary schools in the Tribal Trust and Purchase Lands.

They were to be the only responsible authorities in those areas that had authority to open new grant-aided primary schools.

It should be noted, however, that the responsibilities of African Councils as prescribed posed serious challenges at implementation.

3.3.4.1 The Contradiction of the Education Act of 1973 at Implementation

The act proved to be difficult to implement for several reasons linked to the scenarios listed below:

African Councils were given limited powers for financing the primary education system.

Most of the powers were invested in the District Commissioner who supervised all councils under his jurisdiction to ensure that they acted in accordance with government policies.

Powers relating to the professional functions of schools were vested in the officials of the Ministry of African education (Policy, 1973).

These issues and others form the basis of many views that argue that the education policy of 1973 ushered in token decentralisation measured that were designed to consolidate the power of the state over resources. The assertion is that the empowerment of African Councils was designed to displace and to counteract the influence of mission institutions in African education. However, the implementation of this distribution of power to local councils became a challenge because of the following reasons:

The distribution of power was not the objective. The purpose for decentralising this particular function was to address a political power issue existing between the government and the missionaries. Devolution of power to local authority was not really the issue. The real issue was that the government was not anxious to see the expansion of African education by the missionaries.

The political context of government was segregatory and as such, the environment for implementing change was not enabling. Given that fact, it is not surprising that the government opted to empower the District Commissioner, instead of the African Councils, as initially stated. Devolving power to Africans was not quite in line with the political ideology of the time. At the end of the exercise the power of the state was strengthened

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because their mission was accomplished. Policy text prevented the district commissioner or the mission agencies from independently opening new schools. African Councils who ironically did not feature at the implementation level of decentralisation policy were given powers to do so, creating a disconnect that effectively required state intervention in most matters.

In some cases, the inadequate supply of skilled and qualified Africans to take up decentralised functions hindered the effectuality of policy adoptions. However, some policy-makers who appreciated and understood the impact of local communities in the management of schools and genuinely wanted their participation made efforts to train and empower these communities for meaningful contribution in certain tasks, not necessarily management. Sibanda (1990:60) who suggests that the purpose of decentralisation under the control of African Councils was therefore to direct and control the work of local authorities, rather than to provide them with necessary financial support and technical guidance in their work. It was not to give them power.

The Education policies in pre-independent Zimbabwe were in line with the political climate of white supremacy. It followed, therefore, that whatever move was made to improve the African education system, whether by the efforts of missionaries or through the recommendations of the Inquiry Commissions, segregation was to be maintained.

Attempts to decentralise power was proposed by the commissions but the government maintained the right to power in controlling the African Education System and the inequalities in the distribution of resources. Mungazi as quoted by Sibanda (1990:39), presented a table that shows the discrepancies in education spending that discriminated between the White and Black children.

Table 3.1: Discrepancies in the Unit Cost of European Education against that of African Pupils

Period	White Students (Including Asians and Coloureds)	African Students
1964 -1965	$197,30	$18,40
1965 - 1966	$206,00	$18,90
Increase	$8,70	$0,50

Mungazi (1982) has pointed out that the table clearly shows that the Ian Smith government in the sixties not only spent more than 10 times as much for non-African education as it did for African education, but it also increased the unit cost per White pupil by more than 17 times that of the African pupil. There were many other education ordinances between the 1960's and independence in 1980 which will not be discussed in this chapter. Exploration of the Education Act of 1979 is important because of its influence on post-independence policies.

The Education Act of 1979 had major implications for the African education system in Zimbabwe. It is widely credited with reviving and reinforcing segregation after raising hopes that things would improve.

3.3.5   Implications of the Education Act of 1979

After the Education Act of 1979 was passed by Ian Smith's government, there was pressure from political unrest by the black majority. They were unhappy with what is broadly regarded as the most regressive policy enactment of recent times, the Education Act of 1979 (Government of Rhodesia, 1979). At a time when violent insurgence was at its height in Rhodesia the government was beginning to fear the political awareness expressed by the Black masses and smart from the effects of the armed struggle. Ian Smith masterminded an internal settlement with some political parties in Rhodesia. This internal arrangement was overtaken by events of the 1979 Lancaster House talks in London (Jaji. 1988:27-28). The results of the Lancaster House talks led to the democratic elections held on April 18, 1980 which culminated in the birth of Zimbabwe as an independent nation. However, the proceedings and the results of the Education Act of 1979 stated below remained a contentious issue to this day (Musekiwa, 1988:22). Listed below are some of the most fiercely debated issues:

The Act stated that people had to own a house within certain geographic zone to be able to send your child to a school in that particular zone, and in order to qualify, individuals had to own properties. The implications of this Act were obviously to further deny access to sound education to the African child, because the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 did not allow Africans to live in White areas, except perhaps domestic workers in those areas.

Public schools were sold to some local communities at a virtually give-away price, and such community schools were allowed to determine who could be admitted into the schools. This decentralisation through privatisation is viewed by many as a deliberate move by the

government to further deny African access to education, because those communities were given the decision-making power to select students for admission. This strategy was overtaken by the Lancaster House talks and it was not fully implemented, but it may be indicative of the indirect strategy of seeking to devolve powers over public resources to individual communities for political reasons.

A domestic worker in that area could not send his/her child to the school attended by an employer's child. Even in cases where employers wanted to sponsor their worker's children in such schools, the Act denied the Black child admission. There were very few Africans living in the areas where the zoning was applied in terms of the Land Act of 1930.

The Education Act of 1979 marked the end of colonial rule spanning 90 years (1890-1980) (Ministry of Education, 1981a). The following quotation epitomises what the new government in an independent Zimbabwe would do to reverse the regressive education policies their government had inherited. The Prime Minister, Mr Robert Mugabe, proclaimed, "I make bold to say, to change Zimbabwe we must first change the educational system. Our children in school today are after all, tomorrow's workers and leaders" (Ministry of Education, 1981b). The new government appeared determined to address the issues of access to and equity in education to meet the aspirations of the Zimbabweans. Such issues informed the agenda in the implementation of new policies.

3.4   THE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN ZIMBABWE IN 2008

At present, formal education in Zimbabwe is divided into four levels:

Pre-school (a compulsory level now referred to as Zero (0) grade)

Primary,

Secondary and

Higher Education (Ngwala et al.,1990:4)

There are two ministries of Education in Zimbabwe. These are:

Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MOESC), and

Ministry of Higher Education and Technology (MOHET)

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture is in charge of Primary and Secondary education, non-formal Education, Sport and Culture. The responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology is to monitor all Higher Education- Universities and tertiary education such as offered in Technical Colleges. This Ministry looks after all Civil Servants, including their remuneration through the Public Service Commission (SIDA/MOESC Capacity Study, Novk, 1998).

MOESC is centrally run from the Ministry's Head Office, with personnel matters extending to the Public Service Commission in the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Social Welfare. They include the Minister and Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary and five Directors, each in charge of a division, housed at the Head Office of the Ministry. The five divisions are Human Resources Development, Finance and Schools, including Adult Education, Education Development and Sports and Culture. Each division has a Deputy Director, supported by an Education Officer or Education Officers. Figure 3.2 outlines the distribution of responsibilities in the current structure of education as of January 2008.

Most of the functions which were initially decentralised from the head office are currently centralised. Practical examples of these mentioned by the principals is the recruitment of teachers. Even where the table shows tasks devolved to the Provincial Education Directors and District Education Officers, these officials do not have decision-making power. Decisions are made at the head office by the Permanent Secretary. Parents have been given the responsibility of running schools without financial support, and they have no power to make decisions in generating revenue. Numerous functions transferred to schools also came without financial resources and schools cannot make any administrative decisions.

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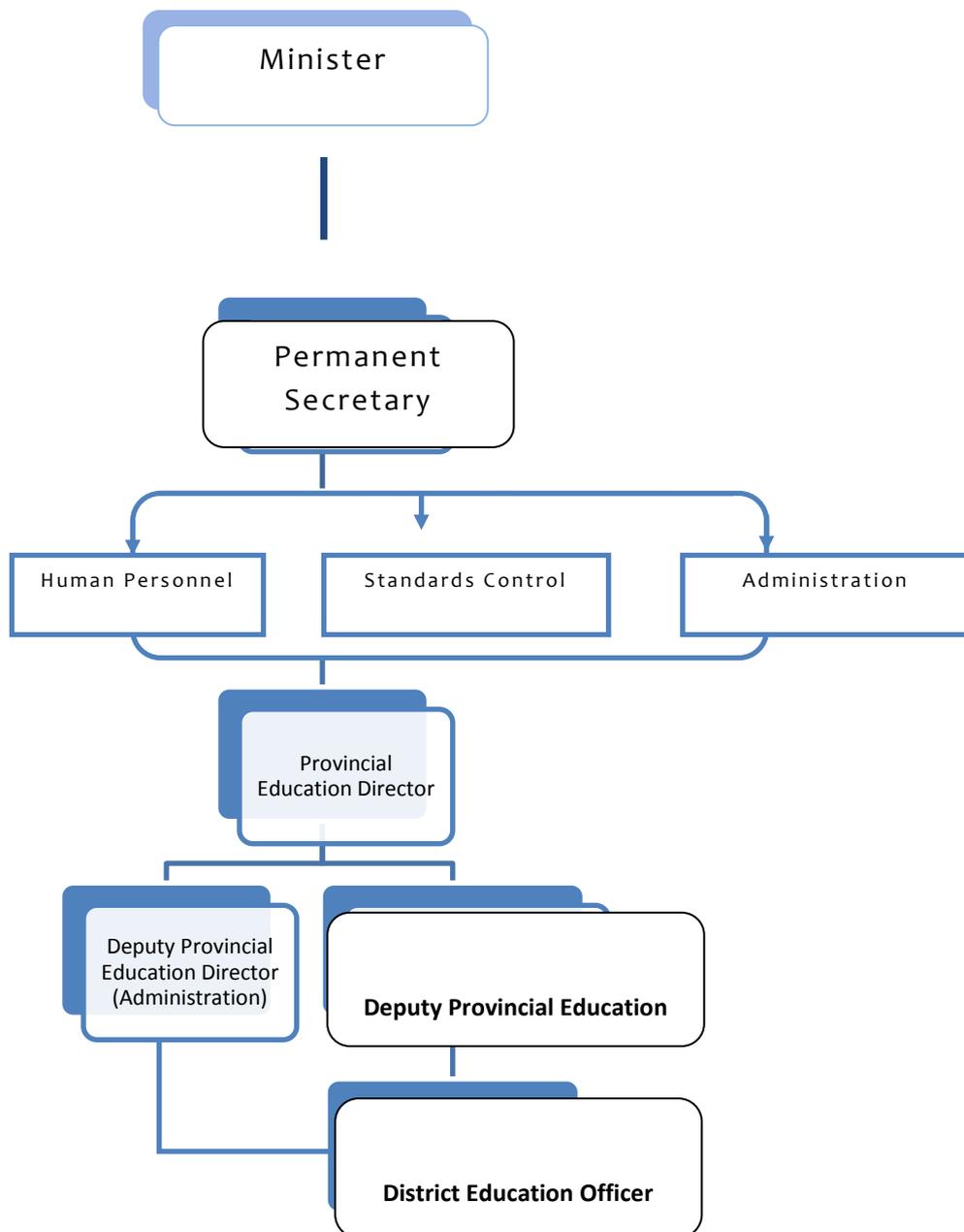
Figure 3.2: Operating Organisational Structure 2008

The Minister is a figurehead with political power. The policies are made by the Permanent Secretary who is the professional administrator under the Civil Service. Three deputy Permanent Secretaries are in charge of human personnel, standards control and administration. They implement policies through the supervision of the Provincial Education Directors. The decentralisation claim is that the Provincial Education Directors have been given decision-making power, but this is deconcentration. They can only recommend the cases they deal with; disciplinary cases, for instance, cannot be finalised in the region, hiring and firing also have to be recommended to the Public Service Commission. The dilemma is that the Public Service Commission is not part of the organisational structure but it is functional–perhaps the most powerful organ of the central government. Promotions recommended by regional offices can only be confirmed by the Public Service Commission. This is the only sector that can make decisions on the remuneration of Civil Servants.

There are two deputy Education Directors who look after administration and standards control. These Directors supervise District Education Officers. The District Education Officers in turn interact directly with the school principals who work together with parent bodies who are School Development Committees (SDC), School Development Associations (SDA) or Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA) in some cases.

The operating structure as of January 2008 shows distribution of responsibilities but power is still centralised. In an interview with the principal of School A, he asserted that nobody has any decision-making power except the head of the Public Service Commission. He explained that he, as a principal, could not charge a teacher or expel a student. He could only recommend cases to his immediate superior, the Education Officer, who would forward related recommendations to the District Education Officer to be passed on to the Deputy Provincial Education Director (Administration). From there, cases follow protocol until a decision is made at a head office. Even the Permanent Secretary has no power to make decisions.

In an interview conducted on September 6, 2007, the Deputy Provincial Education Director Bulawayo Central alluded to the fact that people have responsibility, but power still resides with the central government. He explained that, in his view, officers have no power. Paying salaries or purchases school supplies, for example, is impossible without head office approval because the decision for payment of any purchases lies there. The result of such centralised power is that schools go for long periods without supplies.

There is a clear overlap of roles in this system. To a large extent, the two education officers find themselves dysfunctional, or without any role to play. That is because principals, in most cases, perform supervisory roles and report directly to the District Education Officer. They may also take administrative issues directly to him for quick feedback. The education officers may become demotivated and feel marginalised because they are often bypassed. Some officers left the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture during the implementation of decentralisation because of role conflict. In an interview with both DEOs and EOs they confirmed that there is serious duplication of roles. The consensus was that these officers had significantly more power to make decisions in their districts before the implementation of decentralisation, compared to the prevailing token power in the education system to date.

In many cases principals seem to work co-operatively with the School Development Committee and School Development Association. Parents take an active part in taking the allotted responsibilities but they have no real decision-making power, even if there are government circulars that empower them. According to Nziramasanga's Report (2000:82-83), there was a suggestion concerning the distribution of power to Education Advisory Boards at both national and regional level. This report suggests that no such boards exist and that schools are owned by various authorities ranging from Government to Urban and Rural District Councils, Church organisations and farmers. There are a number of independent schools also called Trust Schools. Government pays all teachers, except the additional teachers employed by Responsible Authorities or other bodies that run schools. The State is in charge of education standards in the country through the Standards Control Unit.

The implications of the "most regressive" Education Act of 1979 became the first target soon after independence. Peresuh and Nhundu (1999:43) argued that in order to meet the aspirations of the majority of people and maintain popular support, education was declared a basic human right which could not be denied anyone who needed it. According to Zvobgo (2000:30), education was not a privilege for a few only, but had to be designed to meet the needs of every citizen and the nation.

Within a year of political independence in 1981, the new government of Zimbabwe introduced a set of educational reforms designed to redress the disparities and inequalities inherited from the previous regime (Lewin, 1993:62). The dual system of education which

had existed before independence was abolished, and several strategies were adopted to put in operation a policy of massive expansion in education headlined by the following items:

Primary education was declared universal and compulsory.

Tuition at primary level was free for children of all races.

Repetition of classes was highly discouraged on efficiency grounds.

Children completing primary school had the opportunity to attend four years of secondary schooling (before independence they had to pass the 7th Grade; this   was   automatic promotion).

The zoning system which existed before was relaxed to allow surplus children to enrol in schools outside their zone.

Communities and local authorities were to contribute more towards the provision of education.

Schools were to be within walking distances for all the children and boarding facilities were discouraged as these were sometimes up to five times more expensive than day schools.

Retired teachers and a large number of unqualified, under-qualified and expatriate teachers were recruited to teach in schools.

Pre-school, adult and non-formal education programmes were expanded to raise the literacy levels of citizens.

Numerous other education policies were put in place soon after independence. As Zvobgo (2000:30) states, the government policy on education first appeared in the Party's 1980 Election Manifesto. Item L of that document expressed the government's commitment to maintain a uniform education system of high quality in respect of both its organisation and content. The Manifesto of 1980 further outlined the six cardinal principles which would guide education in an independent Zimbabwe. Three of the most profound are listed below:

The abolition of racial education and the utilisation of the education system to develop in the young generation, a non-racial attitude, a common loyalty;

The abolition of sex education in the education system;

The orientation of the education system to national goals/the special role of education as a major instrument for social transformation.

Many new policies were not fully analysed in terms of what demands their implementation would make on both financial and human resources.

3.4.1   The Impact of Policies on Financial and Human Resources

The policy on free primary education that was accepted in 1980-81 had serious repercussions on both human and financial resources. Zvobgo (2000:55) explains that the budgetary proportion for education rose by 53.36 percent in 1980. Administrative costs also soared as the system expanded and called for more manpower at all levels. Of the education vote of $184,712,000 primary education received $41,970,000. The funds voted for education proved inadequate and prompted the Ministry to request a further rise in the vote during the 1981-82 financial years.   These resources were much higher than government could meet without assistance. The main challenge of education funding was encountered in the financial year 1982-83 when as much as 22 percent of the national budget was allocated to education alone. This was still inadequate in meeting the demands of schooling (Education Secretary Report, 1980-1987).

Nziramasanga's Report (2000:10) affirms that the new policies resulted in phenomenal expansion of educational provision and access during the period 1980-90. The expansion put pressure on human, financial and infrastructural resources, as well as on teaching and learning resources. The majority of the pupils who completed Ordinary Levels could not be absorbed in high schools, teachers colleges, the training sector institutions or the labour market. Two factors were responsible for this problem. The first was that the government did not have adequate resources to cope with the growing enrolments. The other factor that is also related to lack of resources is that the Ministry of Education had an academic curriculum which did not give students an opportunity for relevant practical skills training for the labour market. The offer of such practical skills required specific capacity building and resources which the Ministry of Education was having difficulty in funding. Nziramasanga's Report presents the tables given below, which showed the projected school enrolments for the year 1990 and beyond and demonstrated that some positive action had to be taken urgently.

Table 3.2: Projected Primary enrolment

YEAR	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	SPECIAL	TOTAL
1985	346335	326426	331028	347265	357937	304416	214121	600	2228128
1990	395000	351360	329828	307059	286887	275367	282513	1100	2229114
% CHANGE	14.05%	7.6%	-0.04%	-11.5%	-19.8%	-9.5%	31.9%	83.3%	0.4%

Table 3.3: Projected Secondary enrolment

YEAR	F1	F11	F111	FIV	FV	FVI	VIIU	SPECIAL	TOTAL
1985	153439	137943	101970	91723	4173	6000	3200	300	498748
1990	248355	266766	272389	234765		8000	6440	800	1037515
% CHANGE	61.8%	93.3%	167%	156%	-100%	33%	101%	167%	108%

Source: MOESC – Structure and content of General Education, 1986 as quoted by
       Nziramasanga (2000)

In the light of such unprecedented expansion, Zvobgo (1986:55) warned that, if alternative ways of generating funds and cutting down government expenditure on education were not found, a point would be reached when government could not meet the exorbitant costs of running an ever-growing system. Zvobgo added that, while free primary education for all was a sound democratic ideal, it was not sound practical economics, particularly for a developing country. He argued that, to place those who have the means to pay for their children's education in the same category with the poor and all the disadvantaged was not sound, realistic economics because it meant spending rare resources on those who needed the least help. Zvobgo suggested that everyone who earned a minimum wage of $150 per month should pay for their children's primary education.

During this period (1985-90) the quality of education in Zimbabwe began to decline because the expansion in enrolment did not match the resources that were available. Claims were that the government opted to adopt decentralisation to ease the mounting pressure to meet budget demands. The government maintained that while it was true that the budget was failing to balance and parents had to partner with government to bear the cost burden

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of education, the aim was also to empower local administrative levels and allow parents to be more invested in their children's education. Initially, parents were tasked with partnering with government to fund learning. In no time deconcentration had occurred which saw the transfer of many responsibilities to school principals; almost to the point of overloading them in some cases. These responsibilities came with little or no decision-making power. The Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe left all school funding to the parents, except the remuneration of teachers - a responsibility which was to remain with central government. Despite the additional funding responsibilities passed on to parents, they were left very little decision making power.

Decentralisation in Independent Zimbabwe

Education structures introduced in post-independence Zimbabwe are illustrated in Figure
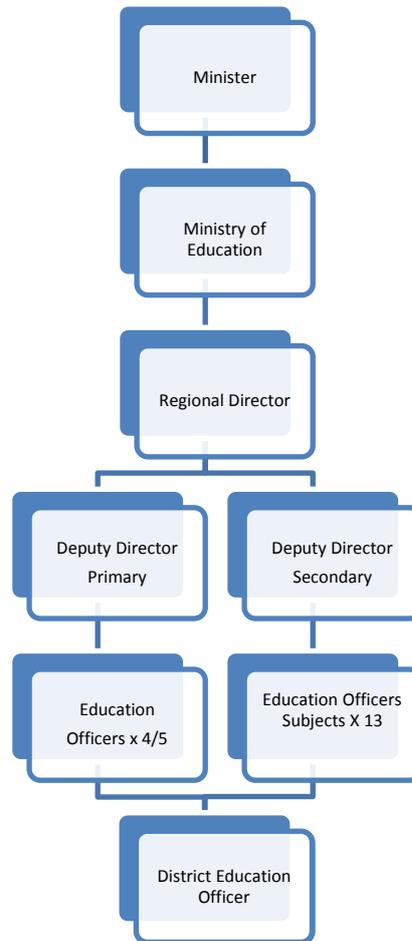
3.3 and Figure 3.4

Figure 3.3: Post-Independence Education Structure (1)

Source: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture – Zimbabwe, October 1997.
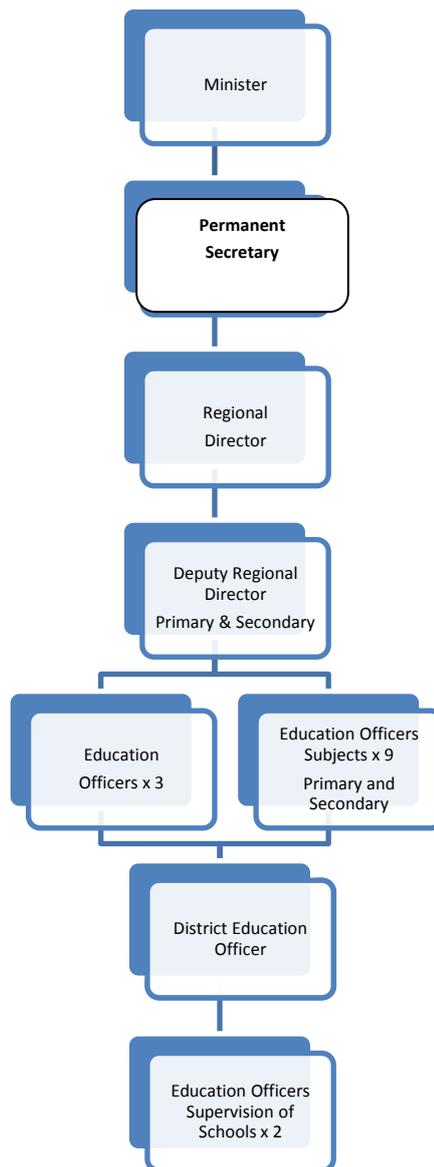
Figure 3.4: Post-Independence Education Structure (2)

Source: Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, October 1997

The post independence education structures show the transfer of responsibilities from the Head Office. Of importance in Figures 3.4 and 3.5 is the result of restructuring, which is explained fully in Chapter one in the Ministry of Education. In Figure 3.4, Primary and Secondary Education are shown as monitored by a Director but this responsibility was given to one Director, as shown in Figure 3.5, as a result of restructuring done in 1996. Similarly, there was a significant reduction in the number of subject Standards Control Education Officers, from 13 to 9, and there is none in the operating educational structure of 2008. In all post-independent structures, District Education Officers execute the following functions:

Dealing with decentralisation issues at district level

Dealing with all education issues at primary and secondary levels

Interfacing with all local authorities

Staffing

Co-ordination of distribution activities

One of the changes that came with decentralisation was the reduction and eventual removal of subject specialists to oversee the country's education system. Many hold that the initial reduction of subject specialists in secondary schools and their eventual elimination has negatively affected education standards. The responsibility of school supervision has been devolved to principals who, in most cases, do not possess expertise in all subject areas. In an interview on September 7, 2007, the Deputy Provincial Education Director expressed his reservations regarding the move to eliminate subject specialists as part of the process of decentralisation initiated by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. In his view, specialised education officers were key to monitoring the quality of education in Zimbabwe, which he believes was second only to Egypt in the late 1980's.

When the decentralisation policy was suggested in Zimbabwe in the 1990's, the time was critical because the country was experiencing serious economic problems. Many education reform programmes were under-funded, especially in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, as is evident in the tables showing the enrolment expansion and preceding costs.

Nziramasanga's Report (2000:103) suggests that the stakeholders outside government were discouraging the implementation of decentralisation because the government was not coping with the demand for resources. However, the report points out that the government proceeded with its plans despite widespread calls for caution.

3.5   ALLEGED POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OF DECENTRALISATION IN ZIMBABWE

According to Chifunyise, the then Secretary of Education, Sport and Culture (1993:3) the decentralisation programme in Zimbabwe is defined as a legislated transfer of functions from central government to local authorities such as rural district councils and municipalities. Chifunyise explains that his Ministry has decided to adopt all five

components of decentralisation, which entail devolution, delegation, deregulation, de-concentration and privatisation. He adds that this will make it simple to achieve the objectives of decentralisation.

Decentralisation in Zimbabwe has not adopted five components of decentralisation as alluded to by the former Secretary of Education and Culture (Chifunyise, 1993:3). On the whole, deconcentration has been implemented and this simple form of decentralisation can only transfer responsibilities without any power to make decisions. In certain cases, delegation has been used. In this form, higher authorities may devolve certain functions to lower levels, but these can be withdrawn whenever central government decides to do so.

Sibanda (1995:5-6) expresses that often the pendulum swings more to the centralised approach than to decentralisation in the management of education in developing countries like Zimbabwe. He suggests that the concept of decentralisation takes one of the two forms: deconcentration and decentralisation. In deconcentration the ministry of education devolves authority to its sub-units at regional and district levels. These sub-units are given more authority to make decisions and also to ensure that policies from the central government are implemented. Parallel with deconcentration there is a comparatively weak decentralised local government structure running down to the grassroots level, that is, the community and school level. The decentralisation is defined as weak because major decisions of policy, including finance, are made at the centre or through the deconcentrated central authority units in the regions and districts. In this kind of decentralisation, the responsibility for the finance and delivery of education is transferred to local authorities.

Secretary of Education (Chifunyise, 1999, 2000) presented the following as the main aims and objectives of the decentralisation process:

To promote democracy, public participation and civic responsibility in the development process.

Increase efficiency and effectiveness in government and therefore enhance service delivery.

To reduce the direct role of central government administration in the delivery services.

The aim of the decentralization programme is to empower people to make important decisions on critical development issues that affect them on a daily basis.

The programme is also aimed at devolving authority from central Government as part of a shared vision, collective responsibility and good governance.

It will improve the country's education and reduce expenditure.

It will enable the government to save millions of dollars by shedding some functions.

It will reduce the government's budget deficit.

It will broaden the ministry's financial base.

The aims and objectives given for decentralisation are always contradictory when compared to claims made for the process. The situation in Zimbabwe is similar. As a quick example it can be pointed out that most of the objectives given by the former Secretary of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe are meant to benefit the state. Objectives that can serve as examples include that decentralisation will do the following: Decentralisation would assist central government curb its direct role in the delivery services; lessen expenditure on education; ease the government's budget deficit; and broaden the Ministry's financial base. This scenario may strengthen the argument that decentralisation strengthens the power of the central government. Moreover, as the Nziramasanga Report (2000:98) argues, decentralisation of functions does not address and assure the devolvement of financial resources and other related resources from central government to local level. Without the decentralisation of resources it is not clear how the quality of education will be maintained and improved under a decentralised system.

It should also be noted that the government of Zimbabwe was going through a major economic crisis which hugely affected education, particularly in the period 1981-90 when it implemented the decentralisation policy. Nziramasanga's Report (2000:101) further suggests that the government had run out of money and was using decentralisation to pass on the responsibility for financing the system to lower authorities. This is also confirmed by the objectives, for example, to reduce the expenditure; enable the government to save millions of dollars by shedding some functions: reduce the government budget deficit; and broaden the Ministry's financial base. According to the report, some schools were left with bills unpaid by the government.

3.5.1 Transfer of Functions to Local Levels

The local levels to which some functions were transferred, according to former Minister of Local Government and Housing, Nkomo (1998), are Rural District Councils, Urban Councils and other responsible authorities such as Churches, Mines, Local School Boards and Boards

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of Trustees. Another of the objectives put forward for decentralisation in Zimbabwe was to offer quality education although they do not define what constitutes quality as it may be interpreted and understood variously.

Nkomo re-emphasised the government's concern with regard to offering quality education as one of the major objectives for decentralisation in Zimbabwe, but it was not the intention of the central government to transfer functions to local levels with accompanying resources.

In July 1996, Nkomo explained that the decentralisation strategy of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture was based on the principles and policies of the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social transformation (ZIMPREST), which made special reference to the decentralisation and transfer of some functions within a specific and limited period of time. Nkomo has confirmed that the formulation of this strategy was also based on the thirteen principles adopted by Cabinet and announced by his Ministry. One example of the thirteen principles reads:

That decentralisation be defined and understood to mean the legislated transfer of functions and authority from central government to local authorities such as the rural district councils on a permanent basis. Once provided for in law, such transfer of powers and functions can be reserved only on the basis of an amendment to the appropriate Law. (Nkomo, 1998:4)

The transfer of functions is presented in the table that follows.

Table 3.4: Transfer of functions

| WHAT should be Decentralised | Sitting locating, establishment, construction and maintenance of school libraries, schools. ECEC centres and centres for disabled children | The establishment and maintenance of school grounds ECEC and Non-formal centres. | Procurement of textbooks and stationery not using per Capita Grants which should be disbursed directly to schools/ECEC and Non-formal centres. | Collection of levies, fees and other charges for the running of the schools and ECEC/Non-formal centres | The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture would source for and disburse direct to the Councils building grants for Secondary Schools. |

TO WHOM	Local authorities and responsible authorities in consultation with the landowner where applicable.	Ras, SDCs/SDAs School and Community	SDCs/Das Schools	SDCs/SDAs, Schools and Responsible Authorities.	Responsible Authorities
How should decentralisation be done?	Through consultation among key stakeholders, STAKE-HOLDERS: RD, Cs, Urban Councils, SDC/SDAs, line Ministries, professional	Through consultation and participation of key stakeholders, STAKE-HOLDERS: Las, SDAs/ SDCs. Schools and Responsible Authorities.	Through consultation among the key stakeholders and buying to best advantage STAKE-HOLDERS: Teachers, head suppliers	Through consultation of key stakeholders and regional offices to control and regulate the changes	Through budgetary provisions and identifica-tion of needs. STAKE-HOLDERS: MOESC. Las
Time Table	By Year 2000	By year 2000	01 01 99	01 01.99	With immediate effect

Source: John Nkomo, 1998

The former Secretary of Education, Sport and Culture at a press conference in 2000, stated that standards of education would remain a function of central Government for a while, in order to ensure that high standards of education are maintained. He explained that the issue of curriculum and examinations was being negotiated with stakeholders. To date, these remain centralised.

From Chifunyise (1999) I have obtained a matrix (above) that shows the order in which the transfer of functions followed from the Public Service at the head office, to the head of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and to the Provincial Education directors. From the provincial education director's level, one of their responsibilities was to construct/create district education offices. The new district office was then to devolve power to schools and parental bodies.

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Table 3.5: Decentralisation of Functions

HEAD OFFICE PERM SEC →	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION →	PROVINCIAL EDUC. DIRECTORS →	DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS →	SCHOOLS
	1. Promotion 2. Advancements 3. Transfers 4. Regrading of teachers, deputy heads, heads, education officers, etc.	1. Co-ordination of district activities 2. Professional supervision 3. Curriculum innovations 4. Disbursement of grants 5. Construct DEO offices	1. Deal with decentralisation issues at district level 2. Deal with all education issues (primary and secondary) 3. Interface with all local authorities on both general education issues and the decentralisation programmes 4. Staffing 5. Administration issues 6. Co-ordination of district education activities 7. Professional supervision	1. Recruitment of teachers – select and recommend candidates to the DEO through a staffing committee of stakeholders comprising the head, a representative of teachers and SDA/SDCs 2. Retention of school (tuition) fees 3. Collection of levies 4. Establishing a School Finance Committee comprising of the head, representatives of the teaching staff and SDA 5. Take complete responsibility in setting up boarding fees because the government would no longer subsidise boarding fees – full cost of running these schools was to be met by the parents 6. Establishment and maintenance of school grounds

3.6 CHALLENGES OF DECENTRALISATION IN ZIMBABWE

Restructuring, as a function of decentralisation that reduced the number of supervisors in schools, had a negative impact on the supervisory structure. Most of these functions were devolved to the principals of secondary schools. The restructuring exercise of 1999 reduced the government budget and this represented the achievement of one of the major objectives of decentralisation in Zimbabwe. The result of this is that lack of supervision in schools remains one of the major challenges of decentralisation in the Zimbabwean education system.

3.6.1 Critical Lack of Supervision in Schools

The International Institute for Education Planning, under the leadership of De Grauwe (2001: 138), undertook research on School Supervision in four African countries, namely: Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. De Grauwe (2001:138) reports that his team grouped the problems in Zimbabwe under four headings: management issues, working conditions, co-ordination and attitudes. Co-ordination between services is weak, and supervisors do not always show a positive attitude. This attitude problem, supervisors claim, is the result of what they feel is the disregard from which their reports and recommendations suffer. They are of the opinion that they have little impact on schools and even less on policies. They argue that some policies actually hamper their work. The example that they provide of such policies is that of free primary education, which makes it very difficult to persuade parents to contribute to the development of schools.

De Grauwe (2001:139) finds that this becomes one of the major management problems mentioned by the supervisors. The supervisors explain that the recruitment of secondary school officers is problematic, because some heads and deputy heads occupy posts of the same grade as education officers. Therefore heads, as elsewhere, do not compete for these positions, with the result that several posts, especially at secondary level, remain vacant. The second issue pertains to a lack of continuous and specialist training and professional support. Thirdly, the monitoring is ineffective: the supervisor's performance is judged mainly on the quantity of reports that are produced in a given period, while their impact on teachers and students plays a minor role. Fourthly, the absence of clear norms de-motivates staff and their career opportunities are very limited.

An issue related to management concerns the lack of autonomy at district level. The report stresses that decentralisation, although an official policy is not consistently implemented, especially where resources are at stake. Funds remain centrally controlled, which has at least two negative effects on district supervision: planning within districts is dependent on the availability of those funds, and the room for manoeuvring by supervisors to act upon their own recommendations becomes more limited (De Grauwe, 2001:139).

In one of my interviews with the regional director of Matabeleland North (Moyo, 2003), he confirmed lack of supervision as a major concern. There were 10 000 students in the region and a total of 616 teachers in primary and secondary schools. He had only 36 education officers for supervision. A secondary school head (2003) argued that one of the drawbacks in supervision was that decentralisation has led to disempowerment and the abolition of posts for subject Education officers for secondary schools in the region and devolved the responsibility to supervise secondary school heads and their staff to District Education Officers without subject specialisation. He reported that both secondary school heads and their staffs were resisting this on professional grounds. Meanwhile, there has been no effective supervision at either district or regional levels. The heads, because of overload, were barely filling this gap.

He explained that the abolition of posts for subject supervision left a skeletal team of education officers to take charge of general subject supervision from primary through secondary schools, each over and above their field of specialisation, expertise and experience. He added that critical issues such as interpretation of subject syllabi and the development and application of specific and most relevant professional didactics have languished under too generalised and at most mediocre supervision by unspecialised personnel.

Another major challenge that De Grauwe (2001:138) reported from the supervisors was lack of other resources, which hampered effective supervision. These are listed below:

Shortage of transport, with the result that some teachers have not been seen for more than a decade. Supervisors depend on other offices or even private people for transport.

Lack of secretarial staff to write the supervisors' reports. The number of schools per supervisor has increased to 1:300 teachers and this further compounded a heavy workload.

Poor involvement by communities in school supervision. Communities do not play a special role in ensuring teacher presence or checking their performance. They are not contactable

by supervisors when they visit schools; therefore they are not informed of the supervisors' reports or recommendations so that they can do follow-up with the teachers.

One of the Rural District Officers of Lupane in Matebeleland North (2004) interviewed, alluded to the shortage of transport. He stated that transport hindered the process of decentralisation in rural areas. He explained that his district has not had a vehicle since 1998. He appreciated that the officers could once in a while borrow a car from the region, but they could only keep it for a week and very few schools could be covered. Mr Sango had 20 secondary schools and 97 primary schools to take care of. He admitted that he had not visited some of these schools in the last seven years. He identified a further challenge as lack of effective communication with schools. Most often mail was sent by public long-distance buses and this caused a lot of delays.

The fact is that standards in schools remain unchecked. According to De Grauwe's report there is a possibility that teachers in some instances might not report for work at all, as supervisors report that communities could also monitor both attendance and performance. Then, again, anything could happen to rural buses carrying mail to schools. These important documents might be lost or the buses might break down and be unable to travel for days while waiting for parts. Meanwhile communication is grounded. This certainly does not provide quick service delivery of education. Decentralisation has no capacity to improve the quality of education. That the country of Zimbabwe was economically unable to implement the decentralisation policy has been discussed earlier in this chapter. The following section reveals to what extent people outside government had voiced their dissent regarding decentralisation.

3.6.2 Public Opinion on the implementation of the Decentralisation Policy

The most important part of any educational reform is its implementation. Success will be measured by the strength of implementation. Pratt, as quoted by Carl (1995:167), suggests four factors that promote implementation. They are:

Continuous contact with implementers to give advice and help

Clear communication to illustrate roles, to explain technologies; illustration of possible means of evaluation and supplying answers to the well-known queries concerning *Who*? *What*? *When*? *How*? and *Why*?

Provision of support services, for example spelling out time scheduling and creating a climate within which trust and security figure and through encouragement of teachers.

Compensation, for example financial, praise and acknowledgement.

According to Nziramasanga's Report (2000:103-4), the researchers found that people had mixed feelings about the implementation of decentralisation. Teachers and parents had different reservations. From this report I have used the matrix below to summarise the different opinions of people in Zimbabwe about decentralisation.

Table 3.6: Perceived advantages and disadvantages of decentralisation dvantages of decentralisation	**Reasons put forward** Education has been hampered by a slow bureaucratic approach. Decentralisation will enhance competent use of resources and better delivery. It will reduce red tape. The possibility of tremendous benefit brought about by the participative approach in education, its administration and management. In a decentralised system more people at a lower levels would be motivated by the vested interest for their children, put their shoulder to the plough and improve the delivery system of education
Disadvantages of decentralisation	Present economic climate was not conducive. Government will use decentralisation to pass responsibility of financing education to other authorities. Teachers struggled in the past to become civil servants. They wished to remain with central government. Their experience with local governments had been unsatisfactory because their salaries were at times late or not paid. Parents were concerned about the curriculum, control of standards, resources, financial security and transparency. They spoke about maladministration and corruption. Councils had failed them in the past by diverting education funds for other purposes such as the building of roads. Unless they decentralised to authorities that demonstrated the necessary capacity. Decentralise to responsible authorities that have proven to have capacity such as

churches, specific   SDAs/SDCs, boards and trustees.

Education is as important as security of a country; it should not be relegated to inexperienced local authorities.

Decentralisation could lead to major differences in the provision and quality of education because of varying endowments, natural resources and ability to raise revenue by sectors of the population. Rural economic base was poor. It could open doors for abuse, regionalism, nepotism, political interference and corruption.

Past record of councils was marred by maladministration, corruption and intrafactionalism. People were afraid that the quality of education would suffer.

Rural & urban councils themselves were keenly aware of the need for financial assistance from central government and their inability to handle education if entirely left to their own resources.

3.7   CONCLUSION

In Zimbabwe's pre-independence era, education policy was coloured by inequity and prejudice. The white minority government that controlled the country at the time introduced policies to repress the black majority and consolidate control over the country's natural wealth and production capacity. The Education Ordinance of 1899 made it exceedingly difficult for non-white schools, particularly in the rural areas, to access government for funding. Much of the financial burden of schools for indigenous populations was borne by mission institutions, who themselves experienced considerable financial limitations and administrative pressures from the government.

By the 1970's, facing extreme political pressure to integrate the black majority into the mainstream economy and enact equitable resource allocation in Zimbabwe's education system, Ian Smith's government made a token effort to pacify the restless mood in the country. The Education Act of 1979 was a thinly veiled attempt to keep the lion's share of education disbursements and resources in white hands. Overtaken by the Lancaster House Agreement that would lead to democratic elections and newly elected government in 1980, education policy would now need to change drastically to reflect the neo-socialist ideals of the new Robert Mugabe led government.

Straight off the bat, the new government liberalised education, declaring that learning was the right of all and offering free primary education to all including previously disadvantaged adults and veterans of the armed struggle who needed education in order to reintegrate successfully into formal society. The additional budget demands of this move took the knocked the government sideways, and by 1990 the government had back-pedalled its position admitting that parents had partner with government and contribute to their children's education for the sake of sustainability.

The modern era sees Zimbabwe in an unenviable state of socio-political decline. Isolating the effects of education policy is difficult in this context, given the complex knock-on effect made by severe cash shortages and scarcity of basic essentials like fuel, healthcare, sanitation, clean water and affordable food nutrition. However, most recently central government has introduced decentralisation policy with the apparent aim to empower local administrative levels and parents to contribute positively to make service delivery more efficient and improve the quality of education. The move is not without its critics; but that would have been expected even under the best of circumstances. The Ministry of Education,

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Sport and Culture stands by its decision, citing international successes for similar models as motivation.

Accusations of political manoeuvring will take a lot to silence, with some pointing out that decentralisation is no more than a passing of the buck and the consolidation of power and resources by desperate, cash-strapped government. The central government's chosen path is not without its challenges.

Capacity for sweeping change is clearly lacking with human and learning resources at an ultimate low. The review of literature in this chapter shows that the majority of the relevant stakeholders in Zimbabwe were against the implementation of the decentralisation policy. Many feel that the environment was too militant for decentralisation to be introduced successfully and resent the fact that the government ignored dissent from the nation to slow down the process. Given the depressed economy and a population looking for the government to make good on promises made as long ago as 1980, pressure is definitely on the government to show that decentralisation policy can indeed deliver improved quality education for all, as is the government's mandate.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design that I planned to employ in my field-based research. I describe or define interpretive/qualitative research as seen by different authors and its function in my research. I also explain my rationale for selecting this design based on relevant literature. The methods of investigation are outlined fully in the context of my research needs. The last part is a discussion of the analysis of qualitative data.

4.2   WHAT IS INTERPRETIVE RESEARCH?

Interpretive methods of research are narrative methods that tell the life stories of people in the social world. These narratives focus on the experiences of participants in this study of the implementation of the decentralisation of power and decision making in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe. They also tell about the manifestation of the claims of decentralisation and the effects of this policy in the education system. Terre Blanche & Kelly (2004:1) state that interpretive methods try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurement. Other authors affirm the above view. Gall et al. (1996:594) argue that qualitative researchers investigate lived inner experiences of people which have been neglected and even disparaged by researchers who adhere to positivist epistemology.

Mason (2002:1) explains that we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world through qualitative research, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and the imaginings of research participants. I need this depth of understanding to be able to interpret what my participants' experiences mean to their lives and to be able to convince other researchers about my findings. Silverman (2000:8) states that the methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data. Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) write that qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the social actors themselves.

In an attempt to define qualitative research, Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) give key features that distinguish qualitative research from quantitative research. They are outlined below:

Research is conducted in the natural setting of social sectors.

The focus is on process rather than outcome.

The actor's perspective (the "insider" or "emic" view) is emphasised.

The primary aim is in-depth ("thick") descriptions and understanding of actions and events.

The main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context (idiographic motive) rather than attempting to generalise to some theoretical population.

The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories.

The qualitative researcher is seen as the "main instrument" in the research process.

Qualitative methods were best suited for my research because I wanted to visit participants in their contexts and hear their stories concerning their worlds. In the context of my study, I wanted to listen to the stories and see what artifacts there are to support their stories. Neuman (2000:146) argues that the context in qualitative research is critical. He explains that qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of social context for understanding the social world. Researchers hold that the meaning of a social action or statement depends, in an important way, on the context in which it appears. When a researcher removes an event, social action or conversation from the social context, social meaning and significance are distorted. In support of the same view, Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:2) established that, in the social sciences, the meaning of human creations, words actions and experiences can only be ascertained in relation to the contexts in which they occur. They state that, faced with texts (be they recorded words, graffiti scribbled on toilet walls or old photographs), social scientists, whether psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, or any other, usually deem the task of understanding to involve "recontextualisation" i.e. the text is placed back in its context and there understood.

The natural setting in schools could give me a rich experience because I would see the life of the respondents – their activities and how they do things in their particular contexts. Singleton, as quoted by Silverman (2003:9), suggests that field research is essentially a matter of immersing oneself in a naturally occurring set of events in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation. Interpretive research is advantageous because it allows the researcher to be the key data collection instrument in contexts. This was a privilege because I was likely to have access to any visible artifacts as a participant observer and this would strengthen my ability to interpret constructs on my data.

It would furthermore be easy to validate stories that my respondents told because I, as a data collection instrument, was exposed to the first-hand information. Concerning contexts, Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:2) suggest that interpretive research relies on first-hand accounts; it tries to describe what it sees in rich detail and presents its findings in engaging and sometimes evocative language. Denzin et al (2000:2) confirms that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

4.3   METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

I called the Regional Director of Matabeleland North to make an appointment for the first or second week of May 2005. The purpose of my visit was to tell my story: who I am and what I wanted to do. I also requested an interview with him at a date convenient to both of us. During that interview I asked for a written letter authorising me to conduct interviews and do observation at the selected schools between the months of May and August 2005.

I was referred down the hierarchy, first to the Education Officer, then to the District Education Officer (DEO). The DEO issued a letter explaining to the respective school principals that I would explain the purpose of my visit. I made appointments with the relevant respondents, both for interviews and for observations.

4.3.1   Negotiating Access

What I had to bear in mind at that stage was the importance of building rapport and negotiating relationships with all the respondents and everyone and anyone who waited on them. Most qualitative proponents refer to these as 'gatekeepers' and affirm the significance of negotiating with each one of them for a successful interview or observation. Neuman (2000:352) explains that a 'gatekeeper' is someone with the formal or informal authority to control access to a site. It may be the thug on the corner, and administrator of a hospital, or the owner of a business. Informal public areas (e.g. sidewalks, public waiting rooms, etc.) rarely have gatekeepers; formal organisations have authorities from whom permission must be obtained. Field researchers expect to negotiate with gatekeepers and bargain for access. The gatekeepers may not appreciate the need for conceptual distance or ethical balance. The researcher must set non-negotiable limits to protect research integrity. If there may are many restrictions initially, a researcher can often reopen negotiations later, and gatekeepers may forget their initial demands as trust develops. It is ethically and politically astute to call on gatekeepers. Researchers do not expect them to listen to research concerns or care about the findings, except insofar as these findings might provide evidence for someone to criticise them. Dealing with gatekeepers is a recurrent issue as a researcher enters new levels or areas. In addition, a gatekeeper can shape the direction of research:

Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:133) suggest that researchers should negotiate with all of them, seniors and junior ones. Mason (2002:91) states that researchers need to negotiate access with the relevant 'gatekeepers' and should not assume that access is either granted or denied universally to a setting. They must continue to use their critical judgment to assess what kind of access they have, for example, it might be full, partial, conditional or intermittent – and to which regions or interactions. The researcher should focus upon forming and managing relationships with others in the setting.

In addition to negotiating access, Neuman (2000:354) suggests the researcher should disclose the project to the gatekeepers unless there is a good reason for not doing so, because some gatekeepers could seriously limit or inhabit research for illegitimate reasons (e.g. to hide graft or corruption). According to Gall et al. (1996:554), identifying appropriate sites and working with 'gatekeepers' to obtain necessary permission are critical steps in case studies. If not done properly, the researcher may have to abort the study. First impressions created at a site can also set the tone for the entire relationship between the researcher and field participants. I was aware that I had to build trust with both gatekeepers first and with respondents for a successful investigation.

4.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

I planned to use semi-structured interviews, observations and the analysis of government documents on the decentralisation debates. I intended to use three types of instruments in this study to allow for triangulation. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:22) explain that triangulation entails collecting material in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible. This can help the researcher to "home in" on a correct understanding of a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles. Apart from data triangulation, a researcher could also engage in method triangulation by analysing data both quantitative and qualitatively. I did not, however, expect the same result when I used different methods of investigation, but to get a better understanding of my study. Gall et al. (1996:547); Neuman (2000:124-5) and Mason (2002:66) have affirmed the function of triangulation.

I selected to use the semi-structured interviews as one of the chief methods of investigation because I was interested in the stories that my respondents had to tell concerning their lives and experiences in the distribution of power in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:34) suggest that conducting interviews with people is more interactive than asking them to fill in a questionnaire. Interviews give researchers an opportunity to get to know people quite intimately, so that they can really understand how people think and feel. They give the respondents an opportunity to give detailed information about themselves in answer to the open-ended questions.

 Gubrum & Halsteins, as quoted by Denzin & Lincoln (2000:647), note that the interview has become a means of contemporary story telling where persons divulge life accounts in response to interview inquiries. Because I hoped to get in-depth narratives of what was really going on, interviews could provide me with that kind of information. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:652) advocate that loosely structured interviews can provide a greater breadth of data than the other types, given the qualitative nature of such interviews. Mason (2002:62) affirms that qualitative interviewing is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviews. I am also convinced that it is important to listen to what people have to say and how they perceive their experiences and that I had to take what they said seriously although I needed to verify or, rather, validate their stories.

Mason (2002:63) supports my ontological and epistemological position. She argues, "If you choose qualitative interviewing it may be because your ontological position suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties of social reality". She elaborates that,

if you have chosen to use qualitative interviewing you should have an epistemological position which allows that a legitimate or meaningful way to generate data on these ontological properties is to talk interactively with people, to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations or to analyze their use of language and construction of discourse.

It is also true that listening to people's stories may create empathy and subjectivity, but in spite of that I was sure there could be a lot of valuable knowledge in the stories and that interacting with them through interviews would help me better understand their experiences. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:1) affirm that to assume that people's subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously is an ontological position and that we can understand others' experiences by interacting with them and listening to what they tell us is an epistemological position. I invited life stories in the distribution of power.

Since I interviewed different people at various levels on the same subject, it was necessary to contextualise my questions. Rose (2001:172) shares the technique she used. She explains that she "prepared for data collection by setting forth a pattern of interviews that would be identical for each participant but would, at the same time allow for individual needs and differences to emerge".

Qualitative interviewing may involve different types of interviews. Among the frequently used are one-to-one interactions, large group interviews or focus group as they are broadly known. These interviews may take place face-to-face or over the telephone or the Internet (Mason, 2002:62; Gall et al., 1996:311; Neuman, 2000:272; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:650. I employed the face-to-face and the focus group interviewing technique.

4.3.2.1 Face-to-face interview

I used the face-to-face interview to find out from my respondents what their experiences of the distribution of power to lower levels in the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture were. I also asked them about any manifestations of the claims of decentralisation in their lives in schools. I used a tape recorder to collect and store data. At the initial meeting, the purpose of the interview was explained; confidentiality and anonymity were also assured. The respondents were informed that the interviews would be transcribed and the discussions returned to them for comments and approval. These audiotapes were to be stored for replay if needed.

4.3.2.2 Advantages of face-to-face interviews

Interviews have an advantage over the use of questionnaires as mentioned earlier (Neuman, 2000:272). Babbie (1992:269) suggests that face-to face interviews have the highest response rates. He argues that these interviews can be more advantageous than telephone interviews because it is possible to observe the surroundings and use non-verbal communication and visual aids. Babbie (1992:269) advocates that respondents in face-to-face interviews seem more reluctant to turn down an interviewer standing on their doorstep. He also adds that interviews can also provide a guard against confusing questionnaire items because it is possible to probe and clarify such items. Other researchers affirm highest responses from these interviews because the opportunity to talk to a good listener and to have one's ideas taken seriously and noted down is a chief positive aspect of an interview.

It should be noted though, that, in spite of the advantages, interviews also have shortcomings.

4.3.2.3 Disadvantages of interviews

Interview bias is one of the major disadvantages of interviews. Contemporary researchers use the term "going native" in referring to ethnographers who identify so closely with the culture they are studying that they lose all perspective (Terre Blanche & Kelly 2004:20). Many researchers warn against bias. Among these are Babbie (1992:27); Best and Kahn (1993:252); Rose (2001:172) and Daiute and Fine (2002:61). Other writers suggest that the extensive use of direct speech is an effective strategy of avoiding bias. Rose (2001:172), in an attempt to avoid bias, makes the following statements in her data analysis:

I decided to allow each participant's voice to be heard so as to make clear connections among the themes of the stories. I used as much as possible direct quotations from interview scripts. This clarified the fact that each voice was given its own room to emerge, unhindered by my own thoughts or experiences.

When speaking of bias, Clinchy & McVicker (2002:30) uses Elbow's term "projection in the bad sense" – which is "the tendency to see the other in the self's own terms". Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:134) use bracketing to imply that "we need to give up manipulation of phenomena in favour of allowing this to show itself by an intimate communion with it. They argue that our preconceived notions and prejudices often come in the way of intimate communion and we should therefore try to bracket them".

Neuman (2000:278) identifies six categories of bias as follows:

Errors by respondent - forgetting, embarrassment, misunderstanding, or lying because of the presence of others

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Unintentional errors or interview sloppiness - contacting the wrong respondents, misreading a question, omitting questions, reading questions in the wrong order, recording the wrong answer to a question, or misunderstanding the respondent

Intentional subversion by the interviewer - purposeful alteration of answers, omission or rewording of questions, or choice of an alternative respondent

Influence due to the interviewer's expectations about a respondent's answers based on the respondent's appearance, living situation, or other answers

Failure of an interviewer to probe or to probe properly

Influence on the answers due to the interviewer's appearance, tone, attitude, reactions to answers, or comments made outside of the interview schedule.

As I gained insight into engaging in interviews, I came to a realisation of interviewing as a major but rewarding task. I found the guidelines below very helpful and went through these valuable strategies as I prepared for conducting effective interviews.

4.3.2.4 Guidelines for Conducting a Research Interview

The following guidelines were compiled from the various sources listed below:

Assure respondents of absolute confidentiality before beginning the interview. If necessary, explain the procedures that will be used to assure confidentiality.

Build rapport by engaging in small talk before beginning the interview and by using an everyday conversational style.

Save complex or controversial questions for the latter part of the interview after rapport has been established.

Explain the potential benefits of the study to the respondents.

The interviewer should talk less than the respondents. As a rule, the less the interviewer talks, the more information is produced.

Pose questions in language that is clear and meaningful to the respondent.

Ask questions that contain only a single idea.

In phrasing questions, specify the frame of reference you want the respondent to use in answering the question, for example, ask, "What do you think of the way your child's teacher handles parent-teacher conferences?" rather than "What do you think of the teacher your child has this year?" The latter question might be appropriate, however, if the goal is to determine the respondent's salient frames of reference.

Use simple probes when appropriate, for example, "Can you tell me more about that?"

Avoid contradicting or appearing to cross-examine the respondent.

Do not hint - either by specific comment, tone of voice, or nonverbal cues such as shaking the head - at preferred or expected responses to a particular question.

If a respondent seems threatened by a specific topic, move on to another one. Try returning to the topic later, with different phrasing.

When posing threatening or sensitive questions, ask the respondent about the behaviour of friends as well as about the respondent's own behaviour.

Do not ask many closed-form questions in succession.

Do not change interview topics too often.

Avoid leading questions, for example ask, "What is your opinion of federal aid to education?" instead of "Do you favour federal aid to education?" However, in some cases a leading question may be asked to elicit a particular type of information from the respondent.

Sources: Bradburn et al., (1981); Goetz (1984); Measor (1985); Patton (1990); Weiss (1975).

4.3.2.5 Key Informants

I interviewed key informants that were identified from my population. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:133) define a key informant as

…somebody you get on with who is part of and knows the culture you are studying and likes talking about it. They often operate as links between different cultures, even though they are part of the culture but they can stand outside of that culture to explain to outsiders what is going on

According to Gall et al. (1996:306), key informants are individuals who have special knowledge or perceptions that would not otherwise be available to the researcher. Key informants often have more knowledge, better communications skills or different perspectives than other members of the defined population. Neuman (2000:374-5) considers an informant or key actor in the field as a member with whom a field researcher develops a relationship and who tells about, or informs on, the field. Who makes a good informant? The ideal informant has four characteristics:

The informant who is totally familiar with the culture and is in a position to witness significant events makes a good informant. He or she lives and breathes the culture and engages in routines in the setting without thinking about them. The individual has years of intimate experience in the culture; he or she is not a novice.

The individual is currently involved in the field. Ex-members who have reflected on the field may provide useful insights, but the longer they have been away from direct involvement, the more likely it is that they have reconstructed their recollections.

The person can spend time with the researcher. Interviewing may take many hours, and some members are simply not available for extensive interviewing.

Non-analytic individuals make better informants. A non-analytical informant is familiar with and uses native folk theory or pragmatic common sense. This is in contrast to the analytic member, who pre-analyzes the setting, using categories from the media or education. Even members educated in the social sciences can learn to respond in a non-analytic manner, but only if they set aside their education and use the member perspective.

A field researcher may interview several types of informants. Contrasting types of informants who provide useful perspectives include rookies and old-timers, people in the centre of events and those on the fringes of activity, people who recently changed status (e.g. through promotion) and those who are static, frustrated, or needy people and happy or secure people, the leader in charge and the subordinate who follows. A field researcher should expect mixed messages when he or she interviews a range of informants.

I had to be cautious in selecting key informants; Gall et al. (1996:306) warn that some informants might be very unpopular in their contexts and this might impact negatively on interviews. It is also very important to validate stories in one way or the other to avoid propaganda/bias.

4.3.2.6 Focus Group

The third type of interview that elicits diverse views is the focus group or group interview (Mason, 2002:90). Gall et al. (1996:307) explain that focus group interviews involve addressing questions to a group of individuals who have been assembled for this specific purpose. The individuals are selected because they are well informed about the research topic.

I identified ten secondary school teachers and a primary school for the school principal focus group interview. This was a mixed group selected randomly from different schools. Although Babbie and Mouton (2001:292) suggest that more than one focus group may be needed, I saw that as unnecessary since this was not my only method of investigation Morgan, as quoted by Babbie and Mouton (2001:292), gives several criteria that apply to focus groups. They are outlined below:

Choose enough participants so that the focus group does not fall flat if some members choose to remain silent.

Bear in mind the amount of information you want from each participant and do not choose so few members that individual dynamics in the group outweigh the group dynamics.

Try to steer clear from friendship pairs, "experts" and uncooperative participants.

It is much more difficult to manage the interviewing process in a large group than in a small group. Beware of people breaking off into small conversations or talking at once.

Large groups require a higher level of moderator involvement and skill.

The rule of thumb is to over-recruit by 20 percent to compensate for members not showing up.

Try to have between three and five groups. You may need more groups for certain studies, but, in general, more groups seldom provide new insights.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:651) state that the group interview is essentially a qualitative data gathering technique that relies upon the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting. This technique straddles the line between formal and informal interviewing. They suggest that, in a group interview, the interview or moderator directs the inquiry and the interaction among respondents in an unstructured way.

Richard Kruger, as quoted by Gall et al. (1996:307), identifies the following as the characteristics of a focus group.

It is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment.

It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people.

The discussion is relaxed, comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions.

Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion.

As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the other method of investigation that used to collect data was Participant Observation.

4.3.2.7 Simple observations and Participant observations

I visited selected schools between June and September for observation. This was to help me experience the principals' lives with them during that period. Observation was expected to validate the interview stories were recorded. The challenges of participant observation as expressed in the literature are the decisions that have to be made concerning what to observe and how to manage field notes.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:133) rate observation as "the second popular form of collecting data in the interpretive research". They explain that participant observation is

mostly closely associated with ethnographic work in anthropology. Ethnography entails the study of cultures and initially means the study of exotic cultures. Neuman (2000:344) refers to participant observation as field research or ethnography. He writes that it is a qualitative style in which a researcher directly observes and participates in small-scale social settings in the present time and in the researcher's home culture. He also affirms "this involves hanging out with some exotic group of people".

Gall et al. (1996:344) see "two common methods of data collection" in qualitative research as interviews and analysis of documents. These involve words uttered or written by the participants in natural settings. They argue, however, that this information is limited by participants' knowledge, memory and ability to convey information clearly and accurately and also by how they wish to be perceived by outsiders, such as researchers. Gall et al. suggest that observation, in contrast, allows researchers to formulate their own version of what is occurring, independent of participants.

I believed that observation would validate my interview responses. I wondered whether communicating with my respondents about participant observation at the onset would help getting to the truth during interviews. My culture by tradition esteems the saying "seeing is believing" and this is what my observations were expected to do – verify what I was told as epistemology. Gall et al. (1996:344) contend that the inclusion of selected observations in a researcher's report provides a more complete description of phenomena than would be possible by just referring to interview statements or documents. Just as important, observations provide an alternative source of data for verifying information obtained by other methods.

I thought it might be very important to distinguish participant observation from observations as propounded by various researchers.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:293) advocate two types of observation in qualitative research, namely simple observation, in which the researcher remains an outside observer; and participant observation where the researcher simultaneously is a member of the group he/she is studying and a researcher doing the study. According to Gall et al. (1996:344), the observer role in qualitative research varies along a continuum from complete observer to complete participant. In the extreme role of complete observer the researcher maintains a posture of detachment from the setting being studied. In the extreme role of complete participant, the researcher studies a setting in which she already is a member or into which she becomes converted to genuine membership during the course of the research.

Gall et al. (1996:345) further explain that the observer roles fall between these two extremes. In the observer-participant role, the researcher acts primarily as an observer, entering the setting only to gather data directly from individuals or groups while engaged in observation. In the participant observer role, the researcher observes and interacts closely

enough with individuals to establish meaningful identity within their group; however the researcher does not engage in activities that are at the core of the group's identity.

Mason (2002:84) differs slightly from other authors. She uses the terms "observational and participatory methods of generating qualitative data". She states that the terms 'observation', and in particular 'participant observation' usually refer to methods of generalising data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting' so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting. These include social actions, behaviour, interaction, relationships, events as well as spatial, locational and temporary dimensions. Coffey as quoted in Mason (2002:84), suggests that experimental, emotional and bodily dimensions may also be part of the frame. Mason considers observing and participating as data-generating methods in their own right, without assuming them to be necessarily connected to any particular overall approach.

Authors referred to in the discussion above generally confirm my participant observation as an effective data collection technique. With both interviews and participant observations I felt almost assured of in-depth field notes that would assist me to come up with meaningful constructs and themes in response to my inquiry. Merriam (1998:94-5) considers observations more advantageous than interviews. The other researcher's views on this assertion will be sought in comparison. Observation, like any other method of investigation, has its strengths and weaknesses.

4.3.2.8 Advantages and Limitations of Observations

Merriam (1998:94-5) advocates that observations take place in the natural field instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing. She also believes that observational data represent a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second-hand account of the world obtained in an interview. She observes, though, that informal interviews and conversations are often interwoven with observations in the real world of collecting data.

Keller (1993:126), as quoted by Babbie and Mouton (2001:295), presents the advantages of observations as follows:

It forces the observer to become familiar with the subject.

It allows previously unnoticed or ignored aspects to be seen.

People's actions are probably more telling than their verbal accounts and observing these is valuable.

It is unobtrusive and when obtrusive, the effect wears off in reasonable time.

Keller as quoted by Babbie and Mouton (2001:295), states that one of the biggest advantages of observation is that it can be done anywhere. Flexibility, as Neuman

(2000:349) sees it, is a key advantage of field research. It lets a researcher shift direction and follow leads. Good field researchers recognize and seize opportunities, 'play it by ear' and rapidly adjust to fluid social situations. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:295), the greatest advantage of observation is the presence of an observing, thinking researcher on the scene of the action.

In contrast, Merriam (1998:94) presents critics of participant observation who find that some of the activities of observation create problems for researchers. She mentions, among others, that the use of observation as a research tool is problematic when a researcher has to figure out what to observe, the relationship between the observer and the observed, and the means of recording. These observations may open up a discussion about the disadvantages of this technique, which may include 'going native' (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004:132). The means of recording may disrupt the observed. They might be suspicious or the field notes could have no depth of detail, making it difficult to analyse and make meaningful interpretations.

The other flaw in observation, as argued by Merriam (1998:95), is that critics point to the highly subjective and unreliable nature of human perception. They give an example of different accounts of an accident that could be given by those who claim to be eyewitnesses. She explains that different or contradictory accounts could emerge from different witnesses. The argument continues because proponents of observation as a data collection technique argue that the witnesses referred to in the illustration used were not planning to systematically observe the accident, nor were they trained in observational techniques. These factors differentiate everyday observation from research observation. Mason (2002:85) warns that to plan the use of observation is a major commitment. She argues that conducting observational research can be very time consuming and resource consuming.

Gall et al. (1996:328) argue that, whether "tests, questionnaires or interviews as methods for collecting research data, all of them rely on self-report by research participants. Although self-reports are usually easy to obtain, many individuals bias the information they offer about themselves, or they cannot recall accurately the events of interest to the researcher".

Gall et al. suggest that "an alternative to self-report is to observe the behaviour and environment of the individuals being studied. If used properly these observational methods avoid the inaccuracy and bias of some self-report data. "They further propound that "even when bias is not present in self-report data, observational methods yield more accurate data".

Another problem with observations that these authors present is that the people observed might create an artificial situation for the observer. It is therefore a good idea to spend a long period on the setting to avoid a self-styled environment which might be misleading to

the researcher. Gall et al. (1996:329) state that the observational method is more time-consuming than other methods of data collection.

They affirm that "individuals must be observed over a period of time to obtain reliable data, whereas tests, questionnaires and interviews usually can yield reliable data even when the data are collected only at one point in time". However, Gall et al. (1996:329) advocate that the advantages of the observational method far outweigh its weaknesses for the study of most educational problems. It is a valuable supplement to self-report methods, or it can serve as the main data resource when self-report is not possible or of questionable value.

Attempting to answer the researchers' dilemmas of what to observe, Merriam (1998:97) suggests the following:

Researchers' purpose: The conceptual framework refers to the problem of what is to be observed, e.g. an educator might observe a school because of an interest in how students learn, whereas a sociologist might visit the same school because of an interest in social institutions.

Impressions: "Impressions also influence the choice of what to observe. Researchers often begin a series of investigations by impressionistic, informal observation (Hawkin in Merriam).

La Compete & Preissle (1993) write that to observe depends on the topic, the conceptual framework, "the data that begin to emerge as the participant observer interacts in the daily flow of events and activities and the intuitive reactions and hunches that participant observers experience as all these factors come together" (p. 200).

It also depends on how structured the observer wants to be. The researcher can decide ahead of time to concentrate on observing certain events, behaviours or persons. Where to begin depends on the research question, but where to focus or stop action cannot be determined ahead of time. The focus must be allowed to emerge and, in fact, may change over the course of the study.

Several other writers (Goetz & Le Compte, 1984; Borg & Gall, 1989; Bogdan & Bilken, 1992; Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984) present lists of things to observe at least to get started in the activity.

The physical setting, e.g. what is the physical environment like? What objects resources, technologies are in the setting? The principal's office, the school bus, the cafeteria, and the classroom vary in physical attributes as well as in anticipated behaviour.

The participants. Describe who is in the scene, how many people, and their roles. Who is not here and is expected to be here. What are the relevant characteristics of the participants?

Activities and interactions. What is going on? Any definable sequence of activities? How do people interact with one another and the activity? What norms or rules structure the activities and interactions?

Conversations. What is the content of conversation in this setting? Who speaks for whom? Who listens? Quote directly, paraphrase and summarise conversations. If possible use a tape recorder.

Subtle factors. Less obvious but perhaps as important to the observation are:

Informal and unplanned activities.

Symbolic and connotative meanings of words.

Nonverbal communication such as dress and physical space.

What does not happen – especially if it ought to have happened (Patton, 1990:235).

Your own behaviour. How is your role affecting the scene you are observing? What do you say and do? What thoughts are you having about what is going on? These become "observer comments".

Observation data. Different authors seem to have a different focus for observable data although they share some aspects. Kelleher (1993), as quoted by Babbie and Mouton (2001:292), mentions what he considers as major types of observable data:

Exterior physical signs (clothing, radios, church services, consumables, etc.)

Expressive movement (eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements, posture, etc.)

Physical location (the setting you are observing, people's personal space)

Language behaviour (stuttering, slips of the tongue, topics of discussion, etc.)

Time duration (How long is the person you are observing engaged in what she or he is doing.)

In going through each focus, I tried to select those aspects relevant to my study, but I felt compelled to take every one of them because I did not know what would be there to speak to my study. Neuman (2000:350) presents what a field researcher does as follows:

Observes ordinary events and everyday activities as they happen in natural settings, in addition to unusual occurrences.

Becomes directly involved with the people being studied and personally experiences the process of daily life in the field setting.

Acquires an insiders' point of view while maintaining the analytic perspective or distance of an outsider.

Uses a variety of techniques and social skills in a flexible manner as the situation demands.

Produces data in the form of extensive written notes as well as diagrams, maps, or pictures to provide very detailed descriptions.

Sees events holistically (e.g. as a whole unit, not in pieces) and individually in their social context.

Understands and develops empathy for members in a field setting and does not just record "cold" objective facts.

Notices both explicit (recognised, conscious, spoken) and tacit (less recognised, implicit, unspoken) aspects of culture.

Observes ongoing processes without upsetting, disrupting, or imposing an outsider point of view.

Copes with high levels of stress, uncertainty, ethical dilemmas and ambiguity.

4.3.2.9 Recording Observations

I relied heavily on note-taking to record my observations. Because I also like photography, I use my digital camera to take photographs of observable data that might validate my field notes and give them more meaning. These photographs were down-loaded onto a lap-top computer, and stored together with my field notes. Wolcott (2001:41) affirms the use of photographs in recording, observations or analysis of data. He states that one "might begin a study with a snap shot in which they see the scene and introduce major actors one by one much as if writing a play. Enough of these may put things in motion".

Options of recording data presented by Gall et al. (1996:349) are the use of a lap-top computer to take written field notes or dictating notes into an audiotape recorder. They also suggest that a steno mask can be useful for this purpose. A steno mask is defined as a sound-shielded microphone attached to a portable tape recorder that is worn on a shoulder strap. The observer can speak into the microphone while an activity is occurring without people nearby being able to hear the dictation.

I had to be careful to avoid distracting participants during note-taking. I understood from the literature that detailed notes of an observable data are helpful. I wrote comprehensively.

4.4   DATA ANALYSIS

Most qualitative researchers advocate that one does not simply record data but also analyzes it. (Gall et al 1996:559; Silverman 2000:126)

Data analysis whether quantitative or qualitative has both similarities and differences. What seems to emerge from many researchers is that data gathering should follow such steps as finding concepts, themes, coding of themes and then analysis of these themes.(Terre Blanche and Kelly 2004:132) (Gall (1996:326) (Rose and(Neuman 2000:416).

I have found Neuman's (2000:416-8) discussion on similarities and differences in quantitative and qualitative data analysis useful; especially to explain the notion that a researcher can hardly suggest that one design is better than the other. They are presented below:

4.4.1 Similarities of Data analysis

First, the form of analysis for both types of data in both styles of research involves inference. Researchers infer from the empirical details of social life. To infer means to pass a judgment, to use reasoning, and to reach a conclusion based on evidence. In both forms of data analysis, the researcher carefully examines empirical information to reach a conclusion. The conclusion is reached by reasoning and simplifies the complexity in the data. There is some abstraction or distance from the data, but this varies by the style of research. Both forms of data analysis anchor statements about the social world in the inquiry that has adequacy (i.e., it is faithful to the data). "In qualitative research, adequacy refers to the amount of data collected, rather than to the number of subjects as in quantitative research. Adequacy is attained when sufficient data has been collected that saturation occurs" Morse (1994:230), emphasis in original.

A second similarity is that both forms of analysis involve a public method or process. Researchers systematically record or gather data and in so doing make accessible to others what they did. Both types of researchers collect large amounts of data. They describe the data and document how they collected and examined it. The degree to which the method is standardized and visible may vary, but all researchers reveal their study design in some way. "Research designs in qualitative research are not always made explicit, but they at least implicit in every piece of research" King et al (1994:118).

Next, comparison is a central process to all data analysis, qualitative or quantitative. All social researchers compare features of the evidence they have gathered internally or with related evidence. Researchers identify multiple process, causes, properties, or mechanisms within the evidence. They then look for patterns – similarities and differences, aspects that are alike and unlike:

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[Qualitative] researchers examine patterns of similarities and differences across cases and try to come to terms with their diversity…Quantitative researchers also examine differences among cases, but with a different emphasis, the goal is to explain the co variation of one variable with another, usually across many cases….The quantitative researcher typically has only broad familiarity with the case. Ragin (1994:107)

Fourth, in both qualitative and quantitative forms of data analysis, researchers strive to avoid errors, false conclusions, and misleading inferences. Researchers are also alert for possible fallacies or illusions. They sort through various explanations, discussions, and descriptions, and evaluate merits or rivals, seeking the more authentic, valid, true or worthy among them.

4.4.2 Differences of Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis differs from quantitative analysis is four ways. First, quantitative researchers choose from a specialized, standardized set of data analysis techniques. Hypothesis testing and statistical methods vary little across different social research projects or across the natural and social sciences. Quantitative analysis is highly developed and builds on applied mathematics. By contrast, qualitative data analysis is less standardized. The wide variety in possible approaches to qualitative research is matched by the many approaches to data analysis. Qualitative research is often inductive. Researchers rarely know the specifics of data analysis when they begin a project. Schatzman and Strauss (1973:108) remarked, "Qualitative analysts do not often enjoy the operational advantages of their quantitative cousins in being able to predict their own analytic processes; consequently, they cannot refine and order their raw data by operations built initially into the design of research."

A second difference is that quantitative researchers do not begin data analysis until they have collected all of the data and condensed them into numbers. They then manipulate the numbers in order to see patterns or relationships, but they begin analysis early in a research project, while they are still collecting data. The results of early data analysis guide subsequent data collection. Thus, analysis is less a distinct final stage of research than a dimension of research that stretches across all stages.

Another difference is the relation to social theory. Quantitative researchers manipulate numbers that represent empirical facts in order to test an abstract hypothesis with variable constructs. By contrast, qualitative researchers create new concepts and theory by blending together empirical evidence and abstract concepts. Instead of testing a hypothesis, a qualitative analyst may illustrate or colour in evidence showing that a theory, generalization, or interpretation is plausible.

The fourth difference is the degree of abstract or distance from the details of social life. In all data analysis, a researcher places raw data into categories that he or she manipulates in order to identify patterns and arrive at generalizations. In quantitative analysis, this process is clothed in statistics, hypotheses, and variables. Quantitative researchers use the symbolic language of statistical relationships between variables to discuss casual relations. They assume that social life can be measured by using numbers. When they manipulate the numbers according to the laws of statistics, the numbers reveal features of social life.

Qualitative analysis is less abstract than statistics analysis and closer to raw data. Qualitative analysis does not draw on a large, well-established body of formal knowledge from mathematics and statistics. The data are in the form of words, which are relatively imprecise, diffuse, and context-based, and can have more than one meaning.

4.4.3 Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research

The most common approach to reliability in research involves the study of an instrument's consistency or stability over time. While most researchers generally gravitate around this perspective, each describes it uniquely. For purposes of clarification, we will briefly observe the perspectives of Punch, Miles and Huberman, Best and Kahn and several others.

Punch (2005:95) suggests two main aspects to consistency, namely consistency over time and internal consistency. In his view, consistency over time is usually expressed in a question: "If the same instrument were given to the same people, under the same circumstances, but at a different time, to what extent they would get the same results?" It then follows that the measuring instrument is reliable to the extent to which similar results are observed and conversely, unreliable to the extent to which results differ. Punch (95) holds that stability over time can be directly assessed in most circumstances by administrations of the same instrument at two points in time. This is called test-retest reliability. It may be relevant and useful to qualitative researchers. A researcher could also use the test-retest reliability on the same interviewees over time, to check the reliability of an instrument.

The meaning of validity from Punch's (2005:97) is surmised in the question: "How do we know that the measuring instrument measures what we think it measures?" Punch (29) further discussed several other meanings of validity of which the common thread is the isomorphism between the reality studied and the reality reported. Punch's validity techniques relevant to qualitative and quantitative research are summarised below:

<u>Validity of data:</u> This is expressed as a question: how well do these data represent the phenomena for which they stand?

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<u>Overall validity of the research:</u> This is about the piece of research as a whole, and refers to the extent to which the different parts of the study fit together.

<u>Internal validity:</u> This is about the study's research design. The question here is whether it is a true reflection of the reality studied.

<u>External validity:</u> This refers to the generalizability of the study's findings. The question is how far the study's findings can be generalized or transferred to other settings.

Miles and Huberman (1994:36) define two meanings of validity specific to qualitative research:

1) Descriptive or contextual validity. This refers to whether the account of the research is complete and thorough.

2) Interpretive validity. This asks whether the account given in the research connects with the lived experience of the people studied. This study is all about people and their experience which is most of the responses.

Best and Kahn (1993:208) point out that validity lies in the quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure. They consider reliability to be necessary but not a singularly sufficient condition for validity. Best and Kahn (220) point out that a test is not valid. In order to valid a test must also be reliable. Best and Kahn (208) say that it is more difficult to determine validity and reliability for some data-gathering instruments or procedures than others. For example, methods such as observation, interviews or the use of the questionnaires, in which responses are more qualitative and yield data that are not always quantitative. Best and Kahn are not alone in their views. There are others who also consider issues of validity and reliability to be problematic in case studies. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:572-3) state that some researchers have concluded that traditional notions of validity are not applicable to case study data and interpretations. Gall et al refer to the researchers who hold this notion as interpretive researchers. Instead of validity and reliability these researchers apply more abstract criteria as plausibility, authenticity, credibility and relevance. However, there seems to be another arm of interpretive researchers who retain the notion of validity, but reconceptualise it using such terms as interpretive validity, interrogated validity and situated validity, among others. (Gall et al 1996:572).

To further illustrate how these validity judgements can be applied, we will consider Altheide and Johnson's (1994:485 – 486) explanation of the concept of interpretive validity. Altheide and Johnson propose that interpretive validity refers to judgment about the credibility of an interpretive researcher's knowledge claims. They put forward four criteria for determining validity.

First, validity is expressed through usefulness; the extent to which readers who access findings are enlightened. Second, is the criterion of contextual completeness. This means that in order for the case study phenomena to be convincing, it needs to be contextual. Hence, the more comprehensive the researcher's contextualisation the more credible are his/her interpretations of the phenomena. Altheide and Johnson recommended that researchers consider the following among other contextual features: story, physical setting, environment, number of participants, activities, schedules, temporal order of events, division of labour, members' perceptions and meanings.

Researcher positioning is the third criterion that Altheide and Johnson discuss. This deals with the way a researcher demonstrates sensitivity in how he relates to the situation being studied. A researcher's interpretation is more credible if he/she is sensitive. While this may not seem perceptible to the researcher illustrations of this principle can be observed in everyday scenarios. For example, a researcher who speaks the same language as the people studied and understands their culture, beliefs and values might be more acceptable than a foreigner in that community. Such a person is more likely to get in-depth information and be able to relate better. Thomas as quoted by Gall et al (1996:573) recommends two ways of maintaining sensibility by a researcher who may be alien to the context: either seek assistance from someone familiar with phenomena and has knowledge and understanding of what a research is doing to be a researcher supervisor, or ask a colleague who knows you well to review your research project. They might be able to identify personal characteristics or conditions that might threaten the credibility of findings.

The last criterion is the reporting style which Altheide and Johnson say can affect the validity of readers' interpretations of findings. Researchers are advised to avoid this misinterpretation by reconstructing participants' phenomenological realities in written and graphic form so that it is perceived as credible and authentic. Triangulation is one of the several procedures that case study researchers have developed to check the validity and reliability of their findings, Gall et al (1996: 574), Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:400). It seems that this methodology draws consensus among researchers. Mason (2002:190) also states that in its broadest sense, triangulation refers to the use of a combination of methods to explore one set of research questions. However, she argues that even when applied carefully, the use of different methods or data sources to investigate the same phenomena is insufficient in judging the efficiency or the validity of different methods and sources. Mason (1996:66) states that different methods should not be expected to produce the same kind of data.

Researchers may also be tasked with explaining how they come to the conclusion that their methods are valid as another way to demonstrate validity. Mason (190) recommends supremely the concept of triangulation, favouring multiple methods that encourage the researcher to approach research questions from different angles and explore topics exhaustively. This should enhance validity as the method takes into account the multi-

dimensional nature of social phenomena and allows for every attempt to gain a holistic perspective. Mason's (191) appreciation of triangulation must be accompanied by the following cautionary quote: "Researchers should not expect the use of multiple methods or triangulation to provide an easy or well-trodden route to the demonstration of validity of methods."

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:399), validity and reliability in qualitative research must be sought in research observations and in responses received from respondents. Validity and reliability speaks to the degree of confidence researchers can place in what they have observed and recorded. These may include epistemological questions such as, 'How do I know that what I am hearing is true?', and 'Are the observations I see realistic and not misleading?' Rooted in this basis, Fraenkel and Wallen (400) consider validity to be the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of inferences researchers make based on the data they collect, while reliability refers to the consistency of these inferences over time.

In a qualitative study much depends on the perspective of the researcher, which may be biased. Therefore, qualitative researchers should use a number of techniques to ensure that data is extracted efficiently and findings are evaluated without bias. (Fraenkel and Wallen 1993:400) endorse a number of procedures to assist with this. Listed below are a number those procedures that were applied in this research:

Triangulation was applied and findings were drawn from one-on-one interviews and through observation made on visits to relevant sites.

Descriptions of certain phenomena given by various respondents were checked against one another. Discrepancies in descriptions of similar phenomena could suggest invalid data.

A valuable research bonus was the ability to conduct research in an environment where language, culture and values were familiar and relatable.

Respondent responses can be observed in context as they are supplied alongside questions asked. This has allowed for accurate interpretation of responses at a later date.

Great care has been taken to record specific sources of all comments made in focus group settings, regardless of how seemingly trivial they. Some comments said in passing turned out to hold valuable insights into attitudes and intentions.

Provided is a detailed description of the context in which questions are posed and situations observed. This includes a field schedule outlining details of who was being interviewed, what they were asked, when the data was extracted and exactly how findings were made.

Photography and audio recordings were employed wherever possible and appropriate to most accurately capture data and allow for analysis at a later date.

There are several other useful procedures that Fraenkel and Wallen (400) propose which could have been helpful in enhancing the validity of instruments employed, data extracted and consequently findings made. Some of these include: more repeat interviews to uncover possible inconsistencies and observing settings or situations over more extended periods of time. This could possibly have unearthed some irregularities in observations. Fraenkel and Wallen are not alone in holding that the length of time given to an observation is extremely important in ethnographic research. Generally, observations made over extended periods of time carry more weight and tend to provide additional objectivity.

4.4.4   Analysing Qualitative Data

In analysing my data I understood my role as a very effective reader to require avoiding both under judgment and over judgment of my field notes and responses to my interview and, according to what most writers suggest, allowing as much of direct speech as possible and staying as close to the context as possible may be helpful.

Rose (2001:172) puts her experience beautifully. She explains that she, in data analysis, decided to allow each participant's voice to be heard, so as to make clear connections among the themes of the stories collected. She states that she as much as possible used direct quotations from the interview transcripts. She created individual participant "portraits" outlining each person's lived experiences and reflections.

My role was to infer but my inference had to be supported with evidence in context. According to Rose (2001:173), my own judgment had to come after my interview responses were heard. She states "I created my own 'portrait' only after completing those of others and chose to present it last in the final document. This clarified the fact that the voice of the other was given its own room to emerge, unhindered by my own thoughts or experiences".

I have compared the data analysis steps of Neuman (2000:416-8) and Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:130). They both suggest that concepts formation is an integral part of data analysis and this begins during data collection. Hence conceptualisation is one way by which the qualitative researcher organises and makes sense of data (Neuman, 2000:420). Qualitative coding is another integral part of data analysis. However, because Terre Blanche and Kelly's is the latest publication, I thought it would be best to use their steps in analysing my data.

As background information Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:146) argue that a principle of interpretive analysis is to stay close to data to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding. Geertz as quoted by Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:146), advocates that the purpose of interpretive analysis is to provide "thick description" which means a thorough description of the characteristics, processes, transactions and contexts that constitute the phenomena being studied.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:148) present five steps of data analysis as follows:

Step 1: Some ideas and theories are developing during data collection. Even during contact with gatekeepers and setting up interviews. Now – immerse yourself in your material. Read through your texts many times over. Makes notes and draw diagrams, brainstorming. You should know your data well enough to know more or less what kind of things can be found, where as well as what kind of interpretations are to be supported by your data.

Step 2: Inducing themes. Induction means to infer general rules or classes from specific instances.

1. Look for organizing principles that naturally underlie the material.

Use the language of interviews or informants.

Avoid simply summarizing content. Think in terms of processes, functions, tensions and contradictions.

Try and find an optimal level of complexity. Two themes would be too small, but fifteen themes would be too much.

Try different kinds of themes.

Do not lose focus of what your study is about.

Step 3: Coding. In developing themes you should also be coding your data. This entails marking different sections of data as being relevant to one or more of your themes.

Use a same colour marker/highlighter for the texts relating to a particular group.

Or cut out pieces of those texts that fall under the same category.

Step 4: Elaboration. Explanation of themes; some originally grouped together may look different. Keep coding, elaborating and recording until no further significant new insights appear to emerge.

Step 5: Interpreting and checking. Put together your interpretation.

Check over interpretation.

Check prejudice.

Give some indication of your personal involvement in the phenomenon that may have coloured the way you collected and analysed data.

However, Neuman (2003:442) explains that, to effectively code data into themes a researcher first needs to learn how "to see" or recognise themes in the data. Seeing themes rests on four abilities.

Recognising patterns in the data.

Thinking in terms of systems and concepts

Having tacit knowledge or in-depth background knowledge and

Possessing relevant information.

4.5   ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

It is very important to be ethical when conducting a research. Considering the fact that other researchers and audience may benefit from a researcher's contribution, it is pivotal to be as honest as possible in presenting reliable data and findings. Mason (2002:41) states that qualitative researchers should be as concerned to produce a moral or ethical research design as we are to produce an intellectually coherent and compelling one. This means attempting only to carry out data generation and analysis morally, but also to plan our research and frame our questions in an ethical manner too.

Mason (2002:42) suggests that, for ethical considerations, researchers should ask themselves very "difficult questions" and "push them hard to answer them". She invites researchers to ask, for example, "about the purpose for their research - but this time with ethics, morality and politics at the forefront". She argues that, as a researcher, I might need to push myself quite hard to be honest about my research. I found this a challenge when I considered the interpretation of the responses in answer to my questions and the themes that developed from my field notes.

The purpose of research, as Mason (2002:42) observes, is also "likely to include not just the advancement of knowledge and understanding, but also factors to do with personal gain such as the achievement of a higher degree, of promotion, of some standing in a discipline (among colleagues, friends, rivals, relatives and so on) or perhaps of some research findings. She adds that one may wish to advance the interests of a particular group through the research, but that does not necessarily make the ethics of a research more straightforward, not least because the interests of a particular group may be diverse or contested.

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Mason seemed to be speaking to my major inquiry. I had the interest of the school principals and their experiences at the centre of my research; therefore I was faced with difficult ethical questions when I interpreted the narratives from my respondents.

Neuman (2000:376) in his discussion on ethical dilemmas affirms that "the direct personal involvement of a field researcher in the social lives of other people raises many ethical dilemmas. He explains that the dilemmas arise when a researcher is alone in the field and has little time to make a moral decision. Although he/she may be aware of general ethical issues before entering the field, they arise unexpectedly in the course of observing and interacting in the field". Neuman discusses five ethical issues in field research: deception, confidentiality, and involvement with deviants, the powerful and publishing reports.

Deception arises in several ways in field research: The research may be covert; or may assume a false role, name or identity; or may mislead members is some way. The most hotly debated of the ethical issues arising from deception is that of covert versus field research. Some support it (Douglas, 1976; Johnson, 1975) and see it as necessary for entering into and gaining a full knowledge of many areas of social life. Others oppose it (Erikson, 1970) and argue that it undermines a trust between researchers and society. Although its moral status is questionable, there are some field sites or activities that can only be studied covertly.

Covert research is never preferable and never easier that overt research because of the difficulties of maintaining a front and the constant fear of getting caught. As Lofland & Lofland (1995:35) noted, "As is all other ethical dilemmas of naturalistic research, we believe that the ethically sensitive, thoughtful and knowledgeable investigator is the best judge of whether covert research is justified."

Confidentiality. A researcher gains intimate knowledge that is given in confidence. He or she has a moral obligation to uphold the confidentiality of data. This includes keeping information confidential from others in the field and disguising members' names in field notes.

Involvement with deviants. Researchers who conduct filed research on deviants who engage in illegal behaviour face additional dilemmas. They know of and are sometimes involved in illegal activity. Such knowledge is of interest not only to law enforcement officials but also to other deviants. The researcher faces a dilemma of building trust and rapport with the deviants, yet not becoming so involved as to violate his or her basic personal moral standards. Usually, the researcher makes an explicit arrangement with the deviant members.

West (1980:38) remarked, "I indicated my desire not to participate actively in the relatively risk-prone crimes with victims (e.g. theft, assault) explaining how such behaviour was not worth the risk to me or was personally repugnant: I turned down invitations for "cuts in jobs. Although the few occasions when I was accidentally present at the commission of such

victim crimes presented invaluable data, my wishes were generally respected and my obvious discomfort resulted in subjects warning me on subsequent occasions."

The powerful. Field researchers tend to study those without power in society (e.g. street people, the poor, children, and lower-level workers in bureaucracies). Powerful elites can block access and have effective gatekeepers. Researchers are criticised for ignoring the powerful, and they are also criticised by the powerful for being biased toward the less powerful. The explanation used is by the hierarchy of credibility, which says that those who study deviants or low-level subordinates in an organisation are viewed as biased, whereas those groups with hierarchies or organisations, most people assume that those at or near the top have the right to define the way things are going to be, that they have a broader view and are in a position to do something. Thus, "the sociologist who favours officialdom will be spared the accusation of bias" When field researchers become immersed in the world of the less powerful and understand that point of view, they are expressing a rarely heard perspective. They may be accused of bias because they give a voice to parts of society that are not otherwise heard.

Publishing Field Reports. The intimate knowledge that a researcher obtains and reports creates a dilemma between the right of privacy and the right to know. A researcher does not publicise member secrets, violate privacy, or harm reputations. Yet, if he or she cannot publish anything that might offend or harm someone, some of what the researcher learned will remain hidden, and it may be difficult for others to believe the report if critical details are omitted.

Some researchers suggest asking members to look at a report to verify its accuracy and to approve of their portrayal in print. For marginal groups (e.g. addicts, prostitutes, crack users), this may not be possible, but researchers must always respect member privacy. On the other hand, censorship or self-censorship can be a danger. A compromise position is that truthful but unflattering material may be published only if it is essential to the researchers' larger arguments.

4.6   SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a suitable research design - interpretive/qualitative for this study. The methods of investigation that facilitated the collection of narrative data presented in Chapter five are semi-structured interviews, observations and the analysis of government documents. These methods make up triangulation, which helped to compare and consolidate the findings in Chapter five. The qualitative method comprising data coding, data organisation, data description and interpretation was used to analyse the voluminous data in Chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE:

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a description of the research procedures followed in data collection. The analysis and interpretation of the data are followed by an endeavour to link the results to the theoretical notions and other research findings. The three methods used in data collection were semi-structured interviews, observation and the analysis of government documents. Triangulation was used in collecting data to ensure validity.

5.2   SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The respondents were interviewed at their places of work. Both semi – structured interviews and focus groups were used. They were at ease in their environment and did not feel threatened while answering the questions because confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The interviews were conducted at different times, as follows: March 2003, October 2006, September 2007 and April 2008. The intervals were helpful because I could monitor the status of decentralisation and how it was shaping up in schools. The interviewees were selected from various levels of government in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. They included the Provincial Education Director and his deputy from Province A, who are involved as policy makers and it was important to hear their contribution on the implementation of the decentralisation policy. Five District Education Officers formed the next group that was interviewed. They were selected from five different districts in province A. The idea was to investigate how each one was experiencing the supervision of the implementation of this policy. District Education Officers interface between the policy makers and the implementers in schools. They had rich data which combined their own experiences and the experiences   they encounter in their fields of work.

These officers were interviewed in a focus group at one of their offices. Principals from five selected Secondary schools B, C, D, E and F were the interviewees in another focus group. These are local authorities who implement decentralisation in schools under the supervision of the District Officers. Principals carry the heaviest burdens because they are at the point of

service delivery of education. They are also the focus of empowerment in decision making by higher authorities. They claim that their workload has increased since the transfer of decentralisation responsibilities. This was confirmed by their responses although there are conflicting views that appraise the positive effects of decentralisation. For instance, one of the interviewees, Janet, who is the principal at school B remarked that, "Decentralisation of power makes life easier because whenever I need help I go to the district office, my district officer is immediately in a position to explain things and give the go ahead for whatever projects I have."

The interview took place at one of the central schools where the principals agreed to meet. I identified two key informants because they were willing to give additional information that was useful to my research, for instance, information that other group members were hesitant to discuss, like how Africans seem to cling to power more than the white people do in the redistribution of power.

The two key informants were Michael, a District Education Officer who has gone up the ladder from a classroom teacher to a principal in various secondary schools and currently nearing retirement. Janet, has also served as a classroom teacher before and after independence, and she is principal of a large public secondary school.

Three parents' bodies were interviewed at their respective schools. I had the privilege of being taken around and saw the projects they are engaged in. I gained their consent to take photographs and I secured written permission from them to use the photographs in my research as long as I used pseudonyms. The projects that I saw reflected success that the parents can be proud of, as well as the challenges that they encounter. For instance, at one school the parents were happy to show the grinding mill and how it was serving the community as a way of generating revenue for their needs. The contrast was the unfinished laboratories that parents have been struggling to raise since 2006. The buildings are still at foundation level.

5.3   OBSERVATION

In August 2007 I requested permission from the Provincial Education Director from province A to attend and observe district meetings in the Ministry of Education. These meetings are

organised either at the end of the 2nd school term in mid-August or before the beginning of the third term in September each year. I received a schedule for meetings in various districts and I was able to attend one on September 3, 2007. The purpose was to find out what agenda is discussed in relation to decentralisation issues. The venue was central to all schools in that district and principals of both primary and secondary schools were invited. The relevant District Education Officer addressed the meeting. The main issue on the agenda was the challenges schools were facing because of the critical shortage of water. This was impacting negatively on teaching and learning. The details of this report are included in Chapter three of this research report. My observation, which was based on the issues discussed in that meeting besides the shortage of water, was that the standards of education in Zimbabwe have further declined during decentralisation. Some of the factors contributing to this assertion arose during the meeting. These were:

Brain drain - teachers leaving for greener pastures

Lack of resources in schools, for example, teachers did not have paper to set final examinations and for the answer scripts

The failure of some parents to pay tuition fees for that term due to economic decline

However, the other rewarding meeting which contributed to my observation was on November 10, 2008. School C, under the leadership of Reuben, the principal, was receiving a Merit Award for the best O' Level and A' Level results from the Permanent Secretary. An interview with the principal, on November 9, 2008 revealed that the participation of schools for the merit awards has increased since the implementation decentralisation. This participation now begins at the base or local level giving an opportunity for rural schools to be assessed on their own initially from their zones. Teams from both Provincial and National levels do the assessment.

The result, as the principal explained, is that there is a fair representation of rural schools that are eligible for merit awards. This is as opposed to National Team best results awards which were done by the National Team only. The criteria used was not very clear because the decision was left with the authorities at the Head Office as to which Province they picked and only the best schools were assessed and considered for the merit awards, Reuben explained.

5.4   GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

When I started my research in March 2003, I requested for government circulars that related to decentralisation from the Provincial Education Director, Dumisani. One of these was Circular number 1 of 2000, which dealt with the responsibilities of standards control, when Education Officers were transferred to be principals of secondary schools. School

supervision is amongst the major responsibilities which were decentralised to the principals. I am quoting a section of this circular. "Standards Control Education Officers based at the region will only give assistance and advice to schools on improvement and maintenance of standards, but schools should have their own properly articulated supervision plans. The plans should indicate who will supervise what and when as well as the expected performance indicators. Observations in this area should be communicated to the district education officer through the monthly report."

The problem that arises from the withdrawal of direct standards control supervision in schools as pointed out by most principals involves declining standards of education. Firstly, because the principals confirm that they do not specialise in all subjects taught; as such, they have limitations regarding specialised supervision beyond their major areas. Another problem is that they claim to be overloaded by many other decentralisation responsibilities and some of these require a lot of paperwork. They become inefficient and this defeats the objectives of decentralisation put forward by the Ministry of Education. Similar observations can be confirmed from interview findings. On the part of the Standard Control Education Officers themselves, their responses during the interviews indicate that they have been demotivated through the decentralisation of their duties. They argue that they have no power, which is claimed to have been redistributed to them. They suggest that they had more power before decentralisation.

Circulars Number 5 of 1997 and Number 4 of 2004 are examples of government documents that communicate deconcentration to decentralise responsibilities. This is where the central government explicitly states that authorities must get permission to implement any decision they make, for instance, the raising of fees and levies. These circulars seem to contradict what government said decentralisation should do. Local authorities indicate that they have no power to make decisions that may significantly improve education standards. This may be partly because most governments use the simplest form of decentralisation, which is deconcentration. Other contradictory circulars are directed to the parental bodies. In the same circular, parents, on the one hand, are empowered to take decisions and on the other, they have to seek permission to implement their decisions. This may result to the decentralisation/centralisation scenario In this way, one may point out that that power is centralised and it still resides with the state.

A summary presented as a matrix of the collection of data which answers questions about particular methods that were selected for this research project, how data was collected, where this was done, when and with whom is presented below.

Table 5.1: Field schedule

	Semi-structured interviews	**Observations**	**Focus groups**	**Government documents**
Why?	I can observe non-verbal communication. Usually have high response rates. Can probe for in-depth information.	To interact with people. Listen to their conversations.	Groups will have different ideas and perceptions. Have opportunity to probe.	To compare policy text/theory with practice in schools.
How?	Visit schools/ government offices. Use a tape recorder and transcribe.	Sit in their meetings or at meetings /teatime. Use a tape recorder.	Government offices to interview DEOs in Bulawayo central. Arrange a central venue and assist with transport.	Access policies and circulars on decentralisation and analyse these. Discuss for more understanding.
Where?	At the schools or individual offices.	At respective schools. At venues where meetings will be scheduled.	The group can agree on a venue.	Government offices or Principals have provided these.
When?	June/July 2007.	June/July 2007.	June/July 2007.	Ongoing from March 2003 to April 2008.
With Whom?	Provincial Education Director, District Education Officers, Principals of secondary schools, Parent bodies.	Principals of secondary schools, District Education Officers	Regional Director, District Education Officers, Principals of secondary schools, Parent bodies.	Regional Director, District Education Officers, Principals of secondary schools

5.5   ANALYSIS OF DATA

I relied more on the language of interviewees to analyse data. First, I looked for concepts that emerged from responses, using the same colour marker or highlighter for the texts relating to a particular group. In this way I derived various concepts represented by the different colours of makers. In the next step, I developed themes from the concepts and patterns that I could see in the marked data. The tacit knowledge of my study also contributed to the development of these themes. To avoid too many themes I coded my data. Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004: 148) suggest that two themes would be too small but fifteen themes would be too much. I then marked different sections of the concepts that I considered relevant to one of my themes. This time I used circles, again of different colours to code concepts that could be discussed under one theme. Below is a list of concepts that emerged from semi-structured interviews.

5.5.1   Concepts emerging from semi structured interviews

Twenty concepts emerged from the interviews:

Devolution was promised and expected by respondents

Deconcentration and delegation were employed instead

Certain authority was transferred

Absolute power has not been experienced

Power resides with central government

Real decentralisation has not been implemented

Increased workload for principals especially on supervisory roles

Local authorities have no significant power

Decentralisation has reduced tasks and responsibilities of central government and reinforced the power of the state

Benefits of decentralisation in parental bodies is evident

Decentralisation, if properly implemented, would have been a big service

Contradiction of policy text and implementation

Declining education standards

Demotivation among respondents

Decentralisation/centralisation of tasks

Roles unclear, overlap

Responsibilities of running schools transferred to parents without allocation of resources and decision making power.

Reduction of subjects specialists negatively impact on education standards

Some principals appraise decentralisation

District Education Officers claim lack of power

The twenty concepts listed above resulted in the themes presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Themes drawn from the concepts

Themes	Sources
Ambiguity of meaning of decentralisation	Literature review Chapters 2 and 3 Circulars on decentralisation Interview response
Power struggle in decentralisation	Literature review Chapters 2 and 3 Circulars Interviews
Effects of decentralisation on principals' workloads	Literature review Chapter 1 Circulars Interviews
Effects of decentralisation on education standards	Literature review Chapters 2 and 3 Observations Interviews
Contradiction of decentralisation at implementation	Literature review Chapters 2 and 3 Circulars on objectives and claims of

	decentralisation
	Observations
	Interviews

Decentralisation challenges faced by parents	Literature review Chapters 2 and 3
	Circulars
	Interviews
	Observations
Curriculum to be decentralisation	Circulars
	Interviews
Benefits of decentralisation evident in parental bodies	Literature review Chapter 2
	Observations

5.5.2   Analysis of Themes

The eight themes indicated in Table 5.2 are discussed individually in the following section.

5.5.2.1 Ambiguity of meaning of decentralisation

Most respondents understand decentralisation as the devolution of power to local levels but they are uncertain that power has been given. This is also confirmed in an attempt to define this term by decentralisation researchers as reported in Chapter two. They see decentralisation as a highly ambiguous concept that has been variously defined and interpreted. (Govinda, 1997; McLean & Lauglo, 1985; Rondenelli, 1981; Weiler, 1989; and Sayed 1997). Respondent one said,

"Whilst devolution has been done, at one time the heads of schools were supposed to recruit staff members but that power was taken away from them. Power should be given whole heartedly. There was misuse of power, nepotism etc. as stated by the Regional Director in an interview. My understanding of decentralisation in education is the process by which decision-making powers are transferred from a higher position to a lower one. The Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in the past used to have all decision making processes taking place at the head office in Harare. And with the decentralisation, this means that the power has been redistributed to provinces and from the provinces to districts, so that there is effective communication and effective and quick decision-making." The principals' expectations of the decentralisation of power might not have been met but from the government's point of view the least type of decentralisation could suffice.

The issue at stake based on in the above response is that, if there was devolution, which, according to Hanson (1998:12), refers to the transfer of authority to a unit that can act independently or without seeking permission. Government documents such as Circular Number 5 of 1992, page 2, report devolution of power in the policy text, but the principals found it difficult to implement.

The second issue that can be seen as indicative of the ambiguity in the implementation of the decentralisation of power concerns the power that was given to the principals of schools to recruit teachers which was later withdrawn. This was confirmed by one of the policy makers, the Deputy Provincial Education Director in an interview, who explained that the government made this decision because the teachers were complaining about some practices of nepotism by the principals and by the interviewees at both district and school levels.

Redistribution of power through devolution did not take place in most governments. What is revealed by the literature in Chapters two and three is that most central governments did not use the kind of decentralisation that could devolve power. It would seem that they employed deconcentration and delegation by which responsibilities were transferred without decision making power. For example, circular number 5 of 1997, states that parent bodies should apply if they wish to raise levies and they should get permission from central government before implementing new fee structures. Based on literature review, responsibilities that were later withdrawn describe delegation, under which higher authorities can transfer functions and withdraw that responsibility at their own discretion.

The third implication of that response suggests that respondents expected devolution and it seems that they embraced the concept and believed that decentralisation would speed up service delivery if decision-making power was at local level. This, in turn, was to improve the quality of education in schools. Respondents argue that they held this hope until they experienced the decentralisation/centralisation scenario where power was transferred and later taken back by the central government.

Interviewees alleged that decentralisation has also been characterised by overlapping of roles. Most respondents complained that roles have been unclear. There are district officials who felt marginalised or bypassed to the extent that they decided to leave the ministry. In an interview with the Provincial Regional Director on Monday 6 October 2003, he described his experience as 'confusion'. He explained that to effect the process of decentralisation, his team visited the local teacher training colleges as early as June each year. They addressed the final year students for induction in preparation for assumption of duty in September after their graduation. The understanding was that the deployment of teachers had been devolved to the region from the head office. On the contrary, before the region knew it, the lower levels received a deployment list from the Head Office.

The confusion, as the director explained, was that his team was at the implementation level and it was their responsibility to follow these teachers in schools to ensure they had reported for duty. He argued that the biggest challenge following this scenario is that most teachers do not report to their assigned districts, especially if the appointments are out of town. They were all vying for the limited vacancies in the city of Bulawayo. This respondent reported that he still had 154 vacancies in the Binga district that had not been filled. This was expected to affect learning negatively and Head Office was not responsible. One could point out that decentralisation may not be responsible for the overlap of roles but perhaps more effective communication was necessary between policy makers and the implementers.

It should be accepted that the empowerment of local levels, though minimal, had a negative impact on some workers in the Ministry of Education. I interviewed a Deputy Provincial Education Director, Rita, who found herself redundant during the implementation of decentralisation on Monday 6 October 2003. She explained that she lacked job satisfaction, felt demotivated and discouraged. She expressed her frustration because, before decentralisation, she was responsible for capturing statistical data for enrolments and forwarding it to the Head Office. Soon after the implementation of decentralisation, she discovered that computer programmes were linked from schools direct to the Head Office.

She found that she was now getting this information from Head Office and yet it was her duty to supply that office with these statistics. This lady admitted that she was demoralised and found herself unable to make any meaningful contribution. When I returned for some follow-up information I needed from her, she had left the ministry. District Education Officers in the interviews confirmed that a few others decided to leave after the restructuring exercise that preceded the implementation of decentralisation. However, if one were to analyse the case of Rita presented earlier, her case sounds genuine and again effective communication about the change of procedures and how the implementation of decentralisation was going to alter the way she had functioned before, would have been helpful. Otherwise, the direct link of computer programmes to the Head Office was facilitating quick service delivery, an achievement of the main objective of decentralisation.

5.5.2.2 Decentralisation/Centralisation in decision-making

There are government circulars that empower local authorities such as schools and parents to make administrative decisions but they deny these bodies the power to implement these decisions. An example is the Provincial Education Director's circular number 4 of 2004, which reaffirms approval by the Director's office before the implementation of suggested fees.

This can furthermore be demonstrated by means of a case in Zimbabwe which occurred in January 2005 when the economic crisis in Zimbabwe was beginning to escalate. Local authorities in schools had unanimously agreed to raise fees and levies to increase revenue so that they could maintain high standards in schools. When the proposed fees were implemented, the government charged and suspended all the principals in the respective schools. The local authorities made decisions based on the text of Circular number 5 of 1997 and implemented these decisions. The circular empowered parents to decide on the fees and levies. They did not realise that the power proclaimed in the circular was not redistributed in practice. Janet, a substantive principal, commenting on this lack of clarity in and contradiction with regard to the distribution of power between the government document and the practice in schools, said,

"…the suspension of principals was quite hurtful because according to the circular we are given power and authority to make decisions but at the end of the day one wonders how realistic this power is. My colleagues were punished unnecessarily."

Respondents point out that it is not very clear how much power central government has given to local authorities. Based on government circulars and other relevant documents,

decentralisation was meant to empower those closest to service delivery. One could therefore deduce that, although power is claimed to have been redistributed to local authorities. Most decisions are still made by central government.

Respondents suggested that the objectives of decentralisation were often contradictory at implementation. The scenario further reveals that the objectives of decentralisation were not fully accomplished. The transfer of responsibilities from higher levels to lower levels very often became little more than the decentralisation of administrative duties as it usually came without decision-making power and sufficient resources. Local authorities argue that they needed decision-making power and the resources for school improvement. Findings from interviews suggested that local governments in schools at district levels and in the provinces have no decision-making power. George, one of the substantive principals pointed out that,

"While we as provinces, districts and the schools would have loved to have the power because we are dealing with the situation on the ground, the Ministry of Education does not let go of this power that they claim has been devolved to us."

Responses further imply that some power was given but this was not what they referred to as absolute power. Their understanding of absolute power was to have authority to make decisions as they see the needs of schools and to implement them; to have resources that would meet the needs of learners in terms of human capital, financial and material resources. Respondents also indicated that parents who run schools understand the needs of those schools better. Parents explained that the only meaningful way of generating revenue is through levies and other fees, which they have no power to implement without the approval of central government.

Respondents explained that the directive from central government was that through the implementation of decentralisation, each district was expected to be self sufficient in terms of resources. This meant that each district should ensure they have adequate, qualified teachers in their schools and that there is effective learning with adequate resources for the needs of both teachers and students. Reports on the supervision of instructions are expected from schools each month. Michael, one of the District Education Officers, complained that,

 "We are districts without power; instead we are appendages to provincial office. We are told how to run our institutions by central government who are not on the ground. The

province is also told from head office what to do, in most cases everything we do is to receive directives. Only the Permanent Secretary at the head office can make decisions."

There seems to be a feeling among respondents at district level that decisions on some functions could easily be made at that level by the District Education Officers.

John, a substantive District Education Officer suggested that the "functions such as the transfer of teachers in to Bulawayo should not be really done by head office". Ronald, another substantive District Education Officer added that,

"Honestly if I cannot authorise a teacher to go on leave without referring to the province then where is the devolved power? We don't have the decision-making power to do what we consider to be perhaps straight forward administration."

On the other hand principals argue that, instead of decision-making power, paper work was decentralised to them. This paper work included assessment of teachers which requires six copies of reports for each teacher to be sent to various higher offices. However, they are grateful that among other functions that have been withdrawn from them, are included. Reuben, an Education Officer, explained that,

"Effective recruitment of teachers by the distribution of application forms, taking fingerprints and filling in medical forms. This was a burden for us because we needed stationery and yet paper is very expensive in Zimbabwe. It is a blessing in disguise that power for this function resides with the district authorities."

It is reported that the situation in schools as well as in the districts and provinces is that effective implementation of decentralisation was insignificant. It seems that what the respondents mean by real decentralisation is meaningful decision-making power that gives the lower levels power to act. At the time of the interview, decisions were made at the head office. It appears that decision-making power has not been redistributed to local levels, it is still centralised. Respondents point out that there is no quick service delivery as espoused by the decentralisation objectives.

5.5.2.3 Effect of decentralisation on principals' workloads

There were conflicting views among the principals interviewed concerning their workloads. While the review of literature alluded to this increase, the principals' responses were varied. The contradictory answers explain this. Dick, a substantive principal complained that,

"My supervisory roles have increased. I now should supervise all teachers and make reports on my deputy head each month. All these reports must go in six copies that should be sent to the higher authorities who were initially responsible for this function. How does one cope with this?"

Harold, a principal as well, argued that before decentralisation, the task was light.

"Now there is more work for me to do and so I have to delegate at much as possible because I cannot cope with the amount of work we have to do. The Ministry of Education Sport and Culture pushed sub-contracting to the schools. It means that I must see to the cleanliness of the classrooms, grounds, maintenance and general cleaning. I am doing all this in addition to the Normal supervisory work that I have. I must find a person that I must delegate his job to and so I assign the deputy principal and the caretaker to ensure that certain things are done. So the duties have increased but I delegate in order to cope."

On the other hand, Janet, one of the principals suggested that some of the responsibilities given to principals were a strategy of the central government to empower them. She cited the collection tuition fees at the schools to illustrate her point. Janet explained that, "Now we can budget for the books that we critically need, especially in the Languages where we had a shortage. We also cater for the administrative overheads. We divided the money according to the several needs in these areas. So we have one hundred percent authority!"

Two other principals, George and James argue that decentralisation did not increase their workloads as principals. George explained that, "I still devote my eight hours at school, to be honest, decentralisation has not affected my workload." James has taken advantage of his supervisory role and capitalised on it. He explained that he has structured the supervision of instruction in such a way that he can safely say,

"To a certain extent decentralisation has lessened my work load because at school level, my role as a supervisor is to monitor the supervisory work of eight heads of departments and they in turn would inspect the staff in their departments. Out of forty-eight staff members I am directly responsible for the eight heads of departments. The remainder of the staff becomes the function of the heads of departments. In this way decentralisation has reduced my work load."

One could point out that most principals seem to employ delegation as a coping strategy. However, respondents argue that the transfer of responsibilities from the district education officers to the principals could be seen as a strategy to cut down on the central government's budget costs through the withdrawal of subject specialist education officers. They insisted that this decision negatively affected standards in secondary schools.

It was pointed out that shifting the supervisory role to principals has not only lowered educational standards, but has put additional pressure on the principals because supervision was previously done by subject specialists. Most principals, obviously have not specialised in all areas and they may not be competent to advice beyond their own specialisation. They reported that sometimes they meet resistance from specialist teachers who argue that principals are not qualified to assess them and cannot contribute to the improvement and development of the particular subject.

In addition to supervisory roles and other responsibilities, the director's circular minute of December 2005 has guidelines on the teaching loads of principals and deputy heads. It requires that principals teach between five and eighteen periods per week depending on the enrolment at the school.

The principals reported that they find this a big challenge and a contradiction if high standards of education are to be maintained. According to most government documents that speak on decentralisation, its implementation was meant to give the Zimbabwean child quality education. It might be accepted that principals need to be in touch with classroom teaching to be able to evaluate classroom teachers meaningfully, but perhaps their teaching load could be minimal. Principals further explained that if they teach examinable classes students tend to suffer because quite often the principals attend meetings or they have other duties outside the school. Some principals teach examinable classes which tend to suffer as they quite often attend meetings and have other duties outside the school.

Student learning time is compromised and they hardly receive quality teaching, but the directive is for the principals and their deputies to teach. The Director's circular of 2005, which gives a detailed schedule of the teaching loads for heads and deputy heads, states that,

 "The teaching load can be from examinable or non-examinable subjects." Principals confirm this in their interviews.

The other challenge brought forward by the principals is that it becomes imperative for them to learn new skills to be able to cope with the implementation of decentralisation. While it is plausible to empower local levels with new skills, technical areas like accounting might need basic knowledge and practice. James, one of the principals, stated that the responsibility of collecting tuition fees, keeping records; disbursing and accounting for funds require special skills.

"Although we have attended workshops on what we are supposed to do, most of us still find it difficult to keep ledgers. We have to collect bank statements and enter the payment of fees on daily basis and at the end of the month we are expected to balance the books and produce a balance sheet and present a financial statement to the board. This requires accounting expertise. Even in cases where there is an accountant, if the auditors find any problems with his/her books, they will still go to the principal for explanation and find that one has no expertise and cannot answer convincingly."

It should be pointed out, however, that skills training can be seen from the government's point of view as an effective way of empowerment for local authorities which is a function of decentralisation. The process of such training might be tedious, but the results could be very rewarding towards the achievement of objectives of decentralisation, as well as professional growth of principals. Although there are some benefits of decentralisation mentioned by the principals, the majority of them think that their work was more manageable before decentralisation. Tom, one of the substantive principals, stated that,

"Before decentralisation, the task was light. There is too much work now, to be able to cope I delegate as much as possible, For example, the government sub-contracted companies to maintain public schools and pushed their supervision to the principals. In addition to my supervisory work and my classroom teaching, I must see to the cleanliness of the classrooms, the school grounds, maintenance and general cleaning. I have asked the caretaker and deputy head to co-ordinate these functions."

Principals report that there are too many other programmes that come as directives for implementation. These programmes obviously fill most of the principals' already crowded schedule. They report that one programme sometimes may be introduced before another one has taken shape. Respondents explained that they become demotivated on account of these unfinished programmes which they believe come with decentralisation. Among other programmes that have been introduced during the implementation of decentralisation is

the "Two Pathway" programme in secondary schools. The government introduced the vocational/technical national foundation certificate whereby students are placed in two separate streams from form one (First year in High school) for four years. One stream was for those students with a strong academic bias and the other stream was for those with a vocational and technical slant. The selection was based on the grade seven results (Secretary's circular number 3 of 2000). It is stated that because parents did not like the programme, the ministry has since suspended it because of their complaints. However, there is a possibility that if central government was afforded an opportunity to explore the programme with support from the parents, this could open other doors and opportunities for the students to pursue other fields that may be beneficial to their future careers, as well as give decentralisation a chance.

The message from principals is that they have difficulty coping with the work, but they have found an effective strategy of delegating, which seems to work, both in the supervision of instruction where the principal empowers heads of departments to do it, as well as the staff who take care of general maintenance. It can be pointed out that through this delegation, decentralisation achieves some of its objectives, for example, the redistribution of power. However, policy makers could be more sensitive and more realistic in the timing of implementing programmes so that they could allow enough time for the local levels to see at least one programme at a time to completion.

5.5.2.4 Effect of decentralisation on education standards

The findings from interviews and observations reveal that education standards have continued to decline during the implementation of decentralisation. The literature review in Chapter three also confirms that the decentralisation policy in Zimbabwe was implemented when the country was economically unstable and lacked resources for decentralisation leaving slim chances for its effectiveness. The policy was prematurely implemented to rescue the declining education budget. Chapter one also indicates major shortages of resources for education funding which forced the government to decentralise as a way of relieving their budget. This situation points out that education standards were going down as early as the late 1980s.

One of the major problems stated was that the growing enrolments which demanded more human, financial and material resources and infrastructure could not be matched with available resources. Subject specialists who monitored quality in schools were eliminated and their work was devolved to the principals of secondary schools and one education officer was left to man each district. Tom stated that,

"There were no longer teams of specialists going out to make reports and supervise instruction. This became more and more difficult because of the increasing number of schools and diminishing resources."

From the government documents it was noted that the organisational structure of the education system of Zimbabwe discussed in Chapter three shows that one district education officer looks after the whole district and monitors a subject from primary school to secondary school level. It is also reported that the resources became a challenge because there are no cars and fuel for visiting schools. Harold commented that, in the unlikely event that an Education Officer happens to get to a school,

"It's no longer classroom visits, they are entitled to look at the plant life and the principal's work. They do not do supervision of instruction anymore but they just look at the overview of the institution and what type of records principals have. This type of supervision may result in low standards of education."

The current challenges that emerged from the discussion in the observation done was that adding to the effect of the contradictory decentralisation, a major factor contributing to poor education standards in Zimbabwe is the lack of trained teachers in schools. As a result of the flight of skills discussed in Chapter three, qualified teachers have left for greener pastures. As George put it,

"Qualified teachers are migrating to other countries and we end up with untrained temporary teachers to present quality education. The onus is left with the principal to provide another teacher".

Most respondents seem to interpret quality in terms of students' performance, although one respondent suggested that some of the variables in considering quality might point to the size of classes, high teacher-pupil ratios and automatic promotion at grade seven level. He argued that these scenarios definitely militate against quality teaching and learning.

However, most respondents explained that they measure quality by the pass rates. The following quote from James demonstrates this:

"We discover that nationally we may not have achieved the quality we were looking for because even if we are implementing decentralisation, the national pass rates have not significantly improved. They have remained at 20% and below at Ordinary Level. The last report in the Bulawayo province was that 27% of the candidates did not even get one

Ordinary Level pass. I think decentralisation hinders more than it facilitates quality education."

According to the government documents, offering quality education to the Zimbabwean child was one of the objectives put forward by the government of Zimbabwe for decentralising (Press Conference). Principals who were supposed to implement this policy to improve education standards have been overloaded by the requirements of decentralisation. The quality education that was sought has been hindered. Education officers formerly facilitated and encouraged teachers to attend seminars and workshops to update themselves. Subject panels that were co-ordinated at cluster levels have disappeared.

Dick stated that, "Some of the reasons contributing to the poor standards could be lack of academic resources in terms of infrastructure, too large teacher-pupil ratios and automatic promotion in grade seven." He added that, "Lack of effective communication between central government and the schools also contributes negatively." The respondents complained that circulars arrive almost halfway through the year and this contradicts the objective of decentralisation for quick service delivery. These circulars usually announce changes of syllabi to be implemented at the beginning of the year. Students are then disadvantaged because teachers may have difficulty completing the syllabus before the examination dates.

5.5.2.5 The contradiction of decentralisation at implementation

Respondents have found decentralisation problematic to implement. They suggested that, if this policy had been put into practise based on its text, it would have been a big boost for school improvement. Local authorities would be able to improve and maintain high education standards if they had decision-making power, because, as they argue in the interviews, they know what education improvements need to be done in schools, but they lack both resources and decision-making power. The challenge that explains the difficulty to implement decentralisation is that its objectives are contradictory. This concurs with the discussion in Chapters two and three, which suggests that decentralisation, according to Weiler (1989:56), is often a legitimising strategy rather than for the purposes it is proposed. Local governments would only improve education if central governments had empowered them through the redistribution of decision-making power and the allocation of resources. School authorities and their communities explain that they were enthusiastic about their involvement as it could be seen as a more democratic approach, but they discovered that the policy meant something different on the ground.

School authorities stated that they had difficulty putting the claims of decentralisation into practice. Teachers and parents find themselves without the power that the government's documents and circulars claim has been devolved to them. When schools and their communities embrace this power for school development, they find themselves in trouble for implementing decisions without approval from the same ministry that has promised to give them power to run schools. Sarah argued that,

"It is an example of rhetoric power that the ministry granted schools and parents permission through specific government circulars to hike fees. When they put this into practise, the principals were charged and suspended for implementing this decision without permission. This was a serious contradiction."

5.5.2.6 Decentralisation challenges faced by parents

Apart from my formal initial inquiry, I am also presenting experiences and observations captured during the course of my visits and discussions in 2008. Government documents revealed that the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture in Zimbabwe invited parents for partnership in education through such bodies as School Development Committees or Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations (Circular Number 5 of 1992). Respondents think that because of the constraints parents have in decisions to implement new fee structures in schools, the invitation for partnership tends to be viewed as a political move to reduce central government's education budget.

They argue that instead of sharing funding, the ministry left the whole responsibility of school operations to the parents without the transfer of any financial resources. They explained that the contribution the ministry makes is through the payment of the teachers' meagre salaries and very minimal subsidies given to public schools. I sat in a consultative meeting between the parents' executive and the principal at a public school on Thursday 15 May 2008. It was interesting to learn from Janet, the principal that the subsidy allocated to the school from the ministry for this second term, May to August 2008, was $24 million. Based on the exchange rate at the time, one ZWD was equivalent to US$0,08. The principal argued that it was more expensive to fetch this money using public transport because a return trip to town costs an equivalent of US$1,00.

The School Development Association Executive from school C explained that their responsibilities include seeing to the smooth running of the school. They monitor how the children learn and see to it that they have adequate and capable teachers. They face an

ongoing problem of teachers leaving at the end of every term because of the depressed economy in the country. The salaries are low and teachers expect high supplementary salaries that parents cannot afford. The public school fees set for the term May to August 2008 and paid by each child in secondary school was $6 million, as confirmed by the principal. Janet explained that the central government could afford to do this because they have devolved school funding to the parents. Higher levels of government are not concerned with whether parents can fund the education of their children or not.

The parents' representative stated that it is because of this unrealistic fee structure that the parents' body came up with levy and fee increases to keep the schools in operation. He outlined the challenges that confront them when they take that step. The challenges are as follows:

The process that has to be followed is very tedious, because they begin with a consultative meeting with the principal who explains both the routine expenses and requests from the teachers for funding.

They look at all the expenses, cost it and come up with proposed fees and levies to be paid by each pupil to meet the needs.

Among other things, this particular school runs and maintains two vehicles; they pay electricity bills, water, general workers' salaries that go up monthly, as the principal added, and many other expenses.

The parents confirm that the most difficult part is to present the budget to the full parent body. The chairperson mentioned that "We can't present our proposed rise first, but we wait for the parents to suggest figures after looking at the realistic budget. It is very difficult to convince parents. There are usually three suggested figures as follows; One figure is usually much lower than our proposed one, another one close and the last one is often much higher. After a long debate we all come to a consensus to vote." They use the ballot system and it should constitute more than 50% of the full house.

The next step is for the executive to send an application with all the information about the proposed fees. It is at this step that there is a long delay, while inflation reduces value of proposed fees and the prices shoot up. The school cannot effect the proposed fees; neither can they afford to make any urgent payments from the small amounts collected from the public school fees until the Provincial Education Director responds on behalf of the government. Janet argued that the Director too, has no power because he needs to consult. Parents have no power to act, even though the circular says that they have the power. This is also a contradiction of the objectives of decentralisation to facilitate quick service delivery.

The chairperson argued that the wait was not usually worth it, because when the Provincial Education Director responds, his proposal suggests that the School Development Association should reduce the amount by 90%. For example, he stated that at one time the parent body had suggested a figure of $50 million and this was reduced to $5 million. This decision by the central government may confirm their political power in education, which is believed to be embedded in the decentralisation policy. When I asked the executive and the principal how they balance their budget confronted by this scenario, they explained that their electricity bill was still outstanding at the time of the interview. The principal and the parents were afraid that Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) would discontinue services at any time.

Janet mentioned that other supplies like the toilet disinfectants, as well as other essentials that the school was in desperate need of had not been bought. She also pointed out that the parents' bank account was on the verge of closure by the bank because it was overdrawn by $38million and yet the bank charges were $100 million per month. Both the parents' executive and the principal agreed that the statement at the end of May would attract another $100 million in bank charges. The principal confirmed communication with the ministry about the possibility of a closure of the school's bank account. Their response was that she should encourage parents to sustain it in spite of the fact that parents are struggling to raise funds. One may conclude that this kind of power controls and dominates individual activities.

I obtained some new light about what is actually happening in public schools from the consultative meeting between Janet the principal, and the parents' executive. The principal explained that there was a political power struggle between the government and private schools in Zimbabwe. She explained that the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture was encouraging private schools to offer education but the Ministry was trying to control the operation of these schools. They control the fee structures with very little success because of the power of the board of directors which is the responsible authority. The principal explained that the fees and levies in private schools are calculated in billions and the ministry initially allowed these proposals. On the other hand, fees of public schools are $6 million in comparison.

She stated that while the application for the permission to raise fees is applicable to all schools; both public and private, it is likely that the policy was initially meant to control the unprecedented fee rises in private schools. The 90% reduction of proposals from all schools' is now done across board, disregarding the small amount in fees paid by students in public schools. The policy also ignores the differences in the availability of resources regarding the two types of schools. The fact is that there can be no comparison in terms of human,

material and financial resources between the two kinds of schools. Private schools have maintained and probably improved their capacity over a long time. In contrast, the parent bodies in public schools have barely been sustaining their schools because they took over the responsibilities of funding schools without the allocation of resources.

Janet also argued that the government again, is playing the political game. She confirmed that there was a later circular than the Statutory Instrument of 1992, which stated that public and private schools would be treated differently in respect of the percentage rise of fees but they did the opposite in practice. A similar situation to that, according to the Wang's report in Chapter Two, occurred in Hong Kong. There the power struggle is also between the government and the private schools but the problem is that there are more schools under private school control than those controlled by the Ministry of Education. The report suggests that the objectives of decentralisation in Hong Kong were rhetorical gimmicks used by the government to legitimise its managerial restructuring and gain more control in education.

When I probed the parents at School C for explanations of how they cope with the slash of proposed fees and levies, they pointed out that they engage in other activities that can generate funds. The example they gave involved the use of "Civvies Days" which allows them to charge any amount that parents agree on without applying for approval from the Ministry of Education. The school used funds collected from a Civvies Day in February 2008 to hire members of the community to cut grass on the school grounds. They informed me that the school can no longer afford loan mowers with their limited financial resources.

It can be argued that both the declining economy and the tense political situation in the country worsen the plight of government schools and government aided schools in Zimbabwe. The economic situation contributes to the drop of education standards because of the flight of skills discussed in Chapter three. Parents and principals also report that children drop out of school because their parents cannot afford to pay fees. A worse situation is that they sometimes keep their children in school but delay paying the fees. This impacts negatively on the school budget, especially with regard to the purchasing of classroom supplies that are dependent on the payment of fees at the beginning of each term. The available teachers have difficulty in providing effective learning without writing materials and text books, for example. It is unrealistic to prepare the students for examinations when they lack necessary equipment. This affects the pass rate and the quality of education.

The political situation also affected the learning time of the students, firstly when the teachers were on strike between January and March and then during the country's election in March 2008. I read an article written to the editor of the Chronicle of Wednesday, 19 March 2008, by an anonymous concerned parent. It read, "We are paying school fees for services which are not being provided. When schools opened in January, teachers were on "go slow" and in February the teachers went on strike up to 12 March 2008. Now schools are closing today (19 March 2008) so our children have lost out. Children attended lessons for a month only this term, yet we paid fees for the whole term. I appeal to the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture to ensure something is done to make up for the lost time. Economic hardships are affecting everyone including those parents who are being milked. Could the ministry come up with a schedule of how schools can make up for the time lost during the strike?"

Following the school calendar, in addition to the strike, the schools closed earlier because teachers were involved in assisting with the voting process. It is for these reasons that learning time was one month instead of three months. When the term resumed at the beginning of May 2008, most schools in rural areas were unsettled because of political uncertainties. It may not necessarily mean that there were problems at such schools, but what was reported in the media was more than enough to intimidate people. Students again were short-changed of their learning time. This may certainly affect their performance, especially in the case of those who are sitting for public examinations this year.

All three parental bodies that were interviewed shared similar challenges of inadequate revenue for school operations. Their major source of revenue was the collection of fees and levies, but they had no power to raise and implement these without approval from the Ministry of Education. A parent in the interview at school B, stated that,

"We have no problem with the government approving our decisions but the process takes too long for implementation of our school plans."

It should be noted that one of the major objectives of decentralisation in Zimbabwe was to improve service delivery by allowing local authorities to make quick decisions about matters that affect schooling but this has contradicted that claim.

The parents' executive in school A explained that another challenge that parents face in Zimbabwe at the moment, is that there are too many requests for funding supported by small income. The parent added that the little income they have, sometimes gets wiped out

by the teachers' supplementary salaries that are paid to retain teachers. It is imperative for the parents to do that because many teachers are leaving the country for greener pastures and students are left without expert teachers to maintain standards of education. This negatively affects not only the pass rates, but the quality of those passes as well.

One regressive point mentioned by one of the committee members of the parents' executive at school C, was that they agree on a figure to be paid for fees and levies in their meetings, but when this proposal is sent to the provincial office for approval, the suggested figure may be reduced by 10%. This defeats the whole purpose because parents arrive at that figure on the basis on their budget, which is informed by their needs. This is seen as part of the governments 'political game' to retain political power in education at the expense of education standards.

In spite of the intentional setbacks arranged by the higher authorities, parents try their best to keep the schools functional. They have assumed responsibility to develop the schools. At school B, the executive committee stated that they maintain buildings, repair furniture and they are also in charge of security at the school. Because of limited funds, it is regrettable that these parents laid a foundation for an 'A' level science laboratory in October 2006.

When I visited the school on Thursday, 22 May 2008 to see the progress, it was disappointing to find that the building has not gone beyond foundation level because of inadequate funds. Other building materials, like quarry stones sand and bricks are still lying idle at the site. Photographs of this building can be viewed in the Appendix C. At school A, the parents' body was operating three projects; a grinding mill, poultry (layers) and a tuck shop. Proceeds from these projects were used for school development, as well as supplementary salaries for teachers. They explained that their challenge is that they have to supplement food for boarding students every term. They do this in addition to the initial fees paid. All the boarding schools face this challenge. Because of inflation, the top-up fees, as they are called, are more than double the fees paid initially at the beginning of the term.

The 'Montrosian' is the pride of the third School Development Committee. This is a school bus which takes sports teams from one school to a neighbouring school. The school is very actively involved in sporting activities. The parents first provided a truck with a canopy for transport and purchased the bus in 2000. Photographs of the bus can be seen in the appendix (C). On the whole, parents confirm that they could do much more if they had decision-making power. They still willingly accept the responsibility of operating schools

although it is becoming more and more difficult because of the deteriorating economic environment.

5.5.2.7 Curriculum to be decentralised

The former Secretary of Education Sport and Culture, Chifunyise, at a Press Conference in 1998 on Decentralisation, alluded to the advantages of decentralised curriculum as one of those initiatives decentralisation could implement, but he hastened to say that the Zimbabwean government was not ready to decentralise it. Based on this presentation, Tina, one of the principals stated that "Education should be community based. It should be brought to the grass roots closer to the life experiences of a child, so that it becomes realistic."

Tina argued that the curriculum should be decentralised to meet the needs of the local community and that of the child. The decentralisation of a curriculum could largely benefit the child, but, again because of political reasons, the government in Zimbabwe is not ready to do that. Mr Chifunyise, confirmed that the decentralisation of a curriculum could have tremendous, positive effect on education. He gave examples of what could happen in Binga, which is in the northern part of the country, Nyanga, which is in the eastern highlands, and Lupane, which is in the western part.

Mr Chifunyise explained that there is a major fishing industry in Binga and if this was incorporated in the curriculum for the schools there, it could benefit the children in that area. He added that this move would open doors for skills development, so that the children would be able to learn how to fish, salt, dry and pack the fish for the market. Children would be equipped with a livelihood skill that could sustain them, together with their families and communities. Similarly, he added, large hectares of tea are growing in Nyanga. If the curriculum was contextualised, school leavers could engage in this type of farming as a livelihood. Schools could also work in the tea industry as a money-generating project to supplement school funding. Chifunyise also mentioned that Lupane University, which was in its infancy then, could have its students major in wildlife and many related areas, because of its location near the giant Hwange National Park. To conclude his speech, the former secretary ironically mentioned that his government was not ready to decentralise the curriculum.

The principals who were respondents in this research project are advocating for a decentralised curriculum for the following reasons:

Schools in Binga, for example, are located about five hours away from the small town of Hwange. Students live in very remote areas. In most cases, they have never seen a bank

building and yet the content of their curriculum at high school level requires them to do and understand accounting. To a large extent, they do not have textbooks to read and help them understand what happens in a bank. The content becomes very irrelevant for the children in that area. They also write national examinations which assume that all the students at 'O' level have seen a bank and they know what happens in handling bank transactions.

Principals argued that these students fail largely because the content they have studied is abstract. It does not deal with things that are within their contexts and it becomes difficult for them to comprehend. They would most likely be more conversant with any question about the fish industry, the process of carving special tools made in the area and the popular and special basket industry. Binga baskets sell very well throughout the country because the material used is only available in that area.

This reminds me of a very irrelevant curriculum that I went through at lower primary level. I came to realise this in the last two decades. The geography taught at the time was world geography. Interestingly we didn't know anything about our own geography. We could not even locate Zimbabwe on the world map. In spite of that, we studied and we were examined on such content as Eskimos and their igloos, snow, reindeer and typhoons, for example. My classmates and I had never seen a reindeer. These species do not even exist in Africa. There was no accurate description of snow that could give us a clue of what the teacher was trying to explain.

When I think of it, it is unlikely that our teachers had seen any snow either. Eskimo igloos were nothing we could relate to because they have a very different shape from the huts we lived in. It was not until 1992 when my family migrated to the Philippines that I came to know what typhoons are. Most of my then classmates have probably not seen or experienced typhoons to date. As an educationist I advocate for a decentralised relevant curriculum because of its effectiveness in learning. I should mention, though, that it is important for students to interact with global content, but they will certainly engage more effectively if they first understand their own world.

The next point that justifies a decentralised curriculum is that it facilitates needs assessment in each community. An example is what happened at the University of Zimbabwe soon after independence in 1981. A degree in Politics and Administration (POLAD) was previously open only to white students following the two-tier system that was operating in education in the country. When the degree became accessible to everyone, many black students enrolled for

POLAD. There was an over site about the market for these students. At the completion of the degree, many students who graduated from this programme were not absorbed into the market. The few white graduates had been employed as town administrators previously and they filled most of the available posts in the few towns in the country.

The rest of the students were left unemployed. It was an oversight by curriculum developers to ignore the need for a paradigm shift which called for Needs Assessment. Most of the graduates were desperate. The only sector that seemed to be able to utilise a few of them were schools. They taught history as temporary teachers because the Ministry of Education expected them to have a teaching certificate – Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). When this requirement was enforced, some of these graduates went back to enrol and obtained the certificate and others enrolled in a more functional degree and spent another three years studying, which was very disadvantageous.

The third point, perhaps the most pressing issue in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture concerning a decentralised curriculum, concerns the minority groups in Zimbabwe. Ndebele and Shona are the main languages spoken in the country. These are the only local languages taught in schools, even if they are not representative of all the tribes in Zimbabwe. Both the Tonga community in Binga, located in the remote northern parts of the country and the Kalanga people in Plumtree, west of Bulawayo are advocating for the recognition of their minority languages to be taught in their schools. What is happening is that students use their mother language at home and they are compelled to do either Ndebele or Shona at school. A decentralised curriculum could take care of this problem.

Some of the responding parents' arguments indicated that this practice may disadvantage children in many ways.

The children have difficulty learning a second African language when they are already struggling with English as a second language. This slows down their learning.

Each language comes with its own values, customs and traditions and these children are missing out on their culture.

Parents cannot help their children with homework; neither can they enforce their own values because these may contradict what is taught.

Ndebele and Shona do not prepare the children to live, learn, practise what they learn and help them to fit into their communities.

The examinations are written either in Ndebele or Shona and this prejudices the children. Learning is not enjoyable and this may affect their self-worth as individuals.

They do not understand why they can live in independent Zimbabwe and yet are not free to have their own respective languages taught in local schools.

Based on the issues of power discussed in Chapter two, this is abuse of power by the central government to get people to do things that may contradict their culture and their values, just because they are subjected to someone who has control over them. The response from the government on this issue is very political. I spoke to one of the principals from Binga who attended my 'Issues in Curriculum' course, in December 2007. He explained that what the Ministry of Education, Sport and culture was doing may worsen the plight of the children in that area. They allow the teaching of Tonga from grade one to three, and then switch to Shona or Ndebele from grade four in preparation for grade seven examinations.

He pointed out that it would be more advantageous if the children were taught in Shona or Ndebele as early as possible until the government is ready to implement the whole programme in their own language. What they are doing now may result in more confusion to the children in terms of reading, writing and understanding of the language. It is also a waste of the child's learning time. There is a possibility that the children may be confused between the two cultures. It is their right to identify themselves with their own culture so that they may prepare to live and be accepted by their communities.

This issue may be pursued by future researchers who may want to investigate the significance/benefits of a decentralised curriculum and why the government of Zimbabwe has difficulty implementing this. However, one of the obvious reasons why the Ministry of Education is dragging its feet to implement this programme fully, according to the principal from Binga, is that they do not have trained personnel to teach these languages. To start training teachers in these areas would require stable financial resources to cover materials such as books, teachers and other needs.

The fact that the government is already struggling to fund the few teacher training institutions adds to their dilemma. In spite of this, I think that the government should take this decision because these communities have lived and will continue to exist in Zimbabwe and it is not fair to marginalise them. Existing structures could be used to minimise the cost. There would be need to utilise the available teaching personnel and maximise on teachers who would take care of the major languages. Any country should be able to meet the

education needs of its people if it prioritises. At the moment most resources in the country are pooled towards a political agenda which benefits a few individuals in power.

Tina who suggested the decentralisation of the curriculum argued that this would lead to the decentralisation of final examinations as well. She argued that this move would benefit all the learners because they could interact with relevant content within their reach. Each student may more easily relate to the concepts taught if they deal with his/her day-to-day activities. This could also open doors for quick learning of abstract concepts because psychologically learners grasp faster when their learning develops from simple to complex and from those things that they know to new knowledge. Learning becomes manageable and achievable in terms of its outcomes. Again the importance of one's culture in developing a positive self-worth cannot be over emphasised. Children need to be oriented in their culture as early as possible in their lives in order to belong and fit in with their communities. A decentralised curriculum could achieve this.

5.6   SUMMARY

Literature review on decentralisation in Zimbabwe revealed that principals of secondary schools had increased workloads because of the decentralisation of tasks devolved to them. However, findings from interviews indicate that principals have different perspectives about the implementation of this policy. Some confirm that there were too many additional loads that came with decentralisation, to the extent that they find it difficult to supervise instruction as effectively as they are expected to in maintaining productive learning. Others think that their workloads had been eased or they remain the same after the implementation of decentralisation.

From the observation it was noted that one could appreciate the implementation of decentralisation in empowering the parents to take part in the funding of schools. They have come up with various projects that are not only taking care of the needs of their children, but they benefit the community as well. The example of this is a grinding mill which is used to grind maize that feeds the students and it also serves the community. Parents use the proceeds to cover their expenses.

It was also noted that the parents have gained control over the education of their children, because they can now be part of the decision-making body that sets tuition fees. The central government in Zimbabwe can no longer single-handedly do this.

The decentralisation of merit awards which also came with decentralisation is very motivational to local levels – teachers, students and parents. I attended such a field day

which was heavily supported by education officials in the district as well as principals and parents of the school. The Permanent Secretary had come to give the merit award to school C. This exercise is promising to result in both teachers and their students working towards more excellence and the possible increase of support from the parents and the community.

It should be pointed out however, that parents still have major decision – making limitations. This, for example, refers to the circulars where government empowered parents, but restrain the implementation.

There seems to be a consensus among respondents that there were many problems in the smooth implementation of decentralisation which later resulted in the decentralisation/centralisation of certain tasks and responsibilities. Respondents realised that the concept and policy text of decentralisation which they had embraced, was contradictory at implementation because local levels have limited decision – making power for quick service delivery closer to where learning takes place.

The restructuring exercise which was a major function of decentralisation in Zimbabwe (discussed in Chapter One) is mentioned by the respondents as one of the contributing factors of the failure of decentralisation. Although conceptually this should be commended. This restructuring, according to the government documents reviewed, led to the drop of subjects specialists, and the respondents argued that this resulted in the decline of education standards in schools. The challenge as has been stated earlier, was in the lack of effective implementation of decentralisation.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   SUMMARY

The study focuses on the re-distribution of administrative and financial power in the education systems in Zimbabwe and in selected international countries. The aim of the study is to explore how the intentions of decentralisation as part of a global policy could lead to the improvement of the quality of education internationally.

After Zimbabwe got independence in 1980, education policies were focused on the commitment to redress issues of access and equity in education. Existing imbalances had emanated from a dual education system during the pre-independence period. The adjusted focus also addressed the aspirations of the black majority in Zimbabwe outlined in the ZANU PF Manifesto of 1980. The government gazetted compulsory education and offered free primary education. Overwhelming enrolments that followed could not be matched on account of inadequate financial, material and human resources. This situation forced the government to find ways of supplementing education funding through decentralisation.

They resorted to employing deconcentration, a concept of decentralisation that allowed them to transfer some responsibilities of education funding to local authorities but still retain decision-making power and control over education as well as the resources. In some cases delegation was employed in decentralisation. The concept allowed central governments to devolve power and withdraw it at their own discretion. Since the focus was on the re-distribution of power this was seen as a contradiction as well as a confirmation of the power struggle and a strategy to recentralise major roles in the education systems.

The local authorities were expected to effect quick decisions concerning education in their schools because of their proximity to education delivery. In Zimbabwe the principals experienced increased workloads due to the devolving of administrative and supervisory functions and the withdrawal of subjects specialists who monitored standards in education. The additional workloads and similar drawbacks were reported internationally in the quest to maintain and improve education standards. Those at implementation level consistently

reported the decentralisation/centralisation scenarios which counteracted the claims and aims of decentralisation as presented by various governments.

Some of the major contributing factors to the difficulties encountered at implementation were because of the complex nature of power and its redistribution in education which was found to manifest differently in different contexts in the same country. The other factor was the ambiguity of the meaning of decentralisation that was understood and interpreted contextually. Challenges faced by implementers in Zimbabwe could be related to those revealed by the studies of decentralization in other countries.

The role conflict of who has what power and who is responsible for what characterized many education systems. The Education Officers interviewed in Zimbabwe argued that the job descriptions of the District Education Officer and that of Education Officers are 95% similar. The only difference is in their level, otherwise in operation they are identical. One could view this as one of the reasons for conflicts in roles. It was reported that some of the workers in Zimbabwe were experiencing emotional stress on account of the fear of losing their jobs.

The interviewees at the district levels explained that the decentralisation policy in Zimbabwe came with the idea of downsizing, rationalising and restructuring. In this process, according to the District Education Officer, some people were left without jobs. Structures that were at the district and provincial levels are now at the head office. They have been centralised, contradicting the object of decentralisation. They also pointed out that efficiency was once a needed concept, but at the moment work is accumulating at the head office. The provincial and district levels are waiting for many decisions that have to be made by central government. There are delays in service delivery and these lower levels argue that they are stuck and unable to operate.

Following restructuring, the District Education Officers further explained that they attended a workshop on decentralisation in the early nineties. The agenda was to discuss their job profiles at various levels. They stated that workers were visibly worried, because there was a threat that, if anyone could not come up with a certain number of tasks for their job, the ministry could do without them. Because of this threat, people were trying to come up with as many tasks as possible. At the end of the exercise the job profiles of the Education Officers and those of the Deputy Provincial Directors overlapped.

Critics of decentralisation suggest that the re-distribution of power had political motives. This can be evident from the analysis of documents in Zimbabwe which revealed that major objectives is decentralising, such as 'to relieve the central government's budget' and other related issues did not promote the improvement for schooling. Leung reported a similar situation in Hong Kong , where the government there also decentralised in order to gain control in education. Leung explained that the central government was prompted to decentralise because it had to tighten control in the aided-school sector. His illustration of this fact presented in Table 2.1 shows that the majority of schools were not under the central government and the question of who had the power in the education system then arose. Hence the government had to decentralise to reposition itself for more power and control over education.

Decentralisation in Taiwan, as argued by Law showed that, in 1987, the ruling party began to institutionalise representative government by incorporating two major opposition parties into the legislature and introducing popular elections up to the presidential level. Since then, democratisation in terms of forming a representative administrative structure has become a driving force and part of reform in the sectors of the government, legislature and education in Taiwan. According to Ndegwa and Levy in Ethiopia decentralisation was designed after the war. They reported that it was intended to strengthen the power of the state and to give voice and power to the country's largest ethnic groups. Decentralization of education took place as part of a wider governmental representation, rather than as a specific reform aimed at improving schooling.

The qualitative methods of research were effective in eliciting insightful responses from the respondents. The use of triangulation in the methods of investigation, which involved semi-structured interviews, observation and analysis of government documents, were reliable. Respondents' direct speech has been retained to validate analysis and to avoid bias and prejudice on the part of the researcher. In addition, recorded audio tapes are safely stored, should replay be required. Selected government circulars that support some of the literature review are included in the Appendix. Observation provided rich informal interviews that the researcher could have missed by just using semi-structured interviews and the analysis of government documents. Observations provided additional information about the present status of decentralisation in Zimbabwe, especially the current learning situation in schools.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Decentralisation through the re-distribution of power was claimed to empower lower levels of governments in the education systems. In turn, the lower levels were to devolve power down to local levels in schools to improve the quality of education. The implementation of this policy is reported to have revealed major inconsistencies between the intensions of governments and the way it played on the ground where education took place. The implementers found this a complex process that was difficult to put into practice because power was seen to manifest in multiple ways.

The respondents argued that decision making power was not decentralised but responsibilities were passed down to lower levels. In Zimbabwe there was a major exercise that transferred tasks but these came without authority for decision making and without the necessary allocation of resources. The recruitment of teachers by the principles was one of the responsibilities devolved but it was short lived. The reason given for withdrawing recruitment was that there was growing practice nepotism. However, district education officers viewed this as part of the complexities of re-distributing power and they argued that there was more nepotism at the provincial level.

Interview responses suggest that centralising the recruitment of teachers has contributed to a drop in education standards because principals can no longer be selective in getting competent teachers. After the subjects specialists were redeployed and the recruitment of teachers was centralised, principals were compelled to accept any teacher deployed to their schools by the higher levels of government. Respondents point out that private schools maintain high standards of education because the responsible authorities in private schools have the power to recruit teachers of their choice. They also pay competitive salaries and offer attractive packages to retain their staff.

It should be pointed out that while some respondents complained that decentralisation came with many responsibilities, others found it advantageous . There are some sparse successes of decentralisation in some international education system. Table 2.3 which shows the status of decentralisation in selected African countries, reveals that while there are challenges at implementation, more advanced reforms are evidenced in Tanzania and Uganda are reported to have the most advanced decentralisation in Africa. Uganda has won international praise. There is increased participation, transparency and accountability. Improvement has been noted in capacity building as well. Similar situations are reported in developed countries. For example, while challenges are unavoidable, Chicago in USA is reported to have the best decentralisation initiatives although its education system

declined. Gershberg and Winkler (2004:140) point out that considerable decision-making power was devolved.

Linked to the improvement of education standards was the intersection between the notions of decentralisation of authority and home school partnerships that made tremendous contribution to the education of their children. As a way of easing burdened educational budgets, international governments and the government of Zimbabwe invited the participation of parents to fund schooling. This move came with decentralisation through the promised redistribution of power. In Zimbabwe, parental bodies such as School Development Associations, School Development Committees and Parent Teacher Associations were established in schools. Various government circulars empower the parents to run schools, but in practise they reported that the power struggle surfaces again and the parents cannot implement the decisions they take in their committees.

Parents pointed out that while the circulars allow them to increase fees and levies, the same circulars expect them to apply to the gorvenment and wait for approval before effecting new fee structures. They complain that sometimes the school has urgent needs that mey require quick decisions and when some of these needs are not met on time, they negatively affect learning programs resulting in the decline of education standards. However, the observations made by the researchers are that the decentralisation policy is not fully responsible for the participation of parents and their communities in schools. They suggest that parents take responsibility because governments fail to provide services that they require for their children's schooling. This may be one of the reasons why the parents in Zimbabwe, for instance, have to contribute increasingly.

 There is evidence from both literature and interviews by parents and principals who state that the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture has left all the funding of schools to the parents. The only contribution made by central government is the payment of salaries which in most cases are inadequate. Many teachers have left for greener pastures resulting in the further decline of education standards. The parents in most Zimbabwean schools confirm that they are running schools and paying income to retain teachers. Some parents run projects such as poultry and grinding mills to support schools.

The current situation in the recruitment of teachers in public schools is more challenging now. The teachers that are recruited are untrained and they lack experience. The majority

of qualified teachers have moved to other countries, especially to South Africa. The quality of teachers affects the standard of education. The principals complain that the recruitment of untrained teachers becomes an additional workload because it is their responsibility to present quick development programmes to assist these teachers. One of the principals mentioned that her work was becoming more and more stressful because some teachers do not arrive for classes and give the excuse that they have no money for transport. In addition to the principal's pressing load, the particular respondent is obliged to supervise those classes where teachers are absent. The situation is very precarious in public schools.

One of the interviewees, a private secondary school principal in Matabeleland South, updated about the current situation in schools as of May 2008. He explained that they were failing to cope with the influx of students who are transferring from many neighbouring public schools to join his school. The worst case he reported from one school was that the headmaster was the only teacher left. Another incident concerned an Ordinary level student from one of the public schools near Bulawayo who left school and went to look for a job in South Africa. The boy is said to have mentioned that it was no use staying in school when there were no teachers. The research found out that the private school is taking advantage of the crisis by charging exorbitant tuition fees of up to Z\$20 billion for day scholars. This becomes a bottle neck which denies poor children access to education and leaves the students with few options.

One of the principals interviewed has joined our Masters in Education (MEd) block release programme, for in-service training. She reports that her former school has been closed as of May 2008 because none of the teachers reported for duty. This has serious implications for the students sitting for Ordinary level and Advanced level examinations this year. Parents must have looked frantically for alternative places for their children to continue their schooling. The other problem that confronted parents and students is that the registration for the final examinations was at the end of May 2008. Failing to register leaves students with no option except to repeat and re-register for the next year. This presents many other challenges, for example, the students' learning time has been wasted, the resources that parents put into the payment of fees and the emotional effect of the whole situation on the learner could be critical.

It seems that the declining education standards during decentralisation have been compounded by the depressed economy and the uncertainty of the political situation in the country. A colleague at Solusi University had to make a sudden decision to migrate to the United States in mid-May 2008 for the education of his daughters who are in the secondary

school. These are some of the issues responsible for the brain drain in Zimbabwe discussed in Chapter three. The government has to address these problems because they will continue to have a negative impact on education at a national level. What contributes to this scenario is that the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture is not in touch with schools at the moment, because of the lack of resources which means that schools remain unmonitored.

The respondents suggested that decentralisation would have worked if the central authorities had collaborated with local stakeholders before implementing the policy. They argue that those at provincial and district levels know the needs of schools but they have difficulties in facilitating them because higher authorities make decisions. The decisions made at Head Office are not informed by the needs of schools; as such, they do not solve education problems. The policy of decentralisation adopted by central government to improve education is a typical example. The idea is that those at provincial and district levels cannot avoid collaboration with schools about effective strategies that could be employed to improve schooling.

There should have been more effective communication, sharing of facts that obtain at each level, to facilitate informed decisions. Another respondent explained that, when the policy of decentralisation was introduced, people were very enthusiastic about it. They could see it work, but later on, when the withdrawal of functions followed one after another, their excitement became watered down. The same authorities kept on interfering. Both District Education Officers and principals concur that power has been centralised. They complain that they have no influence on the policy because the structures that should have supported decentralisation were not created.

The study revealed that power manifests itself in relationships that are not necessarily related to decentralisation. Both advocates and critics of decentralisation argue that decentralisation customarily increases the power of lower levels. However, they conclude from their findings that the consequences of decentralisation across countries reveal that the degree of such change can range from substantial to insignificant.

6.3 SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations that emerge from the study suggest that;

The redistribution of power is difficult to realise as it entails more than devolving responsibilities and or authority. Therefore other strategies that may improve the quality of education could be employed through the collaboration of both central government and local governments in schools. Local governments would know what works in their own context

If service providers like schools or other local governments are held accountable for results, they are likely to improve education standards.

The participation of parents and their communities could be further maximised for improved schooling without the decentralisation policy. Consequently, education systems could engage more home school programs for effective standards of education.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For District Education Officers and Principals of Secondary Schools

1. What is your understanding of decentralisation in education?

2. What was meant to be decentralised?

3. To what extent has this decentralisation of power been accomplished?

4. Explain your understanding of power.

   a) in general terms

   b) in decentralisation

5. Explain the interplay of culture and power in decentralisation

Parents' bodies

1. What is your role as a parents' body in the school?

2. Explain the extent of decision-making power you have in running the school.

APPENDIX B: FIELD SCHEDULE

	Semi-structured interviews	Observations	Focus groups	Government documents
Why?	I can see non-verbal communication. Usually have high response rates. Can probe for in-depth information.	To interact with people. Listen to their conversations. To see artifacts and infrastructure.	Groups will give different ideas and perceptions. Have opportunity to probe.	To compare policy text/theory with practice in schools.
How?	Visit schools/ government offices. Use a tape recorder and transcribe.	Sit in their meetings or at meetings teatime. Use a tape recorder.	Government offices to interview DEO's in Bulawayo central. Arrange a central venue and assist with transport.	Access policies and circulars on decentralization and analyze these. Discuss for more understanding.
Where?	At the schools or individual offices.	At respective schools. At venues where meetings will be scheduled.	The group can agree on a venue.	Government offices or Principals have provided these.
When?	June/July 2007.	June/July 2007.	June/July 2007.	Has been on going from 2003-May 2007.

With Who?	Provincial Education Director, District Education Officers Principals of secondary schools Parent bodies.	Principals of secondary schools District Education Officers	Regional Director District Education Officers Principals of secondary schools Parent bodies.	Regional Director District Education Officers Principals of secondary schools

APPENDIX C: PHOTO GALLERY

1) Montrose parents' executive in front of the car

   bought by them.

2) Montrose parents in front of the school bus

   Bough by them

3) The foundation of a classroom that is

   incomplete due to lack of funds

4) Quarry lies unused since 2006

5) Chicken project run by the Parent Teachers

   Association (PTA)

6) PTA Executive chairman at a Prize Giving

   Ceremony

7) Education Officers (Respondents)

8) Parents attending a prize giving ceremony

9) Parents map the way forward in a meeting with

the principal at Montrose High School

10) Parents attending a speech and prize-giving

day

12) the grinding mill operator

11) locals benefiting from PTA grinding mill

APPENDIX D: OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION

Copies of the following documents are included:

1.   Director's circular No. 3 of 2006

2.   Secretary's circular No. 5 of 1887

3.   Provincial Education Director's Circular Minute No. 4 of 2004

4.   Permission to carry out research

5.   Acknowledgement for Mrs Elsa Masuku (Solusi Adventist Secondary School)

6.   Permission to interview (Montrose High School)

7.   Strategy for decentralization of education functions to local authorities   (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture)