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Discourses of the Policy of Educational Decentralisation in South Africa since 1994: an examination of the South African Schools Act [1][2]

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ABSTRACT *The policy of educational decentralisation has in recent times become a key aspect of educational restructuring in the international arena. The decentralisation of educational control and decision-making is also evident in discussions surrounding educational restructuring in South Africa and has been expressed in the call for greater community and parental participation in schooling. This move towards greater devolution and participation in schooling increased in momentum after the elections of 1994 and was sanctioned with the passing of the South African Schools Act (SASA) in November 1996. In an attempt to understand the move towards educational decentralisation, this paper examines the rationale and likely implications behind such a policy in the South African context. The paper argues that educational decentralisation in the South African context may result in greater educational inequities along the lines of class rather than race. The paper cautions against unqualified commitment to educational decentralisation in countries in transition.*

Introduction

The policy of educational decentralisation has in recent times become a key aspect of educational restructuring in the international arena. This is evident, for example, in the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales (see for example Bash & Coulby, 1991; and Bowe & Ball, 1992), the Tomorrow's Schools report of the Australian government, and the changes effected as a consequence of the report (see Lauder & Wylie, 1990; and Gordon, 1992). It is also to be seen in the changes in the Dutch education system since 1982 (Slegers & Wesseling, 1993) and in Brazilian education since the 1980s (Santos Filhos, 1993).

The decentralisation of educational control and decision-making is also evident in discussions surrounding educational restructuring in South Africa and has been expressed in the call for greater community and parental participation in schooling (Sayed, 1995). This move towards greater devolution and participation in schooling increased in momentum after the elections of 1994 and was sanctioned with the passing of the South African Schools Act (SASA) in November 1996. In an attempt to understand the move towards educational decentralisation, this paper examines the rationale and likely implications behind such a policy in the South African context. Specifically, this paper critically examines the discourses of educational

decentralisation in present educational policy development (1994–1997) in South Africa with reference to the SASA. It is intended that the examination of the policy of educational decentralisation in South Africa will provide an illuminative case study for debates about such a policy in the international context.

The paper is divided into three sections. Firstly, the paper explores the different understandings of educational decentralisation in current policy development in South Africa. In discussing conceptions of educational decentralisation in South Africa, the paper examines these in relation to the underlying assumptions of the policy of decentralisation raised by commentators such as Rondinelli *et al.* (1984), Lauglo and McLean (1985), Weiler (1990), Prawda (1993), Mankoe and Maynes (1994), Lauglo (1995), Bray (1996) and Fiske (1996). Secondly, the paper examines notions of educational decentralisation embedded in the SASA and the tensions and contradictions contained therein. Finally, the paper highlights a particular manifestation of educational decentralisation in the South African context, the tension between national and provincial educational competencies and decision-making.

Discourses of Educational Decentralisation in Contemporary South African Educational Policy Development

Discourses of educational decentralisation in the South African context find expression and support in both the policies of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) (1994) government and the opposition, the National Party, which was, for a period, a member of the Government of National Unity (GNU). Two inter-related, though potentially contradictory, notions feed discourses of educational decentralisation.

First, both the previous ruling National Party and the opposition anti-apartheid movement shared a commitment to some form of educational decentralisation albeit for very different political and ideological reasons. For the National Party, the clearest expression of a commitment to educational decentralisation was to be found in its Model B and C Regulations [3] and in its Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS). In these regulations, the National Party argued that educational decentralisation allowed for greater control of schooling by those who had to pay and that it would enhance efficiency, effectiveness and quality.

The National Party's commitment to educational decentralisation as expounded in its ERS document and Model B and C Regulations prioritised individual freedoms and rights in matters of social service provision. The National Party in the last years of apartheid was committed to the ideal of total individual freedom of choice without any forms of intervention or regulation by the state. Underlying this ideal was the notion of the 'individual as consumer' reflected in the discourse of 'parental choice' and 'consumer power'.

However, many writers commenting on educational decentralisation have pointed out that it is mainly professional and middle class parents (mostly white in the South African context) who benefit from such decentralisation. Moreover, many writers point out that central governmental authority for educational decision-making is never actually totally surrendered (for example, see Bash and Coulby (1991), Weiler (1990) and Bowe and Ball (1992)). Thus, the National Party's commitment to educational decentralisation of control to School Management Committees was also related to strong centralised control. Thus, the claim for the redistribution of authority and the commitment to individual (consumer) freedoms, as Weiler (1990) points out, cannot be accepted at face value.

The commitment of the progressive anti-apartheid support for policies of educational decentralisation was, by contrast, rooted in the very trajectory of resistance politics. Such politics operated on an oppositional discourse which drew upon local community support and participation. Grassroots mobilisation and struggle were the basis for resistance. It thus constituted itself in a call for 'community control', 'grassroots control'. In the educational sphere, the most poignant illustration of this notion was the call for 'structures of dual power' in the discourses of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) (NEPI, 1992) and the formation of Parent, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs) which were conceived as vehicles of community expression. Paradoxically, the notion of community as an expression of participatory democracy is weakened in the SASA for two reasons, first, by making community participation in governance structures conditional upon the agreement of the school governing body, and second, by reducing such participation to an instrumental search for such representatives as can render expertise to the school governing bodies. In fact, it is deeply ironic that community representatives on school governing bodies do not have any voting status.

The notion of grassroots community participation was constituted in the context of a state which was oppressive and where the state itself was the primary apparatus of oppression. Thus, grassroots community control was the antithesis of state control. Power to the people as opposed to that of the state reflected a strong commitment to participatory democracy and the decentralisation of control.

Furthermore, in the discourses of the progressive anti-apartheid education movement, there has been a strong call for the democratisation of the state and the education system. It was believed that the transition to post-apartheid society would usher in the installation of a legitimate political centre which would transform education to meet the needs of all, in particular, the historically marginalised and disadvantaged sectors of society. This call was underpinned by a strong commitment to a representative state in a constitutional democracy.

For the progressive education movement, the discourse of educational transformation reflected both a commitment to a strong, interventionist state and a belief in the desirability and efficacy of grassroots control. The latter suggests a strong move towards civil society activity and participation in the polity. With the elections, the new education system was charged with giving expression to both sets of commitments. The first white paper (WP1, Department of Education, 1995a) on education set up this framework. It proposed a strong regulatory state with a commitment to civil society participation in the education sphere. The latter is captured in, *inter alia*, recommendations that motivate the need for strong, advisory bodies at all the appropriate levels of the education system.

The progressive anti-apartheid education movement's commitment to participation thus faced the difficult paradox of balancing a strong commitment to the idea of the state as an agent of control and regulation and simultaneously a belief in the efficacy of community control suggesting new forms of the state/civil society relationship. Sceptical commentators such as McGinn and Street (1986) and Weiler (1990) argue that the policy of educational decentralisation is mainly an attempt to reconstitute the form of the state, and consequently a reformulation of the nature of control exercised in education. In this respect, the crucial claim that is advanced is that the policy of educational decentralisation is an attempt by the state to operate at a distance. In operating at a distance, the state portrays itself as being one with the people.

However, the key challenge facing the new government elected in 1994 with the passing of the SASA is the attempt to find an acceptable balance between a commitment to strong forms of citizen participation and the need for strong state intervention. Creating strong forms of citizen participation may diminish the power of the elected authority (government), and consequently potentially undermines the will of the electorate who expect the elected government in South Africa to fulfil the mandate upon which it was voted into power. Hence, the Ministry of Education and the South African government have tended not to grant stakeholder bodies decision-making power. Instead such bodies in the South African context have been accorded mainly *advisory* powers. On the other hand, strong forms of government control and intervention with stakeholder bodies having weak advisory powers may minimise and militate against increased participation as citizens may feel unable to effect change. An example of this tension in the South African context was the Constitutional Court ruling in favour of the Minister of National Education which stated that the National Minister of Education did have the constitutional power to issue national norms and standards over and above provincial wishes[4]. The Constitutional Court case highlights the difficulty of trying to balance central authority and regulation with the devolution of educational control. It signals a key tension between the ability of an elected government to act decisively and, at times, unilaterally, and simultaneously the desire on the part of such a government to be receptive and responsive to all views from whatever source.

Equity, Parental Participation and the SASA

The preceding section has highlighted the discursive influences shaping the policy of educational decentralisation in South Africa. It has highlighted the tensions that the GNU faced in creating a system of educational governance that entrenched citizen participation at the school level and simultaneously intervened to redress the inherited educational imbalances. In trying to understand the discursive shape of the evolving policy of educational decentralisation in South Africa, this paper focuses on two key questions that affect the implementation of the SASA. These questions focus on the crucial issues of school fees and parental participation. The two questions that help illuminate the discourse of educational decentralisation in South Africa since 1994 are:

- To what extent will the power to raise school fees as proposed in the SASA further exacerbate inequities in education in South Africa?
- What are the underlying assumptions regarding the forms of parental participation envisaged in the SASA?

These two questions raise the difficult issue of attempting to decentralise school governance and promoting greater educational equity.

Autonomy, Equity and User Fees

A key tension in the SASA is the proposal that school governing bodies, constituted in terms of the provisions of the SASA, may raise additional revenue in the form of school fees (referred to as user fees in this paper). The idea of user fees is premised on the assumption that parents who wish to provide quality education for their children, over and above the state subsidy, are able to do so. Thus, the act (Department

of Education, 1996b, Chapter Four) indicates that parents, as the majority constituency on the school governing body of public schools, may decide to levy school fees that are binding on the school community. This approach, known as the Fourth Option, has its origin in the Hunter Review Committee Report (1995b) which proposed three models of school financing, namely,

- the minimalist-gradualist approach which would allow most existing governing bodies to continue to function including the ex-Model C schools;
- the equitable school-based formula approach which is similar to the previous approach but argues for equal per capita expenditure and prohibits schools from raising additional monies;
- the partnership approach that includes an equal per capita expenditure but where the state's commitment to operating costs is reduced depending on parental contribution. (Department of Education, 1995b)

The white papers' bill and act concerning the organisation, governance and funding of schools refute all three approaches and propose a fourth option based on the advice of international consultants. The Fourth Option essentially suggests that schools should be allowed to levy user fees over and above state subsidy[5]. This paper considers the notion of user fees as an instance of the introduction of market forces in educational provision in South Africa.

The market that is introduced through user fees does not function on the classical supply-demand model. Gintis (1995), writing about school devolution in the USA, argues that the ideal or pure market rarely, if at all, operates in education. More accurately, what is created through the devolution of educational control is, as Deem *et al.* (1995) argue in the UK context, 'quasi-markets'. The market mechanism that is introduced is the generation of additional resources based on the principle of self-interest. User fees reflect the deregulation of educational provision and are operative on the grounds of ensuring that the quality of educational 'goods' is correlative of the price (value) that is paid. The worth of the educational product is thus secured in the value of the exchange. User fees secure market logic by engendering commitment to monetary transaction as a basis for the determination of quality and worth. In this case, not every citizen is therefore able to maintain the same level of financial investment and consequently, the level of substantive equal social entitlement depends on a citizen's wealth. The long-term tendency of such an approach is the creation of a two-tier system of public schooling stratified into well-resourced schools and a majority of marginalised, state-reliant schools. This is a result of wealthier parents being able to pay more for their children's schooling and their relative 'cultural capital'. Mindful of the possibility of schisms in public education, the state intervened in educational governance in an attempt to regulate the operation of the market. Thus, the Parliamentary Committee inserted a clause (Department of Education, 1996b, Section 39.4) in the final act that states that the Minister would, after consultation, set 'equitable criteria for the total, partial, conditional exemption of parents unable to pay school fees'. Thus, an attempt was made to curb the possible excesses of the market.

User fees were justified on the grounds that monies raised in this way would effect savings that could be expended on equity and redress projects. This was a persuasive argument on the surface. Yet, it presumes that schools could be motivated to collect monies for the benefit of the state. Why would schools raise monies which they would not be able to keep? Put cynically, user fees thus can be read simply as a

cost-cutting exercise. More fundamentally, there is no indication in the SASA or any other government policy text that savings effected from user fees will be used for redress and equity concerns. The catch-22 of user fees as a way of balancing state regulation and market forces is that, as presently formulated, it will either drive away or demotivate schools from collecting such monies or it will have to be so tightly regulated as to make deregulation impractical. Put differently, the application of user fees in the SASA cannot engender additional funds or achieve equity or redress without compromising either of the goals.

What the SASA proposes is the operation of the market by removing regulatory control over the raising of additional funds. It introduces notions of private in public education and consequently redefines the private versus public boundary in South African education. Thus, what the SASA reflects is the ways in which public education takes on characteristics of the private free market. Concurrently, it argues for state regulation to prevent widening the rift between the rich and the poor. This 'balance' is not easy to achieve nor are the trade-offs and compromises satisfactory. However, there are less difficult trade-offs and compromises [6].

Parents as Consumers and/or Citizens?

A key demand in the debate concerning educational governance has been the call for greater parental participation in schooling. Parental participation has been the officially stated position of all progressive educational organisations in South Africa. The SASA gives expression to this call but in potentially conflicting ways.

Parents are, at one level, conceived of as citizens in a constitutional democracy. They are thus individuals with citizenship rights which are to be exercised in the context of devolved school governance. In this instance, parents are granted the right to participate as citizens in the determination of key areas of school policy. This right is manifested in their representation on school governing bodies. With this right comes a set of responsibilities. The parents' school citizen status is guaranteed by the conferring of juristic persona on school governing bodies. The SASA thus introduces devolved educational control with user fees being a key devolved responsibility.

But the parent as school citizen represents a specific type of citizenship. As the first version of the second white paper on the organisation, governance and funding of schools (WP2a, Department of Education, 1995b, Sections 4.15, 4.16) indicates, the citizen parent is an individual with rights which are interactively constituted in the context of a strong commitment to equity and redress and where such rights are held in partnership with the relevant education authorities. The rights of the school citizen do not therefore imply, as the WP2a (Department of Education, 1995b, Section 4.16), puts it: 'turning over the school to parents'. Parents are framed as assisting with the professional functioning and work of the school.

Implicit in the above conceptualisation is the notion of a school citizen as an individual whose rights are not 'self-contained' but for whom the exercise of the right is to contribute instrumentally to the better functioning of the school because that is to his/her benefit. Put differently, the school citizen in the SASA is one who works with the school and is not, as has been the case in the past, the locus of opposition. Thus, the parent is constituted in the image of the state, a citizen who is unlikely to be oppositional or come into conflict with the relevant education authorities. The form of citizenship that is espoused is, as Deem *et al.* (1995) argue in their study of school governing bodies in the UK, largely administrative; the citizen who functions as part

of the larger workings of the public administration of the state. This could be thus viewed as deconcentration of administrative educational control with parent citizens expected to take on greater administrative responsibility for schooling, a system of administrative downloading.

The preceding point highlights two distinct conceptualisations of the parent as citizen [7]. The first form of parental citizenship is the individual as self-reliant and not hostage to the state. It is a citizenship constituted on the basis of the person him/herself making his/her life better and not dependent on the state. This is a citizenship which attempts to regenerate and revitalise cohesive bonds and restores the political and moral order. This version, it is argued, is invoked in the SASA. The second version, the left form of citizenship, is the citizen who, through public association in the space of civil society, recognises the bonds of community and consequently works for the public good and the assertion of civic virtue. This is essentially political citizenship and what distinguishes it from the first is that the citizen's recognition of him/herself is located within the context of a broader collective.

By contrast, the discourse of the parent as consumer and his/her identity as a market agent is constituted in the SASA through two distinct mechanisms. Firstly, the notion of the school consumer is engendered through the assertion of parents as the primary clients, who should always be the majority constituency in the school governing body. The parent consumers are the ones who, in the words of the second version of the second white paper on the organisation, governance and funding of schools (WP2b, Department of Education, 1996b, Section 3.15) 'have the most stake in their child's education because of the heavy legal and financial decision for which governing bodies would be responsible'. Secondly, the parent consumer is constituted on the basis of the fees which he/she pays to provide additional finances for school provision beyond the state subsidy.

The operation of the market in education creates a conception of the consumer citizen who is a self-interested, utility-maximising, rational individual. This is the cornerstone of the philosophy of the consumer citizen. In this conception, the school community simply becomes the locale for self-interested possessive behaviour. Put differently, community involvement simply becomes the expression of strong consumer rights. This is evidently the case at most, if not all, of the ex-Model C schools where the school community becomes the locus for the self-interested behaviour of the individual driven toward competition and the acquisition of marketable credentials. The school community is thus a collective resource for self-aggrandisement.

For the consumer citizen to operate, two conditions need to be met, namely, that of choice and that of the ability to control the product by virtue of the fees contributed. The first condition operates in the South African context through 'conditioned or constrained' choice which feeds into the privileging of the middle class. In other words, the choice that is available for all South Africans is conditioned or constrained by the principle of 'soft zoning' which privileges pupils from the immediate school locale. In the context of South Africa's unequal racial geography, this gives preference to those who have been privileged and the newly emerging élite who are able to move to such areas. Constrained choice in the South African context ties in neatly with the stratification reproduced by market relations which the SASA opens up.

Secondly, where parental contribution is high and significant, the parent consumer is likely to be interventionist in nature. This is clearly the case. However, the

one key clause that the Parliamentary Committee removed from the act was that which gave parents the right to determine the school's admission policy. Had this been the case, parental control over the product by controlling the input would have been almost complete.

Yet, the success of the Parliamentary Committee was partial. For the notion of an educational market manifest in user fees focuses mainly on the choice behaviour of the school consumer. What is often ignored is the behaviour of producers who operate in no less a self-interested, utility-maximising way than parent consumers. In this context, the school as producer actively solicits and attracts those parents who can and are likely to be able to pay the stipulated user fees. In this way, consumer choice is reduced as it is now circumscribed by the self-interested behaviour of the school.

The SASA introduces particular notions of parents, privileging the notion of the parent as consumer. Public education and the participants therein begin to structure their interactions on the basis of market logic. In this context, the distinction between the public and private is blurred as the patterns of interactions that are likely to govern public schooling in South Africa will reflect that of consumers in the market place. This is already the case in many schools in South Africa.

The Tension Between National Policy and Provincial Implementation in the Western Cape

A particular manifestation of the tension in the policy of educational decentralisation centres on the Western Cape Schools Bill (WCSB). With the passage of the SASA, the nine provinces in South Africa, which according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are responsible for schooling, have two options. Firstly, where provinces had already passed schools acts, these had to be amended in line with the new SASA. Secondly, where provinces had no such legislation, they could choose not to pass any act, in which case the national act would prevail. Alternatively, they could pass their own acts. The Western Cape Province, which is the only province where the National Party is in the majority, chose to pass their own schools act for obvious political reasons. This section of the paper considers the differences between the national SASA and the WCSB to highlight the tension in educational decentralisation between national centralising tendencies and decentralising provincialisation of education.

It is perhaps appropriate to start by contextualising the discussion. The Constitution of South Africa cites schooling as a provincial competency. In other words, the governance and administration of schooling is the function of the nine provinces, two of which are controlled by the Inkatha Party (Kwa-Zulu Natal) and the National Party (Western Cape). As discussed, the overriding constitutional provision suggests that national authority is only for the purposes of establishing uniform norms and standards, and in instances where provincial laws and regulation contradict national priorities and policies. In the latter case, the National Ministry of Education may intervene, following a prescribed procedure which includes showing just cause why the province has violated national policies.

In the case of the Western Cape, its draft school bill is not an obvious case of conflict. However, there are a number of recommendations in the WCSB which reflect the conflict between centralised (national) and decentralising (provincial) modes of governance. Four manifestations of this tension, 'decentralised centralisation', 'protectionism', 'omission and adaptation' and 'deferral', are discussed.

The WCSB contains a strong controlling thrust in its recommendations concerning school governance. For example, the WCSB states that 'the Head of Education may exempt a learner from school if she is pregnant, if the learner marries' and more insidiously 'if sufficient school facilities are not available' (Western Cape Bill, 1997, Section 50.1). Further examples are the provision made for a school attendance officer who may enter schools, interview any person and subpoena any information he/she feels to be necessary in respect of attendance (Western Cape Bill, 1997, Section 11.1). These examples highlight the centralising nature of the WCSB which opens schools to direct surveillance by the department. Thus, the Western Cape Education Department utilises its decentralised powers to centralise school governance at the provincial level and subjects schools to greater scrutiny.

Yet, whilst the WCSB centralises certain functions, it also provides school governing bodies with many powers and functions which the SASA removes or restricts. For example, the WCSB restores to school governing bodies the right to determine language and religious policy in schools (Western Cape Bill, 1997, Sections 52, 53). The political project that is being sponsored revolves around, on the one hand, accruing provincial educational power to buttress possible and potential national intervention. On the other hand, the WCSB gives expression to the National Party's ERS of devolving maximal power to governing bodies as a way of diminishing state authority in educational decision-making. Thus, the WCSB further devolves educational decision-making authority and control.

'Protectionism' surfaces in the provision relating to the continuation of certain councils. The WCSB proposes that certain governing bodies which are in existence will, at the inception of the Western Cape Schools Act, become the new governing bodies as required by national legislation (Western Cape Bill, 1997, Section 26.1). This clause makes it possible for governing bodies constituted in terms of apartheid legislation to continue despite the passing of the SASA. Specifically, it allows ex-whites only Model C school governing bodies to continue operating. This is perhaps the clearest expression on the part of the provincial authority to retain the status of certain schools. As such, it possibly contradicts the democratic intent of the SASA.

'Omission and adaptation' refer to the manner in which sections of the WCSB, on the surface, mimic the SASA, but actually the report changes the approach of the latter by omitting certain sections. The most important example is the omission of the limitation clauses which are the cornerstone of the SASA. For example, the SASA lists a number of limitations regarding the determination of language and religious observance policy in the schools which the WCSB fails to mention. A further example is the partial, conditional or total exemption of parents from the payment of school fees. In the SASA the determination of exemption is a ministerial prerogative whereas in the WCSB it is a function of the governing body (Western Cape Bill, 1997, Section 57.1). Through a process of omission and adaptation, the WCSB potentially alters the substantive meaning of the SASA.

Finally, the most important feature of this WCSB is perhaps 'deferral'. The WCSB defers a number of crucial policy decisions to the issuing of proclamations and regulations. This is a significant policy manoeuvre in that whilst education bills in South Africa are subject to public scrutiny and debate, proclamations and regulations are the prerogative of the department and schools are required to implement these. This might not be a problem if what is deferred is not of critical import. However, this is not the case with respect to the WCSB. For example, what the WCSB defers are critical decisions regarding both the powers and functions of school

governing bodies and their actual composition. This is another way in which national legislation may be altered in practice. Further, it removes from the public arena significant policy debates.

The above four instances of policy reformulation and modification indicate the tension between centralising and decentralising modes of educational governance. The tension between the centralised and decentralised modes of educational governance in the South African context can also be discerned in other educational systems. The National Curriculum in England and Wales is one example of this. Even though the Education Reform Act of 1988 devolves management powers to the schools, all students are still required to follow a National Curriculum (see Bash and Coulby (1991)). Conversely, a centralised education system may also transfer control. For example, Lauglo and McLean (1985, p. 11) point out that even centralised socialist societies such as Cuba may decentralise administrative control.

The WCSB illustrates the need, in understanding educational decentralisation, to differentiate between two key dimensions of an education system: policy control and policy implementation. Governments may devolve powers of implementation to schools, or grant other agencies or individuals the freedom to provide education (policy implementation) whilst retaining control over functions such as curriculum and financing (policy control). In the South African context, the tension that is set up is between the national level as a body that formulates policy ('setting of norms and standards') and the provincial level as the agency that is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of educational policy. The tension surrounds the actual practices of implementation at the provincial levels and the different ways in which policy implementation is understood.

Conclusion

The paper began by highlighting the growing tendency toward educational decentralisation and has focused on the tensions and contradictions that beset such a policy in the South African context. It has argued that the move toward educational decentralisation in South Africa shares with many other countries a commitment on the part of the government to enhancing parental participation in schooling. The paper also argues that the move toward educational decentralisation in the South African context is coupled with recognition of the need for state intervention to ensure national norms and standards and promote the goal of equity. In this respect, the paper concurs with the research on educational decentralisation by Lauglo and McLean (1985), Weiler (1990), Prawda (1993), Lauglo (1995) and Bray (1996) that suggests that the key issue in the centralisation-decentralisation debate is the balance between centralised and decentralised modes of educational governance and the distribution of power in the education system. The paper further argues that the balance between centralised and decentralised modes of educational governance in the South African context may result in educational inequities with a key difference being that current educational policy may accentuate inequities along the lines of class rather than race. The paper cautions against unqualified commitment to educational decentralisation in countries in transition marked by gross disparities in educational opportunity and access. It is hoped that the discussion of the discourses of educational decentralisation in the South African context will provoke careful examination of the optimal balance between citizen participation and state regulation in the governance of education.

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NOTES

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- [2] The paper was first delivered at the Oxford 'Education and Geopolitical Change' Conference in September 1997. An earlier version of the paper appeared in the *Journal for Negro Education*, 66(4).
- [3] The previous ruling Nationalist Party passed the Model B and C Regulations, respectively, in 1991 and 1992. These regulations gave then whites-only schools control over key school policy issues such as admission of pupils. However, such schools were then expected to cover operating costs, resulting in high school fees. See Carrim and Sayed (1992a,b) for a more extensive discussion of the Model B and C Regulations.
- [4] Political parties such as the Democratic and National Party took the Minister to Constitutional Court at the time of the issuing of the National Education Policy Bill. In essence, they argued that the bill undermined provincial responsibilities and powers for education and consequently the bill contravened the Constitution. The Constitutional Court disagreed with this view and asserted the power of the Minister to determine national educational priorities and objectives. In essence, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Minister of National Education was within his constitutional powers to issue national uniform educational norms and standards for the whole country, overriding provincial authority in this respect.
- [5] The views of the consultants cement into policy positions only because their views resonate with a growing shift in educational policy-making towards neo-liberal economics, emphasising financial stringency and austerity. The positions become more palatable as the dressing for the shift evokes the language of the left of equity and redress: commitments which are not sustained. In a previous paper (see Sayed and Carrim, 1998) this is referred to as the 'Middle Class Mandatory Fee Clustering (MMFC)' option. Also see Sayed (1997) for a critique of the assumptions that underpin the Fourth Option.
- [6] See Sayed (1997) for a discussion of a possible alternative to the Fourth Option referred to as the Fifth Option. In essence, the Fifth Option proposes that schools may raise additional fees but that a certain proportion of funds raised be placed in Development Funds which all schools could access for projects that promote equity and redress.
- [7] These forms of citizenship emerge powerfully in Deem *et al.*'s (1995) fascinating account of citizenship and governing bodies.

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