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**"MUSADZI U FARA LUFHANGA NGA HU FHIRAHU": BLACK WOMEN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS CREATING SOCIALLY JUST AND
EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA"**

Volume I

By

Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

“MUSADZI U FARA LUFHANGA NGA HU FHIRAHO”: BLACK WOMEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS CREATING SOCIALLY JUST AND EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

By

Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

This dissertation examines the multifaceted personal and professional lives of Black women elementary school principals in South Africa at the intersection of institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments for black children and youth. The perspective of the study is rooted in a critical black feminist postmodern theory which frames layers of historical, political, cultural, ethnic, and gender discrimination in a construct that informs an understanding of the fragmented, conflicted and multilayered lives of women. The study asks the Black woman school leader in South Africa to reflect on her formal and informal educational experiences in an effort to discover how these experiences have defined and influenced her work for social justice in school and school community settings. The significance of this study lies in the understanding of leadership through the cultural and contextual lens of Black women elementary principals in current South Africa.

The study uses the biographical narrative and phenomenological methods to collect data from six Black South African female elementary school principals identified by their colleagues and communities as individuals working for social justice. Their

stories were collected through a series of three interviews of 1-2 hours, a one-day shadowing session, a group dialogue and document analysis. Data analysis and synthesis were conducted through the narrative-type analysis and coding. It is acknowledged that narrative methods have their own shortcomings regarding subjectivity, internal validity or trustworthiness, and external validity or generalizability as well as ethical issues such as consent from subjects, protecting subjects from harm, and the right to have privacy.

Four major themes emerged from the study: 1) the personal and public struggle to gain a scholarly education; 2) language of oppression versus a language of liberation, 3) power/ privilege: the tensions within and across personal, the school institution and the broader society; and 4) the challenges to school transformation due to tensions across leadership styles.

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November 13, 2000

**This is for you, the silenced ones, the women who work tirelessly to uplift their communities, and the women who put children first! Women like my loving mother,
Emma Naledzani Tshivhase.**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC - African National Congress
BA- Bachelor of Arts
BEA - Bantu Education Act
B.Ed.- Bachelor of Education
B.SC. - Bachelor of Science
CNE- Christian National Education
COSAS- Congress of South African Students
COSATU-Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRT- Critical Race Theory
GDE- Gauteng Department of Education
HED-Higher Education Diploma
HOD- Head of Department
HPTC- Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate
ID- Identity Document
JMB- Joint Matriculation Board
JSTC- Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate
NEUSA-National Education Union of South Africa
MEC- Member of Executive Committee
OBE- Outcome-Based Education
PAC- Pan Africanist Congress
PHDs- Pull Her Down syndrome
PTC-Primary Teachers' Certificate
PTD-Primary Teachers Diploma
READ- Read Educate And Develop
SABC- South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADTU- South Africa Democratic Teachers' Union
SCM- Student Christian Movement
SEC- Secondary Education Certificate
SED- Secondary Education Diploma
SMT- School Management Teams
UED- University Education Diploma
VSP- Volunteer Severance Package
WNC- Women's National Coalition
YP- Youth Preparedness

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examined the multifaceted lives of Black women elementary school principals at the intersection of institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments. The study asked the school leader to reflect on her formal (e.g., institutional schooling) and informal (e.g., family, culture and ethnicity, socio-economic background) educational experiences in an effort to discover how these experiences have influenced her work for social justice in school and school community settings. Additionally, the study probed the constructs (institutional, political, cultural, language, social/historical, and economic) that involve Black women in the work of social change in an effort to expand both the literature and the practice of school leadership.

This study included the participation of six Black women elementary school principals in South Africa from among the nine ethnic groups (e.g., Venda, Tsonga, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Zulu, Ndebele, Swati and Xhosa) from urban/township school settings in Soweto, Johannesburg. Each professional's story is unique as it illuminates individual experiences of addressing pressing issues around race, gender, class, segregation, and oppression. While each story presents lessons learned (practical tools) that might help professional practitioners, a comparative analysis across the narratives provides rich data, contrast, and informative themes which extend our understanding of

the meaning of social justice that is both contextually and culturally appropriate in school settings.

As a Black South African woman and an elementary school principal with five years experience, I was curious to learn how these Black South African women elementary school leaders navigate across these socially and historically created forces. It was also my aim to examine these forces and the role they play in redefining the leadership of Black women leaders. It is hoped that my examination results in a “re”presentation of the stories to inform an expanded readership whose enlightenment might encourage questions and the exploring of differences in ideologies, epistemologies, perceptions and practices of school leadership. Because each story is unique, it was important to listen to the stories of all six elementary school leaders to determine how they define and enact leadership, as well as how they develop their leadership competencies to create socially just and equitable schools in their communities.

Framed by this complex background, the main compelling question that I proposed for this study was "How do Black women elementary school principals navigate across institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas to create socially just and equitable schools in South Africa?" It would seem that Black South African women from various ethnic groups learn to create strategies and establish networks of support and, also, fight oppression, repression, segregation, isolation and injustices through silence and passive resistance while working to uplift and support their various communities.

Finally, and perhaps most important, I hope this study raises as many, if not more, questions than it answers. That is, I hope it promotes thinking about what leadership and

social justice are and what possibilities and limitations moderate them in general and in the context of South Africa in particular; what conditions make it possible for one to participate in leadership and social justice given interlocking systems of oppression; and what commitments must be addressed when deciding on a theory (theories) of leadership and social justice in the context of understanding Black African women's personal narratives.

I also hope that this study helps with such questions as: What happens to leadership when a Black woman is at its center? How is gender understood in the language and discourse of power/lack of and privilege/lack of? What meaning do Black women school leaders derive from their acts of a creation of a socially just and equitable school environment/community? How does understanding social justice contribute to Black women's emancipatory goals? While I do not provide definitive answers to these questions, nor, in truth would I be able to, I do demonstrate how several Black feminist scholars have had a powerful impact on my thinking about, understanding of, and reflection on these problems and issues in my study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to explore how race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, and class affect the practices of Black women elementary school leaders in creating socially just and equitable elementary schools in South Africa. It was also to explore how these practices have both changed and remained the same after the ending of apartheid and the subsequent ushering in of a new era in South Africa. This work, based on a critical black feminist postmodern model, explored and deepened an

understanding of how 6 Black women elementary school principals create social justice in their leadership of schools, while navigating across historically formed patterns of knowledge and power as well as the tensions in the contrast of leadership for transformation versus organizational structures, human relations differences, political stress, and symbolic/cultural differences. In addition, I wanted to understand how these women navigate the tension between "leadership" and "silence".

Historically, traditional mainstream educational scholarship has not addressed the influence of race/ ethnicity, gender, mother-tongue/language, and class on educational policy and practice. Like the few women scholars who have made a project of examining the life experience of minority women in leadership roles, Benham and Cooper's (1998) study of nine minority women in the US presents often unheard stories of the lives and contributions of diverse women school leaders, in both formal and informal positions of leadership, in an effort to begin to explore "the voices that have too long been silent" (p.3). While all these accounts are insightful and helpful, experiences such as the one explored by Benham and other feminist scholars here typically go unremarked. Like Benham and Cooper (1998), Casey (1993) and Collins (1997) among others, believe that these life experiences should not go unremarked, but need an extensive examining to redefine what it means for Black women to write, tell, discuss, and analyze their life experiences against the backdrop of the prevailing discourses that seek to silence them.

Along similar lines this study seeks to present the voices of the "voiceless" and "powerless" in order to redefine leadership from their perspectives. The mainstream theoretical framework on leadership which suggests that leadership is defined from a group's beliefs and understanding silences the voices of the South African women. The

normative research on leadership represents the voices of the groups in power, those who are privileged to make and determine policies. For instance, in South Africa, tribal leaders have historically opposed equal rights for women and oppression of Black women is seen as a direct after effect of apartheid and customary laws that had become entrenched over time in the daily life experiences of Black women there. It can be seen that Black women lived under a dual burden of discrimination: apartheid and sexism. While apartheid translated to racism, classism, segregation and oppression, customary laws subjected women to black male domination in that women had no power or voice to challenge the structure of male control regarding marriage, guardianship, succession, contractual power, and property rights. These laws perceive women as perpetual minors and lifelong wards of their fathers, husbands, brothers or sons.

Curious to find another viewpoint of leadership based on the experiences of Black women from various ethnic backgrounds in South Africa, I highlight differences not because I think that they need to be interpreted exhaustively, but to provide some insight into the multiple grounding from which the fragile image of a Black African woman emerges. With the understanding of these interlocking categories in mind it would seem that the question of how these women weave their way through these life long experiences within socially constructed boundaries and still create socially just schools and communities is central to this study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Black women are rapidly attaining positions as elementary principals in South Africa's schools and are becoming visible in other administrative roles as well. Despite the growing numbers of Black women in school leadership positions, their voices have

been virtually absent from the literature on school leadership (see Benham, 1997; Benham & Cooper, 1998; Casey, 1993; Henry, 1993; and Foster, 1993, among others). As a result, there has been little recognition of the efforts of black South African women, limited knowledge about their experiences, and lack of a keen understanding about how they enacted leadership in the numerous ethnic communities that they represent.

The significance of this dissertation is that it provides an opportunity for the voices of Black women elementary school principals, the often-ignored minority school leaders, to be heard. The narrative style employed in this work assists the researcher in the re-telling of life stories that share the culture, context, and history of individual intention, potential, and work. Furthermore, this study attempts: (1) to interrogate the experiences of Black women school leaders whose work has been identified by their professional field as transformative and focused on social justice; (2) to underline the tension between leadership for transformation and organizational structures, human relations differences, political stress, and symbolic/cultural differences; (3) to further both scholarly understanding of school leadership and to add to the body of leadership practice for moral/ethical and social justice change in schools; and (4) to add to the understanding of how the works and experiences of Black women working for social justice create (or do not) possibilities and develop linkages and partnerships between schools, families and communities.

This work is also meaningful because there are few Black South African women who are looking at this topic in ways which place the issues of gender and leadership at the center. The data show that I am one of a few Black women scholars addressing these important issues. In addition, the lessons learned from this study will contribute essential

insight to other school leaders, policy makers and researchers in South Africa who are just beginning to look at gender and leadership in different contexts. Last, this study is also important as a case study for other women across the globe. This can be an extraordinary study on gender and leadership, extraordinary in the sense that most studies are reluctant to embrace the new understanding of race as a socially constructed issue. Ira Berlin (1998) in his book, Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America argues that the reluctance to embrace the new understanding of race as socially constructed derives neither from a commitment to an older biological classification system, which in truth is no better understood than the newer genetics, nor from a refusal to acknowledge the reality of an ideological construct. Instead, it derives from the failure to demonstrate how race is continually redefined, who does the refining and why.

It is significant to examine how the lives of the six women in this study reveal a reality that is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, racial, color, ethnic, mother-tongue/language and gender attitudes formed and solidified over time, constructs and processes through which hierarchical relations are created and maintained in such a way as to give some men power and privileges over other men and women. It is also crucial to hear the respondents speak for themselves about their struggles in defining leadership from their own perspectives within these social constructs. And it is critical to learn how being from another ethnic group with a different mother-tongue/language may result in different experiences and understanding of these experiences. Ethnicity is allegedly a purely divisive and negative phenomenon, which needs to be balanced by recognition of the positive dimension in the intellectual, political and academic levels that will transcend

education. Horowitz (1991) maintains that South African society is not difficult to classify.

It is characterized, above all by what is appropriately called *ascriptive ranking*. There are superordinates and subordinates, largely defined by birth criteria. To be sure, within the ranks of each stratum, there are also cleavages that divide, in some variables measure, Afrikaans speakers from English speakers, Zulu from Xhosa and Tswana, and so on. But the overall design of the society is predicated on racial hierarchy, and the significance of those alternative cleavages is, at least temporarily, suppressed. (p.35)

It is crucial to all these considerations to recognize that it is a conceptual mistake to leap from an understanding of ethnicity as a social construction to a conclusion that ethnicity is politically, intellectually and academically insignificant. Horowitz warns that "the mere fact that ethnic affiliations were available for manipulation or encouragement suggest that ethnic violence is not just the product of the state's action in setting one group against another but reflects the importance of ethnicity (p.74).

It is imperative to know that while South Africa has since moved from the apartheid ideology to a democratic order, the challenges of ethnicity are still in place. It is my hope that the findings may also illuminate other people's thinking about alternative ways of leading and creating change in education by viewing them from a different vantage point or through a lens that is more focused on equity, access and diversity.

BEGINNING ASSUMPTIONS

In my role as a principal of an elementary school for five years, I observed differences in the way men and women perceive and enact the role of school principal. Factors of mother tongue/language, ethnicity, and class and also the geographical area of the school also characterized these differences. Research shows that one's personal experience represents a very important source of cultural intuition and is derived from the

background that we each bring to the research situation. Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that this often implicit knowledge helps us to understand events, actions, and words, and to do so more confidently than if one did not bring these particular life experiences into the study (cite in Delgado-Bernal, 1997, p.564). In my opinion, it appeared that, whereas Black men tended to perform the principalship in much the same way, Black women did it differently from men, but also differently from each other. Observations of differences were also made through my professional roles as a teacher and later as an elementary school principal. Again, Strauss and Corbin (1990) conclude that years of practice in a particular field often provide an insider view of how things work in that field (cite in Delgado-Bernal, 1997, p.566). In addition, research shows that we derive our intuition from existing literature on a topic. Strauss and Corbin (1990) affirm that having an understanding of information provides some insight into what is going on with the events and circumstances that we are studying. In this case, it seems the contrary is also true. Having less or none of the information provides a desire to find out why the situation is as it is. As a result, I was curious to find out how these differences influence Black women elementary school in their leadership and how these differences give meaning to their roles as leaders for social justice in their various communities. Hence my beginning assumptions are as follows:

1. That the work of social justice requires attention to the tensions of institutional autonomy and/or restraint, privilege and lack of privilege (social and cultural capital), and power over versus power with.
2. That the term "social justice" might be differently defined and enacted by each woman, however, the outcome, equity and quality for children and youth will be similar. That the work of social justice creates vehicles for linkages and partnerships among schools, families and communities

3. That Black women who work to create social change are strongly influenced by social, cultural, and historical context; thereby, there is a need to examine how each navigates the boundaries and barriers both successfully and not.
4. That the Black women elementary school principal brings a unique view of schooling and school leadership to her practice.

DELIMITATION OF STUDY

This was not a study of the entire life story of the biographer or subject. I used critical analysis to look at the forces of race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, and class at crucial moments of the subjects' life stories. This was also not a study of feminism in South Africa, although I used the feminist perspective to examine primarily leadership which contributes to social justice and equity. As a result, this study focused on six Black women elementary school principals of diverse ethnicity in South Africa, i.e. from the Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga, and Venda origin. Additionally, I focused on the women's life experiences to explore how the interlocking systems of oppression affected their practice to create socially just and equitable schools and communities in South Africa. In addition, the study was also limited to urban/township school settings in Soweto. These delimitations enabled me to have a deeper understanding of the subjects' differences, which yields meaning and knowledge of a particular context rather than particular content.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

I Introduction

Building empathy and building coalitions, essential to creating social change in schools, is difficult and oftentimes defeating. Regardless, Black women in South Africa,

have been shifting the paradigm and practice of schools, and have been addressing the discrimination and limitations of mainstream/western thought. This study paid attention to the structure and to the inter-relatedness of race/ethnicity, class, gender, culture and language, that have shaped the professional and personal lives of Black women in the context of segregation/apartheid, isolation, resistance, and hope. Three theoretical frameworks informed the research: Black Feminist and Critical Race Theories, School Leadership Theories, and Organizational Justice Theory. Because this study focuses on the life experiences of Black women leaders in elementary schools it make sense to pay attention to these pertinent bodies of literature.

While the ground work for the literature was provided by a discussion of the Black feminist theory which emphasis the interlocking categories of race, gender and class, critical race theorists focus on the permanent nature of "racism". Ladson-Billings (1995), Parker (1998) Brown (1993) and Solarzano (1997) perceive race as a factor that determines inequalities in the US and other countries. Furthermore, Ferguson (1994) maintains that feminist theory is not simply about women, although it is that; it is about the world, but seen from the usually ignored and devalued vantage point of women's experiences (p.xii). Black Feminist theory may be seen as supportive of and supported by the critical race theory.

Although there has been an increase in the amount of literature about women as leaders and the nature of their learning in the US and western nations, there has been very little if at all from the South African literature. It is, therefore, essential to pay more attention to the literature on elementary school principalship in the South African context or leadership from a more feminist perspective, an emphasis that Lee (1994) sees as

“feminist attributes of persuasion over power, cooperation over competition, collectivism over individualism and inclusion over exclusion (cite in Colflesh, 1997, p.10).

The final discourse I want to explicate is the issue of equity theory. Equity theory (Adams, 1965) is one of the earliest approaches to understanding sources of perceived organizational injustice (see Folger and Skarlicki, 1999, p. 2). Adams perceives equity in terms of three forms of justice. These three forms of justice which include distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice provided a framework for this discourse. Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) maintain that social justice is about full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. From Adams et al's point of view, social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others and the society as a whole. These examples illustrate that a central tenet of organizational justice concerns the "how" and "why" regarding distribution of resources. Often, however, in South Africa, the decisions that play an important role in determining who gets what, how much and why are guided by the interlocking systems of oppression and apartheid.

II Theoretical Constructs

A. Black Feminist and Critical Race Theory

Collins (1989) argues that race, class, and gender are “interlocking categories of analysis that together cultivate profound differences in our personal biographies” (p.3). In essence, it is the interrelationship of race, class, and gender that frames the contexts (social, cultural, and political) of power and privilege. A supporting view is the adoption

of a both/and view of race, class and gender (Collins, 1989, p. 4). However, the centrality of this ideology in leadership studies is sorely missing (see Benham, 1997; Benham & Cooper, 1998; Delpit, 1998; Brunner, 1999).

In light of Collins' work and that of others including hooks, Henry, Benham, and Delpit, school leaders must recognize and acknowledge that current social systems, of which schools are a part, endow varying degrees of power and privilege i.e. social and political capital to different groups of people. Hence, the work for social justice becomes complicated and messy given that the barriers, which prevent access and equity, are defined by race, class and gender differences. Indeed the differences in power and privilege constrain the ability of Black women school leaders to connect with and engage in dialogue and action across differences.

The perspective of the study is rooted in critical black feminist postmodern theory. According to Benham and Cooper (1998), postmodern theory uncovers layers of historical, political, cultural, ethnic, and gender discrimination in providing a framework to understand the lives of women (p.12). Furthermore, feminist scholars agree that to study a woman's life is studying a fragmented, conflicted and multilayered life. It was important that I attempt to explore this concept of fragmentation to examine how it impacts Black women's efforts to create socially just and equitable elementary schools. Whereas Bloom (1998) states that feminist methodology promises a more interpersonal and reciprocal relationship between researchers and those whose lives are the focus of research (p.1), she also marries the two models indicating that postmodern feminism gives an understanding of subjectivity as a nonunitary existence but also as a move

toward a more positive acceptance of the complexities of human identity, especially the female identity" (Bloom, 1998, p.6).

This perspective helped me to unpack how language and action that is socially, politically, culturally, and historically constructed gives and controls meaning and influences epistemologies of Black women school leaders in South Africa. The issue of mother-tongue/language denotes one's ethnicity and is still problematic in South Africa. Weber (1980) defines an ethnic group as a specific kind of a cultural group having and sharing common characteristics. Ethnic groups consist of individuals who perceive or conceive themselves as alike and are so regarded by others (p. 237). Ethnicity is also seen as a broad category closely related to other social groups that social persons construct around themselves: connubial realty, kinship relations, and clans. In addition, construction of ethnicity is a multifaceted, contested process.

The silent struggle in terms of ethnic minority based on the mother-tongue/language is still the order of the day. Horowitz (1991) maintains that conflict over ethnicity in South Africa is subtle, silent, intellectually, politically and academically ignored (p. 34). Where the forces behind these subtle conflicts could be seen as universal and global challenges, in South Africa they were further reinforced and perpetuated by apartheid policies of separate development that dominated, segregated, and isolated communities.

Lopez (1997) says,

"Race" as a vast group of people loosely bound together by historically contingent, socially significant elements of their morphology and/or ancestry. Understood as a sui generis social phenomenon in which contested systems of meaning serve as the connections between physical features, faces, and personal characteristic. Races are categories of difference which exist only in society: they are produced by myriad conflicting social forces; they overlap and inform other social categories; they are fluid rather than static and fixed; and they make sense only in relationship to other racial categories, having no meaningful independent existence. Race is not an inescapable physical fact. Rather, it is a social

construction that, however perilously, remains subject to contestation at the hands of individuals and communities alike. (p.200)

Critical race theory, then, is defined as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color (Solorzano, 1997, p.6). In addition, Capper notes that similar to feminist theories over the past decade, critical race theory, especially that advanced by feminist scholars has been highly influenced by poststructural theories (p.361). Capper shares the paradigm of "interlocking systems of oppression " that embraces race, class, and gender with scholars like Collins (1991), hooks (1989) and Casey (1994). Collins' framework for Afrocentric feminist epistemology includes the following: concrete experience as a criterion of meaning, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims regarding the ethic of caring, and the ethic of personal accountability (cite in Capper, p. 362). Furthermore, Capper states that despite the difference among critical, feminist, queer, and critical race theories, these perspectives share some commonalities in that all are grounded in modernism (p.362)

In conclusion, critical race theory from the African American perspective is not only grounded in race, but also in slavery and oppression. Along similar lines, the context of South Africa complicates this discourse further when elements of ethnicity and mother-tongue/language differences are added to the equation. Identity is derived from the socially constructed definitions of language and situation. Being Black and woman is just the beginning; more than ever, being a Black Muvenda woman or a Black UmZulu woman is central to the argument of an identity.

B. Leadership Theories for Change

Kouzes and Posner (1987) contend that leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices which challenge process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way and encourage the heart (p.8). Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner add that leadership is not something mystical and ethereal that cannot be understood by ordinary people. Leadership can be learned. Caroselli (1990, p. 94) states that leadership is about challenging the prevailing wisdom and the capacity to influence and organize meaning for the members of organization. Theories of school leadership will focus on the concept of “power with versus power over” and of connected classrooms and collaborative leadership versus directive leadership.

In light of Sergiovanni’s (1992) work and others including Starhawk (1991), Kaagan(1997) and Benham (1998), the new assumption or paradigm of leadership is the concept of power with, rather than power over. These scholars believe that power-with is the power not to command but to suggest and to be listened to. The source of power derives from the willingness of others to listen to a leader’s ideas. Power-with is not authority to command, but acts as a channel to focus and direct the will of the group. It affirms, shapes and guides collective decisions, but cannot enforce its will on the group or push it in a direct contrary to what the group desires. The school leaders of the new South Africa will be challenged with the task of unfreezing the culture of power over to redefine it as power with.

Senge (1990) advises that traditional organizations that require management systems to control people’s behavior should let go of power and begin sharing it with people who are directly affected by change. As well, these organizations need to unlearn

old ways of imposing power over others, moving from making decisions that produce contexts of domination and subordination to those which, for example, give teachers and others in the larger society opportunities to make decisions as they are the implementers of decisions made. It is interesting to note that conflict and resistance can occur when teachers perceive new meaning to be too different from what they know to be true, from their historical background, experience and traditions.

C. Organizational Justice Theories

Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) maintain that social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Furthermore, Adams et al's point of view is that social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others and the society as a whole. Given this framework, social justice education is seen as both a process and a goal.

An additional point of view is offered by Gareth Morgan's (1997) political metaphor which emphasizes the three interrelated conceptions of "interests, conflict and power" as fundamental tenets of social justice. He maintains that "although everyone has access to sources of power, ultimate power rests with the people or forces that are able to define the stage of action on which the game of politics is played" (p.213). He says that "rather than use the political metaphor to generate new insight and understandings that help us deal with divergent interests, we often reduce the metaphor to a tool to be used to advance our own personal interests" (p.212)

Collins (1998) promotes a "visionary pragmatism" that emphasizes the necessity of linking caring, theoretical visions with informed, practical struggle. As Cole (1993)

observes, "While it is true that without a vision the people perish, it is doubly true that without action the people and their vision perish as well" (p.75). Collins asserts that domination succeeds by dividing and segregating people from one another. What is it, then, to accept domination and oppression? These articulations of "visionary pragmatism" move this discussion beyond the understanding of social justice education as both a process and a goal to another lens that emphasizes that actions bring people in touch with the humanity of other struggles by demonstrating that truthful and ethical visions for community cannot be separated from pragmatic struggles on their behalf (p.190) (see Collins 1991, 1998, and Bhubha's 1990 concept of "third space"). The political metaphor politicizes our understanding of human behavior in organizations and pushes us to question the tensions between different constructs, and provide incentive for individuals to act politically for social justice.

What is it, then, to understand schools as organizations and contexts for organizational justice? Equity theory was used to get at the heart of what social justice is and includes three components. First, the causes and consequences of the absence of outcome equity in human exchange relationship are referred to as distributive justice. Distributive justice or rather the "bottom line" of justice concerns also focus on those criteria used to allocate resources to individual (see Folger and Skarlicki, 1999; Stephens and Cobb, 1999). Second, procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures used to determine outcomes, or rather, the study of how distributive decisions are made. Last, employees' perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal treatment received during the enactment of the organizational procedures are known as interactional justice. It is important to note that how people are treated and how change is implemented can have

considerable influence on employees' resistance to change. Change is acceptable only in so far as it leads to the benefits for all members of the system, especially those who are worst off.

III The woman holds the sharp edge of the knife: The metaphor

The above literary reference provides the basis for the metaphor of "The woman holds the sharp edges of the knife," This is a metaphor which is common among the nine African ethnic groups of South Africa. In simple words, the metaphor means that a woman has to face the challenges of life and succeed through thick and thin. This metaphor serves several purposes. On the one hand, it may be understood as a symbol of struggle, resistance, obdurance, and strength. On the other hand, it may be seen as a symbol of hope, faith, courage, and words of wisdom.

This metaphor underscores how I perceive and understand Black women in general, and Black South African women in particular, as holders of the sharp edges of knives. As a Black South African woman who has lived and worked through the apartheid era and currently advocate for justice in the post-apartheid times, I derive meaning both from my personal and professional experiences and current leadership literature. Because of this disciplined socialization, it is no wonder that I feel both excited and overwhelmed. Excited because "identification with respondents enhances researchers' interpretive abilities, rather than jeopardizes validity" (see Bloom, 1998, p. 18). Thus, my personal and professional experiences helped me identify with the participants. And, overwhelmed because even as feminist research methods urge the researcher to move "beyond (or to the side) of the main paradigms of inquiry" and "have the potential for advancing educational research in representing the lived experience of

schooling" (see Benham and Cooper, 1996, p.11), the study of the South African context seems to be arduous task.

Various scholars suggest that the form of our understanding depends upon the genre in which our experiences are created. Thus, the South African discourse may fail the Western mainstream feminist measuring stick which uses the or/and view of race and gender rather than the and/both view. Black women's lives can only be understood through the interlocking categories of various constructs including race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, culture, and traditional norms. Hence, this metaphor provides a powerful reflection of Black women who encounter enormous challenges; women who strive under the multilayered and multiplied burdens of oppression. And, often times they strive and fight back through their silent resistance, and they find hope within the hopelessness and through the creation of a socially just environment. Through their caring nature they create environments of hope, and succeed in linking families, schools and communities of underserved children and youth in South Africa.

Holding leadership roles in the lives of these Black women can be likened to holding the sharp edges of knives, "Musadzi u fara lufhanga nga hu fhiraho", where women are cut without mercy. As a result, women have to learn strategies of how to hold these knives without being cut, how to navigate tensions within and across the personal, school institutions and the broader society. Black women school leaders are compelled to learn how to navigate across tensions created by culture, language, and customary laws.

EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how race/ethnicity, gender and class affect the practice of Black women school leaders in creating socially just and equitable

schools in South Africa. The overarching question was "How do Black women elementary school principals in South Africa navigate across institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas to create socially just and equitable schools for children and youth?" Given this question, my sub-questions include:

1. How does/has each woman address/ed obstacles both personal and professional? How does/has each woman confront/ed political, cultural, economic and social arenas?
2. How does each women address tensions between leadership for transformation vs. organizational structures, human relations differences, language/text difference, political stress, and symbolic/cultural difference?
3. How does each woman define the meaning of working for social justice? How has she worked for social justice in both the apartheid South Africa and the new South Africa? What appears to be different or the same?
4. How does their work inform and challenge the landscape of the social responsibility of leadership practices?

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review draws on the following bodies of literature, that is: Black feminist leadership; Critical race theory – implications for social justice; Leadership theory – mainstream, and emergent (to include White liberal feminism); and Organizational justice theory to better understand what the field currently knows/says about Black women school leaders doing the work of creating socially just learning environments. Additionally, the literature review examined school leadership at the intersection of race/ethnicity, language/mother tongue, class, and gender to present a comparative analysis of traditional frames of school leadership, emergent views of school leadership, and black feminist perspectives of school leadership. The research attempted to make sense of leadership for social justice within the context of the elementary principalship in South Africa.

This literature review was important to explore how Black South African women school leaders navigate through race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender and class to create socially just and equitable schools for their communities. The chapter gives an overview of the Black feminist and critical race theories, school leadership and change and organizational justice theories.

Emerging from the readings are three themes that best capture this field of study. **That is:** (1) Marginality of Black women's work in school organization; (2) Connected towards transformation and (3) Power and privileges. First, Black feminist and critical

race scholars encourage Black women to recognize the vantage point of their marginality from the racist, classist, sexist hegemony and to criticize it while creating a counter-hegemony through the formation of a liberatory feminist theory and praxis as a collective responsibility to be shared by all.

Second, school leadership theories from the feminist perspective embrace leadership for transformation for social justice. To do this, Black women should work collectively to create these ideas, as a group that produces the knowledge. Critical race theory encourages teacher education to develop a pedagogy, curriculum, and research agenda that accounts for the role of race and racism in education and works to eliminate the racism. School leaders should strive to create "connected classrooms" in these "unsafe" societies. School leaders in South Africa should strive to bring back the culture of learning and teaching.

Last, organizational social justice literature indicates that justice is an important motivator for working people. When people perceive lack of fairness, their morale declines and they may even retaliate against the organization. The literature emphasizes both the social and philosophical definitions of what is "fair/just" and what is not, who has "power and privileges" and who has none. Folger and Cropanzano (1998) maintain that in organizations, justice is about rules and social norms governing how outcomes such as rewards and punishment should be distributed, the procedure used for making such decisions as well as other types of decisions, and how people are treated interpersonally (p.xiii).

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

BLACK FEMINIST AND CRITICAL RACE THEORIES

Black Feminist Theories

In a critical review of the literature on Feminist theory, hooks (1984), projects a picture which shows that feminism in the US emerged from white middle and upper class, college educated women, who were not concerned with economic survival or ethnic and racial discrimination in a capitalistic society, but interested in resisting sexism or gender inequalities. Most feminists of color recognize that gender, race, class, and sexual orientation-not gender alone-determine the allocation of power and the nature of any individual's identity, status, and circumstance (Collins, 1986; hooks, 1989; and Delgado-Bernal 1998). In other words, for these White women, feminism is about sexism, not about class and racial issues, while for most Black women, feminism is all of the above and more. As though these layers are not enough, for a Black South African woman, the burden is multiplied, that is, central to creation of a black woman's identity are race, ethnicity, gender, class, mother-tongue/language, traditional values, customary laws and the other interlocking layers constructed by apartheid policies.

hooks sees the plight of Black women as the problem of lack of socialization. Black women are not socialized to assume the role of exploiter/oppressor because they are allowed no institutionalized "other" that they can discriminate against, exploit or oppress (p.15). In addition, hooks suggests that the use of this "lived experience of discrimination, exploitation or oppression" directly challenges the prevailing classist, sexist, racist social structure and its concomitant ideology and may shape Black women's consciousness in such a way that their world view differs from those who have a degree

of privilege, "the White Feminists" (p.15). hooks invites Black women to recognize the vantage point of their marginality from the racist, classist, sexist hegemony and to criticize it while creating a counter-hegemony through the formation of a liberatory feminist theory and praxis as a collective responsibility to be shared by all.

Hooks goes on to define feminism as " a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permits western culture on various levels as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires. Feminism defined in political terms that stress collective as well as individual experience challenges women to enter a new domain, to leave behind the apolitical stance of sexism, decrees in our lot and develop political consciousness (p.24). hooks believes that when feminism is defined in such a way it calls attention to the diversity of women's social and political reality and centralizes the experience of all women, especially the women whose social conditions have been least written about, studied, or changed by political movement. She writes: "When we cease to focus on the simplistic stance 'men are the enemy' we are compelled to examine systems of domination and our role in their maintenance and perpetuation" (p.25). Hence, women need to liberate themselves and move away from perpetuating the situation of oppression.

From her arguments, hooks challenges and counters the mainstream feminist hegemony that perceives feminism as an individual identity and life style choice rather than a political commitment, which reflects the class nature of the movement (p.27). Her vision of a new hegemony is shared and supported by Delgado-Bernal (1998) in her stance about Chicana Feminist epistemology in educational research. She maintains that

Chicana's experiences are different from those of African American and Native Americans in the United States. A Chicana feminist epistemology is formed by and shares characteristics of endarkened, feminist epistemologies (e.g., examinations of the influence of race, class, gender, and sexuality on opportunity structures), but is different from the "Black Feminist Thought" (p.561). Like hooks, Delgado-Bernal's new paradigm shifts away from simplicity to include elements of differences while recognizing the commonalties with the "Black Feminist Thought"

Thus, as Delgado-Bernal argues further, "endarkened" feminist epistemologies are crucial as they speak to the failures of traditional patriarchal and liberal educational scholarship and examine the intersection of race, class gender, and sexuality (p.561). The epistemologies that emerged from these readings informed my understanding and perspective of how the interlocking categories of race, gender, class, ethnicity, language among others, are situated in the world experience of Black African women in South Africa.

Collins (1989) also makes a strong argument in her perceptions of race, class and gender as "interlocking categories of analysis that together cultivate profound differences in our personal biographies" (p.3). She asserts that we must transcend the very differences by reconceptualizing race, class and gender in order to create new categories of connections (p.3). Reconceptualizing race, class, and gender deems the removal of the dichotomous thinking, the either/or and the adoption of the both/and, and the ranking of dichotomous differences (p.4). What seems to be significant is that race, class, and gender may all structure a situation but may not be equally visible and/or important in peoples' self-definitions (p.5). As a result of these differences, Collins perceives the

maintenance of the relationship of domination and subordination structures in the US political economy through three dimensions.

Collins outlines the three dimensions in the following ways. First, she describes institutional oppression: racism, sexism and elitism all have concrete institutional locations. Even though the workings of the institutional dimension of oppression are often obscured with ideologies claiming equality of opportunity, in actuality, race, class, and gender place Asian-American women, Native American men, white men, African-American women and other groups in distinct institutional niches with varying degrees of penalty and privilege (p.7). Second, Collins points out the symbolic dimension of oppression: each of us lives with an allotted portion of institutional privilege and penalty, and with varying levels of rejection and seduction inherent in the symbolic image applied to us (p.12). Central to this process is the use of stereotypical or controlling images of diverse race, class and gender groups (p.10) The third dimension provided by Collins includes the individual dimension of oppression: Whether we benefit or not, we all live within institutions that produce race, class and gender oppression. Thus, our individual biographies vary tremendously. Each of us must come to term with the multiple ways in which race, class and gender as categories of analysis frame our individual biographies (p.13).

To transcend the barriers created by race, class, and gender, Collins suggests that we move towards race, class, and gender as categories of connection, by building relationships and coalitions that will bring about social change. Therefore, we need to do three things. First, we must recognize that each of us lives within systems that vest us with varying levels of power and privilege. As a result, differences in power constrain our

ability to connect with one another when we think we are engaged in dialogues across differences. Second, we must build relationships and coalitions essential for social change concerns knowing the real reasons for coalition. Third, we must build empathy and types of relationships and coalitions essential for social change concerning the issue of accountability. Collins accepts that, while we may not have created this situation, we are each responsible for making individual, personal choices concerning which elements of race, class and gender oppression we will accept and which we will work to change (pp.15-22).

In Collins's (1991) later works, she provides a platform for the creation of the new paradigm based on the fact that Black women intellectuals create Black feminist thought using their own concrete experiences as situated knowers in order to express a Black woman's standpoint (p.17). Furthermore, to embrace this epistemological framework, Collins suggests that the tenet required is that we should reject the pronouns "they" and "their" when describing Black women and our ideas and replace them with terms "we", "us" and "our" (p.17). As a result, Black feminist thought cannot challenge race, gender, and class oppression without empowering African American women. bell hooks (1989) notes that, "Oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story" (p.34). To define Black feminist thought, Collins believes that we must take cognizance of Black women, as a group who creates these ideas, as a group that produces the knowledge. Core platforms in Black feminist thought stand out to be based on "the interlocking nature of *race*, gender, and class oppression" that calls for the replacement of denigrated images of

Black womanhood with self-defined images; Black women's activism as mothers, teachers, and Black community leaders; and sensitivity to sexual politics" (p. 23).

It is in light of the foregoing discussions that I make a transition to the emerging theories of feminism in South Africa. Bonni, Deacon, Morrell and Robinson (1998) maintain that by 1990 feminism was almost a dirty word; national liberation came first and women's liberation second (p.115). A Women's National Coalition emerged in 1992 to demand that the process and product of negotiating a new constitution and the Bill of Rights provide effective equality for women. At the same time Black women had begun to protest strongly at their exclusion from the white feminists' political and theoretical projects, raising issues of gender difference, the fragmentation of the subject and the category 'woman' by race, culture and class (p.112). Thus, as Bonni et al put it, " a feminist politics identity is being asserted against phallogocentric hegemony while itself being challenged on the ground of its racial exclusivity" (p.113)

Different experiences of gender might lead to very different sort of demands for change. And if possibilities for the transformation of gender relations lie in the instability of a performed gender identity, then the direction of change in gender order(s) also become unpredictable. Bonni et al assert that rather than being a site of unremitting reinforcement of domination gender relations, everyday performance of gender becomes the stage for the constant possibility of disrupting and challenging these relations. However, the postmodern challenge, and especially the post-colonial turn, has seen feminism take on board a critique which calls into question its own, previously unexplored, class and racial biases (p.114). The authors identified two themes from the broader feminist engagement with postmodernism: first, the images of transformation

which theorists are mobilizing, and second, the implications of contemporary accounts of identity for the way in which they understand political relationships and organization (p.114).

In addition, the authors' argument run against the grain of many South African feminists who often dismiss as irrelevant postmodern debate over the fragmentation and construction of identity. It is thought that the esoteric theoretical debates of Western feminists, unconcerned with the real material struggles of ordinary poor women, will not be helpful in understanding feminist concerns in this context. Instead, the authors believe that the Western and Third World women frequently contest- albeit in different arenas, aspects of the same political, intellectual and economic heritage, and that there is much to be learned from engagement between feminists in different places (p. 115). While democratic elections of 1994 signaled the end of apartheid government from the white minority rule with the birth of a non-racial government of national unity, some of the most significant issues central to the oppression of women in general, and Black African women in particular remained unchallenged and insignificant and go unremarked in the eyes of the policy makers. In contrast, the Women's National Coalition (WNC), which was launched in 1992, brought together a wide range of women's organizations across racial, political, religious, welfare and other divides. In earlier periods women's organizations had existed as wings of political organizations/parties.

The South African feminist discourse was and to some extent, is still informed by white women's thinking of sexism rather than issues of race and class. As a result, questions of race and location also intervened to ensure that the emerging feminist discourse took differences as its starting point. The WNC aimed to achieve equality under

the new constitution reinforcing unitary identity of women and their oppression. It has been recognized that the removal of the white minority government would not correct sexist practices which were well entrenched within the structures of both the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the African National Congress (ANC). The WNC drew up a Women's charter with concentration on five key areas: women's legal status; access to land; violence against women; women's health; and women's work (see Bonni et al, 1998, p.116).

In these five areas cited above, what emerges are the similarities and diversity of issues which affect South African women as much as respondents speak "with one voice" in censuring the roles and treatment they are subjected to, there is a keen awareness of the complexities of this oppression; especially when culture and tradition enter the frame (see Bonni et al, 1998, p.117). For instance, the Bill of Rights provides two contradictory clauses: first, the demand that an equality clause should enjoy priority in the Bill of Right in order to pave way for gender equal affirmative action; and that traditional and customary law be democratized. While the first clause frees the women from gender discrimination, the second one imposes customary and traditional laws which disadvantage them. These events problematize the idea that interest can be read off location. Rural or any groups of women are at the intersection of a number of factors which constitute their identity. They navigate across many tensions; they wrestle with many social constructs which form their daily existence. Bonni et al (1998) maintain that for rural women their experiences of customary and traditional laws have not been empowering. Similarly, the idea of western women's interest is problematic and homogenizing (p.117). The implication is that custom, culture and equality can be

challenged in public sphere but the private domain is still private and beyond the reach of the Bill of Rights. Thus, the drawing of the Bill of Rights is seen as a process of different and competing interest groups (political parties, traditional leaders, women and others) demanding to have their needs met.

Bonni et al (1998) argue that just as racial identity disrupts a too easy assumption of sisterhood even in an environment where a non-racial politics was paramount in resisting apartheid, so divisions across education, location, languages and class all potentially disrupt any appeal to race (let alone experience) as a primary foundation for the right to appropriately represent others (p. 126). The authors assert that the recognition of identities as multiple and fragmented means that we need new models for representing others and for building political relationships around gender concerns. With this understanding in mind, a first step is to think differently about opposing identities, to seek out alternative ways of conceptualizing disabling modernist dichotomies (self/other; male/female; heterosexual/homosexual; white/black; researcher/researched) (see Bonni et al, 1998, p.126).

Historically, traditional mainstream educational scholarship has not addressed the influence of gender, race/ ethnicity, class, and sexuality on education policy and practice. By looking at commonalities based on gender and omitting issues of race/ ethnicity or class, one may overlook how institutions, political, economic and cultural structures contain and support different groups of women differently. By shifting the analysis onto Black South African women and their race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, and class, scholars are able to address the shortcomings of the traditional mainstream thought and western liberal feminist scholarship.

Critical Race Theories

The literature suggests that to ground one's research within the experience of critical race theory means to deconstruct the historical devaluation of blackness, the victim of ethnicity, the derogative nature of mother-tongue/language, the contradiction of culture, the patriarchal ideology that devalues women, and the complex of class. Indeed, the every day lives of Black women demonstrate the center of struggles against racism, ethnic humiliation, sexism, cultural domination, and class exploitation. A critical race theory grounded in the past legacy of apartheid and resistance, translates into a pursuit of social justice in both education as a formal and public entity and in the informal and private lives of Black women. It seems appropriate to begin with definitions of race to explore the interrelationship with critical race theory. Lopez (1994) provides the following statements about racism in the US:

A person born to a slave woman was a slave, one born to a free woman was free. Blacks were presumably slaves and thus bore the burden of proving a free ancestor; Whites and Indians were presumably free and thus the burden of proving the descent fell on those alleging slaves status. Human fate still rides upon ancestry and appearance. Race dominates our personal lives. Our speech, dance, neighbor, friends, talking, walking, eating, and dreaming are ineluctably shapes by nations of race. Race determines our economic prospects. Race permeates our politics. Race mediates every aspect of our lives. Role of law in reifying racial identities. Legal presumptions burden the law which serves not only to reflect but also to solidify social prejudice, making law a prime instrument in the construction and reinforcement of racial subordination. One is Black if one has a single antecedent, or has a "flat nose" or a "woolly head of hair". Race becomes a 'common sense' - a way of comprehending, explaining and acting in the world. (pp. 191-192).

The above statement captures the interlocking systems of oppression; among other descriptors, race is universally defined in ancestral, historical, cultural, political, social, economic, biological, legal context. The South African version of race seems to be the same save the element of ethnicity and mother-tongue/language that bring on board the

construct of location. Race is one way of looking at the cultural and physical diversity of humankind, dividing it into exclusive and discrete groups, ranking them, and arbitrarily associating them with distinctive behavioral, moral, temperamental, intellectual, and spiritual qualities (see Lopez, 1994; Drescher and Engerman (Eds.), 1998). Thus race is being redefined as part of a society's belief system or worldview. One major component of this prevalent belief is the notion that both physical and behavioral features are innate and inheritable. Consistent with the above social construct of racism, by allocating some group to position of natural inferiority, based on their physical features and place of ancestral origin, policymakers of the world sought to justify the separate development and segregation of peoples, as in South Africa.

Furthermore, based on Audre Lorde's (1992) and Marable Manning's (1992) definitions of racism, Solorzano (1997) identifies three important propositions of racism. First, one group believes itself to be superior; second, the superior group has the power to carry out the racist behavior; and third, racism affects multiple racial/ethnic groups (p.8). These statements reflect a socially constructed belief that failed to be scientifically justified. Likewise, Lopez (1994) clearly indicated the failure of racial construction in terms of both biological and scientific experimentation (pp. 193-199). It seems that different racial groups have more commonalties than differences. Therefore, the argument of race cannot be justified through the use of these factors.

It can be seen that humans rather than abstract social forces produce races. It can also be seen that as a human construct, race constitutes an integral part in a whole social fabric that includes gender and class relations. In addition, the meaning-systems surrounding race change quickly rather than slowly. Finally, races are constructed

relationally, against one another, rather than in isolation (Lopez, p.196). This bleak and gloomy reflection clearly mirrors the South African portraiture. Moreover, the South African context was perpetuated by apartheid policies of separate development that emphasized division in terms of race, ethnicity, mother tongue and geographic areas.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) conclude by saying, "...as critical race theory scholars we unabashedly reject the paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail. Instead, we align our scholarship and activism with the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, who believed that black man was universally oppressed on racial grounds, and that any program of emancipation would have to be built around the question of race first" (p.62).

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE THEORIES

Changing Views of Leadership

It has been suggested that in the real world of schools, leadership is basically managing messes in ambiguous situations with unclear problems and conflicting solution possibilities. Schein (1992) in Organizational Culture and Leadership defines leadership as "the ability to see what the present state of culture is, unfreeze it, redefine and change it, and then refreeze the new assumptions". From the contributions of Sergiovanni (1992), Starhawk (1991) and Benham and Cooper (1998) emerge the new assumption or paradigm of leadership in the concept of "power with" rather than "power over" These scholars believe that power-with is the power not to command but to suggest and be listened to. Furthermore, Starhawk (1991) asserts that the source of power is the willingness of others to listen to leaders' ideas. Power-with is not authority to command,

but acts as a channel to focus and direct the will of the group. It affirms, shapes and guides collective decisions, but cannot enforce its will on the group or push it in a direction contrary to what the group desires. The school leaders of South Africa, like leaders in other parts of the world, are also challenged with unfreezing the culture of "power over" which entails top-down management and relies on bureaucratic processes that stress forms and checklists, rules, regulations and procedures- to redefine it as "power with" with that concentrates on efforts for collaboration and staff empowerment. Likewise, work orientation should be complemented by warmth and support orientation. In addition, all stakeholders who are concerned with the task of teaching and learning should share goals and high expectations. Schools should establish learning goals for all students consistent with responsibility of education in a democratic society

In addition, Kaagan (1998) in Leadership Lessons found that leadership is about relationships that are governed by accomplishment of task. Kaagan cautions that it takes time and repetition of the right action by leaders, such as school principals, to build adequate levels of credibility and to inspire enough confidence in others. As a result, it is possible to engage other members in accomplishing tasks when power is shared with them. Leaders, such as school principals, always want to exert power over others, and on the same hand, teachers seem to expect power from above. The new paradigm of leadership, however, is based on the sharing of power, effective decision making, effective communication and effective leading.

Drucker's (1974) contributions on these attributes, that is, effective decision making, communication and leading are:

1. Effective Decision Making

- Defines questions.
- Creates a need for dissent; one does not make a decision unless there is disagreement.
- Forces participation.
- Creates a culture of question and dialogue. Creates an environment of inquiry.
- Values opposition both internally and externally and learns from them.
- Reinforces growth - reward.
- Finds out why people disagree (avoids "trap of being right")

2. Effective Communication:

- Communication and information are different. Communication is perception, while information is logic
- Communication requires shared experience. Communication is not a means but a mode of organizations.
- Communication entails predictability and trust.

3. Effective Leading:

- Leading is learning to deal with resistance.
- Leaders doesn't start by asking what do I want, but what needs to be done
- Leaders tolerate and value diversity in people, their different experiences
- Leadership ensures consistency.

On effective relationships, Kaagan (1998) maintains that:

- Accomplishment of task should govern the conduct of these relationships.

- It is necessary to have the courage to confront both subordinate and bosses with shortfalls that affect the accomplishment of task.
- It takes time and repetition of the right action to build adequate levels of credibility and to inspire enough confidence in others as a public affairs leader.
- It is possible to take difficult, even extreme and painful, actions as a public affairs leader if one focuses on the task at hand and engages other members in accomplishing the tasks.

Taking this advice into consideration, and with support from Phendla's (1995) research on School Leadership and Total Quality Management in elementary schools in South Africa, leadership is learnable and possible. Phendla found that schools that were perceived as less effective were probably being managed more or less successfully, rather than being led. She holds the belief that, "school leadership is important not in an abstract sense, but in a very practical way" (p.10). Phendla identified eight qualities of effective leadership:

1. Creation of a positive school climate
2. Creative and open communication channels
3. Empowerment of teachers
4. Developing vehicles for teamwork
5. Envisioning and energizing
6. Organizing and motivating
7. Giving feedback
8. Managing change

These qualities were seen as interrelated in the sense that they tended to reinforce each other, thus, creating a reciprocal causality. To show the interrelatedness of these qualities of leadership, Phendla (1995) demonstrated that school leaders empower the teacher by involving them in decision-making. In addition, the school leader who is invitational helps create communication channels that are open. As a result, when both teacher and leaders share visions, barriers are removed, and thus, conducive climates are created. Phendla cites Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) to indicate that real power is the power to be yourself, to be true to your best self, rather than to be the self that is fearful, jealous, or spiteful (p.13). Thus, these empowering relationships create a situation where both the teacher and the leader become equal partners, where the situation of power-with prevails.

From Phendla's (1995) research on leadership and total quality management in elementary schools in South Africa, managing change as one of the effective leadership qualities starts by challenging the prevailing wisdom that people resist change. She indicates that change should be made as smooth a transaction as possible, since it results in emotional challenges (p.19). Moreover, leaders should create the environment that enhances continuous improvement, drive out fear by improving communication, and give people responsibilities with equal authority for accountability. Thus, "the leader's commitment is mirrored by her followers" (p.20)

Change Theories

The South African education system, like the American one, is also characterized by a history of reform and innovations with promising policies that have little if ever any impact on the real classroom situation. From Cohen's (1990) perspective "it is one thing

to embrace a doctrine of an innovation and the other to weave it into one's practice" (p.341). Policies are vague, ambiguous, unclear, long on ideas and vision, but short on implementation. The vague language of policy has functional utility at the level of politicians, but create the real problems for practitioners- the teacher. David Cohen (1990) indicates that policy does not make provisions to support practice. Cohen's interpretation of "a problem practice" is that teachers are given policy and instructions to follow or implement without much choice, or support or further, without incentive to make sure that these policies are implemented. As a result, policies have good intentions that are difficult to implement. It is no doubt that teacher, as "chief agents of change" experience lack of support from policymakers. It is no surprise, then, that educators and school leaders in South Africa are faced with the challenges of a new order, the challenge to embrace democracy, the challenge to adopt new leadership styles that are attributes of a democratic ideology, and the challenges of moving away from top-down leadership styles with their character of command, compliance and control.

Various scholars agree that individuals, regardless of their opinion of the innovation do not automatically accept change. Therefore, change places people in a situation of getting rid of the old and embracing the new, unlearning the old behavior or belief and replacing it with new ones. In addition, any reform effort must involve the main actors who are the implementers of the decision/innovation. In general, schools reflect certain norms, values and cultures of a distinct community. In particular, schools mirror the ideologies of the political order of a country. Schools are part of a social order, as well. There are constant shifts in politics, economics, religious beliefs, demographic, history, social, and other various components of a society. These shifts affect schools to a

certain extent; nonetheless, schools change slowly within their historically framed patterns of knowledge.

According to Popkewitz (1991), the purpose of change is to redesign social conditions to enable the individual to exhibit the attributes, skills, or effects that are the expected outcomes of the designated change. Institutions are there to serve specific interests, and attain certain goals. Popkewitz contends that change is best understood within three main concepts that include historically formed patterns, knowledge or epistemology, and power. Change gives meaning to us when the new ideas or innovations draw from what is familiar, from past experiences. Marris (1974) on the other hand, alludes that we appreciate change when we are given the opportunity to assimilate it to our own experiences and when we are confident in the predictability of our surroundings (p.124). We are more at ease when we are able to anticipate the outcome of events. These two perspectives of change theory are similar in that they draw on an element of history or past experiences to give meaning to change. Popkewitz 's theory calls on past experiences in the setting and knowledge which is formed through these past experiences to give meaning to the new ideas. Furthermore, Marris also derives meaning from cultures, values, norms, and traditions of the social system. Both these theories summon history and experiences to give meaning to change.

Popkewitz (1991), Sarason (1995), Rogers (1983) and Fullan (1998) support the idea that people or teachers are key actors in reform and suggest that it is necessary to move away from the old in order to accept the new. In order to understand change, it is necessary to understand historical antecedents of change events and how historically framed patterns formed over time construct power

relations that control knowledge. Popkewitz maintains that “the forms of knowledge in schooling frame and classify the world and nature of work, which in turn, have the potential to organize and shape the individual’s identity” (p.218). In this context, knowledge provides rules and standards and organizes perceptions, ways of acting, and concepts of self. How we see the world around us is defined by our social epistemology.

Furthermore, Popkewitz asserts “that power rests in complex sets of relation and practice by which individuals construct their subjective experience and assume identity in social affairs” (p.219). He conceives of power having at least two dimensions. First, he asserts, power relates to “forces”, which is the ability to exert power over others, regulate policies, and make decisions that produce contexts of domination and subordination. Second, “effects” relates to rules, standards, and styles of reasoning by which individuals speak, think, and act in the everyday world. Power involves certain social actors which dominate or are dominated by the working of school.

In support of Popkewitz (1991), Sarason (1998) maintains that “any attempt to introduce change into the school setting requires among other factors, changing the existing regulations in some way” (p.113). Teachers’ intended outcomes involve changing the existing regularity and eliminating one or more of the old ideologies and producing new ones. The two dimensions lead to the assumption that change cannot be initiated from the top without the possibility of failure and that those who stand to be affected directly or indirectly by decisions should stand in some relation to that decision making process. Sarason stresses the importance of figuring out what teachers think, if one truly wants to bring change.

Sarason's support for Popkewitz's idea of effective change is that we must shift the dimension of "force" to "sharing", where by teachers derive meaning from change when they are considered as part of the process. Not only is it important that teachers' thinking be considered, they should also be engaged in the decision making process.

Rogers pushes this understanding of considering teachers in decision making further in his human resource frame that calls for an understanding of what drives people to adopt innovations. He contends that innovations should be clarified and understood before they are fully adopted by members of the social system. Rogers' (1983) Theory of Diffusion of Innovations, proposes that "innovations are communicated through some channels" (p.127). Change happens overtime and is communicated to members of a defined system. Rogers identifies four components of his theory: innovations, communication channels, time, and system. Innovations as units of thought, ideas and activities that members of a social system engage in should be communicated in a process though which people share meaning. The time component depicts the rate of adoption of an innovation. Teachers as members in a social system have values and may act as change agents and also as rational or irrational adopters. People adopt new innovations when they perceive the benefits and profitability of the new as more compatible than the existing one.

These ideas affect the degree of involvement and commitment in that to unlearn the historically framed patterns of apartheid and its oppressive nature is not an easy task. School leaders are used to being the "final word" and teachers are used to following the

rules and regulations. Sharing of power and decision making will take a great effort on the part of the school leaders. Sarason (1998) further suggests that the understanding of the culture of schools is necessary for anyone who wants to change schools. He states that "unless the culture of school is better understood, the effort to change schools would be ineffective" (p.24). We need to understand how things are done in our schools, how they differ from other schools, what are the important traditions, ceremonies, rituals and stories. In addition, beliefs, values, desires and interrelationships impact school culture.

SOCIAL JUSTICE THEORIES

Adams, Bell and Griffin's (1997) define social justice education as both a process and goal. The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. From Adams et al's point of view, social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. They envision a society in which individuals are both self-determined (able to develop their full capacity) and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility towards and with others and the society as a whole.

Central to this argument, gender, race, ethnicity, and class are constructs through which hierarchical relations are created and maintained in such a way as to give some men power and privilege over other men and over women by their control of material resources, sexual and reproductive services, education and knowledge. Such control over others is maintained by a complex weave of social relations among dependent groups,

which offers each group some advantages over other groups, sufficient to keep each group within the dominance system subordinate to the elite (also see Dorothy Roberts (1993), “Racism is patriarchal. Patriarchy is racist”. We will not destroy one institution without destroying the other. In essence, when the issues of social justice are at the heart of our schools, our teachers, students, parent and community at large benefit from the teaching for social justice education. Weiler (1998) believes that teaching for social justice is at the core of democratic education. It serves as a reminder not only for the inequalities and biases that continue to wear away at the foundation of democratic values, but of the powerful stories which inspire us to work towards change, to make the world a better place.

Wing and Carvalho (1998) state that South Africa needs a vision of equality that gives particularized attention to the needs of Black women, who have endured unequal treatment because of their race and gender (p. 387). That is, Black women have been oppressed by whites on the basis of race, and they have been oppressed by both white and black men on the basis of gender. The concept of a “nonracial” and “nonsexist” South Africa is challenged by the men’s attitudes that are often more important than written constitutions and legal instruments in determining the advancements of women. Wing and Carvalho assert that constitutional, statutory, and other legal changes without corresponding modifications in attitude will not dramatically improve the situation of Black women. For instance, tribal leaders have historically opposed equal rights for women. Wing and Carvalho see such examples of oppression of Black women as a direct aftereffect of apartheid and customary laws that had become entrenched over time in the

experiences of daily life of Black women in South Africa. In this light, Black women lived under a dual burden of discrimination: apartheid and sexism (p.388).

Customary laws subjected women to black male domination in that women had no power/voice to challenge the male impact on marriage, guardianship, succession, contractual power, and property rights. Customary law is defined in the Law of Evidence Act of 1988 as “ the Black law or customs as applied by the Black tribes in the Republic or territories which were formerly part of the Republic” (Hoffman & Zeffertt, 1988 cite in Wing and Carvalho, 1998). This law sees women as perpetual minors and lifelong wards of their fathers, husbands, brothers or sons. First, women cannot engage in contractual agreements, acquire property, inherit or marry without the permission of a guardian, who is usually a male relative. Under this law, a woman’s assets became the sole property of her husband after marriage. Second, this law legalized polygamy. Also, women needed their husbands’ permission to work and fathers’ to marry.

Wing and Carvalho (1998) identified four arenas of oppression: employment, education, rape and domestic violence, and health care (p. 389). Apartheid's formal restriction impeded the entry of Black women into the workplace. They were placed predominantly in the agricultural and service areas, least skilled, lower-paid and insecure jobs. Several independent components of the pre-1993 regime acted to block the movement of Black women into higher-skilled, higher-wage sectors of the economy.

Along with education for Black women being restricted under apartheid, pass laws legally kept Black women out of urban areas and denied them access to the skills and opportunities that they needed to become participants in an organized labor force. Jobs traditionally held by Black women during apartheid were not protected by fair labor

standards. Minimum wages, maximum hours, maternity benefits, paid sick leave, disability insurance and any kind of job security were not for Black women. In addition, geographic restriction posed working conditions on domestic servants. As a legacy of the racist system, the marginalization of women stemmed from the influx control legislation which, through pass laws, specify that people would be allowed to settle in urban areas as individuals, not as family units. Also, the burden of commuting, discouraged some women from the workforce. Furthermore, women were unprotected from harassment in the workplace and sexism was reflected in the norms created by society, such as the different expectations that parents had for their sons and daughters. Parent withdrew their female children from school and in essence, Black families placed more emphasis on education of male children in that girls were the first to leave schools to help their families. A lack of access to education, particularly for rural women was mainly perpetuated by the "forced removal" policy of the national party, influx control and pass laws that prevented women from lawfully residing in the cities and urban areas. As a result, it was illegal for women and children to live away from the Bantustans or the so-called homelands (Wing and Carvallo, 1998, pp.389-90).

The dawning of the new South Africa brought with it a campaign to achieve equality for Black women. Equal protection under the law to all people prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. The Interim Constitution afforded a platform to introduce affirmative action programs to benefit Black women as well as others discriminated against under apartheid. Wing and Carvallo (1998) assert that affirmative action programs are needed to overcome existing discrimination against Black women. Without employment, Black women will not be able to gain economic independence,

access to education and health care. Without education, Black women will not be able to compete for jobs, participate effectively in the political process, and alter the course of their lives (pp.391-392). The interim constitution needs to provide measures to prevent sexual and physical violence against women. It also needs to remove barriers that prevent Black women from benefiting from education and employment opportunities.

In the South African context, Black women will not be fully emancipated by a reform of South Africa law unless such reform is followed by the abolition of patriarchal norms, spread of education, absorption of women into remunerative occupations, and participation by women in the work of the government. The Constitution fails to accommodate the intersectionality of race and gender or to attack oppression of Black women within the private sphere (see Wing and Carvallo, p.392). For a better understanding of the dual burden of Black women, it is also essential to understand the ambiguous status of customary law under the Interim Constitution. While it does not necessarily bind traditional leaders exercising customary law powers, it implicitly recognizes customary law while contradicting its simultaneous call for gender equality. Hence it sets up an apparent confrontation between different cultures. What this means is that the Interim Constitution does not resolve the seeming conflict between the equal protection clause and customary law (Wing and Carvallo, p.392).

Consequently, in the South African context, Black women suffer discrimination both as blacks and as women. Therefore a legal system that demands that Black women establish their legal claims as one or the other will fail to address the special problems generated by the intersection of race and gender. The intersection of race and gender justifies calls for the creation of a separate constitutional status for Black women. Black

women cannot expect that measures designed to benefit women will directly enhance their condition, since the measures may in practice favor white women, whose social and economic position makes them situated to take advantage of the measures.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the literature promotes thinking about what gender, leadership and social justice are and what possibilities and limitations exist for them in general and in the context of South Africa in particular. Furthermore, the literature provides the conditions that make it possible for women to participate in leadership and social justice, given the interlocking systems of oppression; and the commitments to be addressed when deciding on a theory (theories) of leadership and social justice for understanding Black African women's personal narratives. These commitments include the embracing of the paradigm of both/and view and the promoting of a "visionary pragmatism" that emphasizes the necessity of linking caring, theoretical visions with informed, practical struggle to act politically for social justice.

As social justice turbulence increases, the issues of change are omnipresent, and concerns of who will benefit from change and who will be harmed come to the forefront. In general, organizational change and social justice are of paramount significance at this moment in the South African history; in particular and most important, social justice is central to the lives of women and Black women who are defined through multiple burdens of oppression.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Questions in this study were based on the overarching question which explored how race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, and class affect the practice of Black women elementary school leaders in creating socially just and equitable elementary schools in South Africa. In this chapter I provide a rationale for the methods used. Biographical narrative and phenomenological methods used in this work assisted me in the re-telling of life stories that reveal the culture, context, and history of individual intention, potential, and work as women educational leaders.

Polkinghorne (1989) advises that when phenomenology is applied to research the focus is on what the person experiences in a language that is loyal to the lived experience. In Leedy's (1997) words, "In its broadest sense, phenomenology refers to a person's construction of the meaning of a phenomenon, as opposed to the phenomenon as it exists external to the person" (p.161). Thus, phenomenological inquiry endeavors to describe and explicate the meaning of human experience as it found in concrete situations and as it appears to the people who are living it. In addition, phenomenological methods attempt to get deeper than how people describe their experiences to the building blocks that underlie consciousness, that is, their personal meaning as well as their emotional and intellectual understanding. Thus, in-depth interview protocols were used as extended conversations to develop the rich texture of this study. Since my study concerns women in particular, I followed a number of suggestions from Bloom (1998) on feminist methodology.

What most scholars, including Bloom (1998) call the traditional “stranger-friend” continuum may be lengthened to a “stranger-friend-surrogate family” continuum as captured in our relationships. For instance, I was invited to attend other cultural and family activities beyond the call of our “respondent-researcher relationship” At one point, I went to church with one of the women. I attended a funeral service of a family member of one woman, I went to graduation with another and also attended a cultural dance with another woman. The connection between us became a source of both intellectual and personal knowledge. I helped all the women with guidelines to writing a business plan that works. Moreover, these activities enhanced my interpretive abilities. I was able to observe the women in different environments that were non-threatening to them. As a feminist researcher, guided by Bloom (1997) and others, I was able to strive for egalitarian relationships with the women by making space for them to narrate their stories as they desired, by focusing on issues important to them, and by doing most of the listening in our exchanges.

To break down what scholars call the one-way hierarchical framework of traditional interviewing techniques, my participants and I engaged in interactive and open-ended interviews, working together to arrive at what Tesch (1994) calls “the heart of the matter” (p.147). I employed Tesch’s (1994) advice on phenomenological methods and learned to take cues from my participants’ expressions, questions, and occasional sidetracks to take the level of probe further. We engaged in talk between friends where I shared similar experiences with the women. Our interviews were dialogic in that both the women and myself revealed ourselves and reflected on our disclosures. This was made possible because as an elementary school principal in Soweto, I had had similar

experiences at some point in my life. Because of the mutual disclosures, the women were able to open up and we developed more intimate relationships. In my opinion, our dialogues were non-judgmental and my body language assured the women that I believed in their sincerity in the telling of their true experiences.

In addition to stranger-friend and respondent-researcher relationships, I embraced Bloom's (1997) advice that good listening enhances good story telling. As a result, our interviews became a site of conversation and reciprocated self disclosure and supported the development of a relationship more akin to or resembling friendship or sisterhood than the conventional middle ground between stranger and friend. Since my study required me to probe and explore sensitive issues that the six Black African women experienced in their personal and professional lives, at times these issues brought painful memories and the personal disclosures required the utmost confidentiality. As a consequence, the developed "stranger-friend-surrogate family" continuum came into play.

RATIONALE FOR USING NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

I used qualitative research strategies, in particular, biographical narrative as a way to explore, learn and understand how Black women elementary school principals navigate across institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas to create socially just and equitable schools in South Africa. According to the Popular Memory Group (1982), the principal value of a narrative is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories and with selectivities, silences, and slippage that are intrinsic to its representations of reality (cited in Casey, 1995, p.234). I was also influenced by Benham and Cooper's (1998) understanding that

narrative knowledge is more than emotive expression, it enables us "to organize, articulate, and communicate what we believe... and reveal, in narrative style, what we have become as educators" (p.8). In addition, narratives also help us to construct our personal identities and reveal life changes (p.8). To justify story telling and narratives, Benham and Cooper maintain that storying and narratology are genres that move the researcher "beyond (or to the side) of the main paradigms of inquiry" and "have the potential for advancing educational research in representing the lived experience of schooling" (p.11). Indeed, this advice allowed me to capture the women's personal and professional lived experiences in different stages in their lives.

Narrative was most appropriate for this study as supported by Gramsci who writes that "the importance of the past can only be understood in relationship to the responsibility of the present" (cite from Casey 1995, p.157). Since I was interested in exploring how the 6 women worked for social justice in both the apartheid South Africa and the new South Africa, it was necessary to capture the past in order to direct one's attention towards the present as it is, and how they has managed to transform it. It can be seen from Casey's work that narratives disclose diverse political projects, but also demonstrate social inclusivity and reveal progressive points of convergence. Thus, all educators working for social change have a great deal to learn from the care these women give to their students, the outrage they feel towards injustice, and the way they dare to use the limited power and resources they have.

I believe that listening to the voices of women working for social change renews our faith in positive progressive "political passion", a belief shared by Casey (1995). It is my hope, a hope echoed by Thompson (1978), cited in Casey, 1995, that the scholarship

that engages in story telling/oral history strategy should be seen as a mechanism that gives history back to the people in their own words, and gives them a past to help them towards a future of their own making

Strengths and Weaknesses of Narrative

One of my beliefs, supported by Benham and Cooper (1998), is that the strength of narrative style lies in its ability to "illuminate both logic of individual course of action and the effects of system-level constraints within which those courses evolve" (p.11). The other belief is that, life history narratives have an advantage in revealing the relationships between individuals and the society. They describe the ways in which women negotiate their gender status in their daily personal and professional lives and they allow the examination of the links between the evolution of subjectivity and the development of female identity (Benham and Cooper 1998, p.11).

Benham and Cooper (1998) also acknowledge one weakness of narrative in that "narratives have been ensconced in the particular and the specific, when there is a real need for them to develop linkages to cultural and political" (12). As a result, I also propose that the six Black women's stories should be seen first "as a starting point for active collaboration" and second "as a beginning of the process of deconstructing the discursive practice through which one's subjectivity has been constituted" (p.12). Finally, and perhaps most important, the women' stories should promote thinking about what leadership and social justice are and what possibilities and limitations exist for them; what conditions make it possible for one to participate in them; and what commitments must be addressed when deciding on a theory (theories) of leadership and social justice for understanding women's personal narratives.

The second concern of story telling is what Grumet (1991) calls "a negotiation of power" (cite in Casey, 1995, p.219). Grumet maintains that even telling a story to a friend is risky business; the better the friend, the riskier the business. Grumet warns that "every story telling is a partial prevarication, the politics of narrative is not ... merely a social struggle but an ongoing ontological one as well" (cited in Casey, 1995, p.219). As a result, the social relationships between the researcher and the participant, or rather, the narrator and the narrative present a complicated picture within the social community within which it is interpreted.

Because my study is phenomenological in nature, it attempts to describe and elucidate the meaning of human experience. What have been identified as actions that advance social justice at a public level may not necessarily be public in nature. In addition, some stories seemed to be more domestic than academic, hence the challenges of "breaching the boundaries between private and public, domestic and academic to move narratives beyond the isolated individual into the political realm" (Grumet (1991) cited in Casey, 1995, p.220). These are some of the concerns that I have encountered in my work as I try to explore the lives of the 6 African women elementary school principals working for social justice in South African schools.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The population and sample

Whereas there are a number of Black African women in leadership positions, the study participants were selected through personal contacts and suggestions from colleagues, other school principals, local community organizations, and district officials. In addition, the "snowball effect" strategy was employed to get as many participants that

met the criteria as possible. From the eighteen names identified, I selected those whose names were mentioned more than twice. The women worked in urban/township schools in Soweto, Johannesburg.

The population of this study is composed of six Black women elementary school principals from urban/township settings in Soweto, South Africa. The study explores the life stories of these six Black women to understand how institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas influence their leadership. According to Patton (1990), purposeful sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples (cited in Leedy, 1997, p.162). Thus, participants identified were chosen because they were likely knowledgeable and informative about leadership and social justice. The women selected met the following criteria established for this study:

1. Identified by the community, parents, students and teachers as a woman fighting and working for social justice.
2. Identified herself as Black women of African descent.
3. Experienced leadership in one of Soweto urban/townships.

Data collection tools

First, a series of three in-depth interviews of 1-2 hours were conducted with each participant. The purpose of the interviews was to establish life history of the woman, her experience and learning as an educator, the meaning she gives to her experiences, and the connections between that work and her life. Second, I shadowed the women at work and also observed them during other informal activities to understand relations, culture, symbols, and environments equitable for social justice. Third, I conducted group dialogues to enable me to hear what other members of the community (teachers, in this case) see as acts of social justice from these women. Last, I asked the women to show

artifacts, documents, and other symbolical objects that represent leadership which relates to the creation of a socially just school and community.

The stories were collected through a series of three in-depth interviews of 1-2 hours. This was done in light of Quantz's (1992) advice that the interviewer should eliminate as much as possible the urge to apply external structures to the interview (cited in Casey, 1995, p.233). Furthermore, Quantz adds that instead of a formal interview schedule which has all questions planned ahead of time, the interpretive interview must be a process which is flexible enough to follow the lead of the interviewee while not losing sight of the research object. This is what McCurdy (1972) refers to as "grand tour" questions (cite in Casey, 1995, p.233). Consequently, such questions provided concrete and precise responses without limiting the flexibility of the participant to go in any direction. My participants were able to pursue any line of thought during our conversations without fear of coercion.

The six Black African elementary school principals were shadowed and observed in their homes, schools and at any place they chose to interact with me in order to provide an understanding of verbal and nonverbal messages revealed in their activities. Documents such as government seculars, directories, pamphlets on the wall, and so forth, were analyzed to understand how these women define and make meaning of their leadership, how they web and network with their communities, how they overcome the barriers created by the multiple layers of interlocking systems of oppression.

Interviews. There were three 1-2 hours interviews with each participant. In two instances, due to lack of time, the second and third interviews were conducted at one session of 2-3 hours. The purpose of the interview was to establish the woman's life history, her

experience and learning as an educator and the meaning she gives to the connections between her work and life, and also, how she understands social justice. All interviews were conducted in English with some instances where the interviewee would emphasize something in her native mother tongue.

Because I was using feminist methodology, it gave me the ability, the permission and courage to ask probing questions as a means to help women explore their lives beyond the superficial. These enabling qualities emerged after we had developed what is called a “stranger-friend-surrogate family” continuum. To unravel and retie again, the knot of intersubjectivity and the multiple roles of power in the study of women, Bloom (1998) says that this model suggests that "the interview becomes a site where women converse, reciprocate self-disclosure, and develop a relationship more akin to or resembling friendship or sisterhood than conventional middle ground between strangers and friend" (p.27).

I used interview protocols developed by Benham (1995) and Colflesh (1995) for each of the interviews and adapted them for use with Black African women. A variety of probes were utilized to expand each participant’s responses to the questions in the interview protocol: probing to better understand what the participants were saying; probing for definitions and clarification of the meaning of their responses; probing to elicit concrete examples and stories that illuminate original responses; probing to explore the impact of previous lived experiences on what they are saying about educational leadership, especially their own leadership which enables them to fight oppression and segregation to create socially just environments; probing to understand how they define social justice; probing to extract how the characteristics most commonly associated with

women leaders appear in their talk about educational leadership; and probing to make linkages between and among the interviews.

Shadowing/ Observation. The women were shadowed for at least a day, during which time I observed and took note of how they interacted with the teachers, student, parents and community at large. For example, I had an opportunity to attend a welcome party for the new parents at one school. The function was organized by the old parents in an effort to orient the parents of the new students. It was surprising that the leader could sit back and let the show be run by parents and teachers. These shadowing sessions enabled me to observe, understand, and question the meaning of some subtle actions which may not have surfaced from our interviews. I was able to understand verbal and nonverbal messages through their activities. When I attended a funeral service, I saw another woman' consistency in dealing with conflict. These were valuable episodes that enriched my data and at the same time, help to fill the gaps that may not have been filled by face-to-face interviews.

From this exercise of shadowing and observing these women, I learned that working for social justice occurs behind schools and classrooms. It is a continuous struggle to transform the community and environment to create support for education. In addition, working for social justice involves the participation of all stakeholders, entailing sharing of decisions and sharing of power with others who are also affected by decisions taken.

Group dialogues. These were conducted with at least five or more teachers. I requested the interview participant to select teachers and ask them to meet with me in order to discuss some of the problems she faces both as a woman and as a leader. Since the participants selected the groups themselves, I have no knowledge of how these groups

were selected. I expected to see female teachers only and to my surprise, male teachers also attended these sessions.

Although interesting and at times very animated, these dialogues posed several problems. First, some of the women leaders were not comfortable at the thought of my asking questions without their presence. Second, teachers themselves were not comfortable in discussing their leaders with a stranger, let alone the sensitive nature of the subject of the discussion. Because it was their first encounter with me, it took more time for us to settle down, and for them to look me over before deciding on my credibility. Also, the time was too short for us to establish what Bloom (1998) calls the traditional “stranger-friend” continuum.

These group dialogues did not work as effectively. Because women were uncomfortable they did not reveal much, or rather did not share any new information that the principal participants revealed in the interviews. As a result, the data collected from the group dialogues was used sparingly in the main text of findings.

Document analysis. Participants were asked to provide and explain three artifacts that depicted their own leadership. Women shared artifacts like pictures, ornaments, statements and quotes from their homes and offices. For instance, a picture of Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk shaking hands was seen as a symbol of forgiveness and hope to go on. One woman shared that the contradictions between the two symbols could be seen: Nelson Mandela symbolizing peace, liberation, democracy and victory, with FW de Klerk on the other hand, symbolizing war, oppression, repression and defeat. The meaning of the picture comes from seeing in the two contradicting perceptions the true meaning of hope, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Another example was provided by a

second woman who saw a small calabash as a symbol of working for social justice. She said that, as a calabash is used for drawing water, she saw her role of leadership in terms of going out to draw education and bring it back to her children. The lessons from the meaning depicted in these artifacts are that we should look beyond the obvious to derive meaningful existence and that however small and insignificant, symbols and artifacts have more meaning for different people and help them survive the challenges of life.

DATA ANALYSIS

Naturalistic qualitative enquiries tend to produce large quantities of data. Since I used three interviews, shadowing, group dialogues, and documentation to collect the data, it was likely that I would become what Rudestam and Newton (1992) call “the victim of data overload” (p. 113). To make sense of the data, I followed Rudestam and Newton’s advice and adopt the inductive analysis approach that involves unitizing and categorizing the information. I went through the transcripts with an open attitude, seeking what emerged from the text as important. I then searched for patterns and for connections between the various categories that later became my themes. As a result, I was able to collapse the twelve initial categories into four major themes. To reach this stage, I engaged in the constant comparative method, going through the data over and over again to identify, revise, modify, and amend new categories until they could be placed in suitable themes.

According to Barritt (1986), the researcher is charged with the task of trying to go the core of the matter by looking for themes that lie concealed in the unexamined events of every day life... to find meaningful, shared themes in different people’s descriptions of common experiences (cited in Leedy, 1997, p.162). This study used the narrative-type

analysis, field notes, and coding to synthesize the data from interviews, shadowing, group dialogues, document analysis and other sources to develop stories that described each woman's understanding of her own career as an elementary school principal, within her own cultural and historical context and her understanding of her profession as a school leader.

Thus, the phenomenological analysis of transcribed data was done on a continuous basis as the process of interviewing went on. To do this, I discussed emerging themes with my participants at different stages in our journey. Furthermore, I discussed my data with other colleagues in South Africa who provided me with thoughts and valuable information. In addition to discussions of the themes with members of my committee, my own reflections on the field notes contributed greatly. Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) defines this ongoing narrative as the "plot", the literary tropes operating, with connections between text and experience or knowledge. Content is understood as taken-for-granted knowledge brought to the experience and displayed in the talk- what the reader brings to the utterance is what constitutes text (p.464). Rather than identify categories, phenomenological analysis describes themes and patterns in the data. This produced what Benham and Cooper (1998) call "knowledge of particular situation" as compared to "knowledge of the concept" by offering the reader knowledge of the particular situations of the 6 African women as they went about the business of school leadership in South Africa.

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) concur that narrative analysis has the ability to provide internal coherence of the text. Stories reflect human feelings and lived experience, and that healing necessarily involves telling, hearing, and unraveling stories

(p.465). What is more, the role of narratives lies in empowering persons through understanding of their life situations through power of codes, rules and social functions of text. For example, one woman broke down and cried when an issue of physical appearance was raised by some of her reflections. She was reminded of the time when she was told to stand at the back of the choir between two girls who were light in complexion so that they could help conceal her dark face. The teacher said, “ I just want to hear your sweet voice, but not see your black face”. Throughout these stories, some revelations produce emotional moments and a form of healing occurred through the telling.

Also, themes, principal metaphors, definitions of narrative, defining structures of stories (beginning, middle and end), and conclusions are often defined poetically and artistically and are content bound (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1994, p.465). One woman demonstrated the poetic nature of narratives. When asked to reflect on her life experiences she said:

“I see my life as fresh breeze blowing the old and unwanted away and creating the new. As a leader I am like sunshine, and as sunshine, you feel that you have to love, and create a happy environment. I’m like sunshine and fresh air! As I look back, my life has been like swimming in the dark, always with a glimmer of light from knowing that I will reach my destination no matter what it takes. It has been like rain after a long drought where one does not even mind about getting wet.
(Lead)

Another example indicates that indeed the woman was patient and determined. For instance she waited eighteen years to have a school with its own buildings. In her use of metaphor, she sees herself as a tortoise who is patient, who takes time to look around before she makes a move. It can be seen that the importance of the story is in the organization. Narratives represent society and groups through words. Text is symbolic

action or means to frame a situation, define it, grant it meaning, and mobilize appropriate response to it. Narrative analysis sees society as a "speaker" and social signs, including words, as text (Manning and Cullum-Swan 1994, p.465).

Field notes were found to be useful for making notes to myself and to help me understand the dynamic subtle details in emotions, gestures, temperament and every little action that not necessarily visible to the ordinary eye. For example, during one of my visits to one woman's school, I noted how she made sure that all the children had left for their various homes. At one point, she enquired as to whether one student had enough money for the taxi fare, in which case she gave her some few coins. Again, during my observation, I had an opportunity to attend a meeting where the woman addressed a problem of expulsion of two of her former students who were found smoking cigarettes in the boys' toilets. From these observations and others in her story, I could make some links to what she shared with me during our interviews. These linked pieces of data provided evidence that indeed this particular woman puts children first. Richardson (1994) states that field notes help the researcher with, as he puts it, "staying close to what I saw, while letting my imagination roam around the event, searching for patterns and larger chains of significance" (p.524). Throughout the stories and experiences of these women I could see pattern and links between my observations and their own reflections of their experiences.

In addition, coding methods and the use of matrices were useful for making comparisons across interviews and summaries to retain the context of the data, to organize and articulate the experiences of the Black women elementary school principals, and to communicate what these women believe to be true about themselves. In addition,

they were useful for interpreting and gaining deepened understanding of what these women see as their roles, understanding what particular practices these women engage in, and why those practices create socially just and equitable schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Narrative methods have their own shortcomings. Various scholars raise questions such as "how can we enhance internal validity, objectivity, generalizability to other cases and settings? To Woolf (1927-1960), biography was about the truth transmission of personality. In her view "truth and personality make one of the biographer's perennial dilemmas" (cite in Smith, 1994, p.292). Woolf has been quoted over and over again saying, " writing lives is devil" but, as Smith (1994) advises, a strand of intellectual excitement, approaching ecstasy, also exists (p.293). Smith goes on to indicate that "doing biography is a great way to live- it is "'messy" and "well-informed" the problems contain elements of ambiguity, complexity, uncertainty, value conflict, and uniqueness" (p.293). In short, biographers bring all their own personalities, understandings, and experiences to the task of creating a view of the individual under study.

In this study, subjectivity was one shortcoming. As a black Muvenda South African woman from an African ethnic minority, I found it difficult not to interpret some of these women's revelations as reflected from my own experiences. Because I have experienced oppression as a result of the apartheid structures in South Africa, it is hard to maintain and claim a single interpretation from this study. I, the researcher, end up doing what Olesen (1994) states that women act for reasons that make sense to them in their lives (p.161). In addition, the way a woman's life might be interpreted might not

necessarily reveal her true identity since the interpreter brings her own subjectivity to the study.

The second shortcoming regarding subjectivity is the issue of validity. Kinchenloe and McLaren (1994) ask "how do you determine the validity of information if you reject the notion of methodological correctness and your purpose to free men and women from sources of oppression and domination?" (p.151) The core of this lies not in the extent to which my observations are true descriptions of a particular reality, but in their trustworthiness. Since the purpose of this study is to explore how race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, and class affect the practice of Black women elementary schools, validity is determined by the trustworthiness of the stories presented from these women. What is trustworthy is what they believe to be true; their life experiences are what constitute the truth. This truth is supported by the women's stories. For example, by interviewing women three times, conducting group dialogue, observing/shadowing the women for a day and conducting a document analysis of artifacts and other materials, most of the truth was revealed at various stages. For example, one woman sees herself as a magnet who attracts others and the parents and teachers confirmed this perception during my observations and group dialogue. In addition, from the work she does with the community and her linkages with business sectors, she supports the claim that indeed she attracts others.

The third limitation was what traditional research calls generalizability or external validity. Kinchenloe and McLaren (1994) indicate that traditional research has defined external validity as the degree to which such descriptions can be compared and generalized to other settings similar to the one in which the study occurred. Since

narrative work is a study of a particular life in a specific context, it is difficult to generalize unique life experiences to a larger population. Instead, this study did what Polkinghorne (1988) describes as "knowledge of particular situation" rather than "knowledge of concepts" (cite in Benham and Cooper, 1998, p.13). For instance, the women in this study experienced oppression and domination differently given their different historical backgrounds.

Supporting the notion of "knowledge of a particular situation" are the experiences of the two Vhavenda women in this study, who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. They were born in Alexander township, they went to live with their grandparents at puberty age, and they also trained at the same college. Regardless of these similarities, however, their experiences of power and privileges are two worlds apart as a result of the workings of schools and communities. One woman's power was taken away while the second woman was empowered as a result of skin color. Thus, it makes no sense to generalize their experiences to a larger population, although their experiences may serve as a starting point to "locate such work in a transformative praxis that leads to the alleviation of suffering and the overcoming of oppression" (Kinchenloe & McLaren, 1994, p.154). What is important about the life stories is what is referred to as their "authenticity" rather than "generalizability". It is not to generalize, but to begin a discourse that investigates and interrogates ways in which growing minorities of women do leadership.

In conclusion, Kinchenloe and McLaren (1994) assert that facts are no longer simply "what is"; the truth of belief is not simply testable by their correspondence to these facts. To take part in a critical postmodern research is to take part in a process of critical world

making, guided by the shadowed outline of a dream of a world less conditioned by the misery, suffering, and politics of deceit (p.154).

ETHICAL CONCERNS

There are difficult issues that emerge in conducting narrative research including issues that advocate consent from subjects, anonymity that protects subjects from harm, and the right to have privacy. A research that explores institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical factors which were socially constructed and maintained over time, is a daunting exercise enough. How do researchers avoid inadvertently manipulating subjects? How much control over writing results can subjects have? If research is conducted in one's own profession, can there be conflicts between the roles of researcher and practitioner? Olesen's raises these questions in her work (1994, p.166).

Regarding participants' right to informed consent, Fontana and Frey (1994) indicate that it is important for researchers to receive consent from a subject after she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research (p.372). And also, subjects must be protected from harm. My participants were informed about the study and that they would be interviewed at least three times, one to two hours each time, over a brief period, to reflect on both formal and informal educational experiences, to critically think about how they think about educational leadership, and how they have addressed pressing issues of racism, gender, class, segregation, and oppression in their practice as educational leaders in the past and the current context. The participants were also informed that the interviews would be tape-recorded and that they have the right not to answer any particular questions and to ask that the tape recorder be turned off at any

time. Furthermore, I promised that all data and tape recordings would be kept confidential and that their identity would not be disclosed in the final report. Their right to withdraw and to not participate at any time without penalty was highlighted.

Chapter 4

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA PRIOR 1994

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the historical background of education in South Africa prior to 1994 in an effort to shed light and provide clarity into the role that Bantu education played in the creation, formation and shaping of the six Black women educational leaders' experiences. I discuss basic tenets of education in urban areas, rural areas, and in white education. Furthermore, I provide insight into the events that led to the transformation of education. I conclude with a review of school organization and ownership, governance, and funding in an effort to bring to light the unyielding and persistent inequalities and imbalances of education of the black and white children of South Africa.

THE NATURE OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA PRIOR TO 1994

The salient feature of education in South Africa was the differential pattern of education development for different race groups. On the one hand, whites received a very high level of education, which was comparable with the best in the industrialized world. On the other hand, black education was characterized largely by an inequitable allocation of resources, overcrowded classrooms, high dropout rates, and insufficient numbers of and poorly qualified teachers. Various scholars argued that even before the Bantu education was introduced in 1953 for education for Africans, vast differences existed in the provision of education for blacks and whites.

The History of Apartheid Education: Between 1953 and 1994

Apartheid is defined as, "a legalized repression and exploitation of the black majority to regulate the destiny and fate of legalized discrimination" (Njobe, 1990, p. 44). Furthermore, Smith (1992) says that apartheid is an Afrikaans word, which means apartness. It is a word which has come to be used to describe racial segregation, and hence, the system of government in South Africa based upon total supremacy of the white minority population.

Against the background of apartheid, the education system in South Africa was differentiated along the lines of color, class, and ethnicity. Education was divided into four main systems for four groups, that is education for Whites, Indian, Coloureds, and Africans¹. For the white community, there was a system of free, and compulsory education, and for the black groups, that is, Africans, Indians, and Coloureds, education was not free nor was it compulsory.

These systems were further divided into sixteen departments of education, where nine departments served the nine homelands for the nine black ethnic groups: Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga, Tswana, Sotho, North Sotho, Ndebele, and Swati. Four of the sixteen departments were specifically for whites in the four provinces of the Republic of South Africa: Transvaal education, Orange Free State education, Natal education and the Cape education. Two other education departments were for Indian and Coloured

¹Black in this context refers to all those South Africans classified as Africans, Coloureds and Indians. Although in the day-to-day usage of the language, the term 'black' generally referred to people of African origin, while the other two groups preferred to be called Indians and Coloured. It is interesting to note that after the 1994 democratic government, both the Indian and Coloured groups prefer the term 'African' to either Indian or Coloured.

communities and the last one was the Department of Education and Training (DET) for blacks in the urban areas or townships. Christie (1986) indicated that education was also divided according to the following characteristics:

- There were mother-tongue instructions for all population registration groups. The Venda-speakers were separated from the Sotho-speakers, and the Afrikaans-speakers were also separated from the English-speakers.
- Schools were also divided in terms of city and rural. For instance, children from city areas had very different experiences from children in the rural areas. Furthermore, there were also vast differences between rural and farm schools.
- Some schools were richer than others. These characteristics were visible especially in white schools. Schools in the upmarket suburbs had better facilities and equipment because the parent community was richer than an ordinary family in a township.
- Schools were also separated in terms of gender with separate schools for boys and girls.
- Another separation was in the form of private schools. These were mainly for White middle class English speakers until the early 1980s. These schools were exclusively for rich children who could afford to pay high fees.
- There were also religious schools that parents chose to send their children to, for instance: Catholics schools, Islamic schools, Jewish schools (Christie, 1986, pp. 125-126).

Apartheid education was generally considered by blacks to be inferior and designed to confine them to lower class occupations. There were differences even within

black education, that is, Indian and Coloured education systems were more privileged to a degree higher than African education. These divisions served to entrench separate development in all aspects of life in South Africa. From these examples, it can be safely predicted that separate education will never result in equal development.

Bantu Education. According to the Christian National Education policy of 1949 (CNE), education for blacks should include the following features:

- It should be in the mother tongue;
- It should not be funded at the expense of the white education;
- It should, by implication, not prepare blacks for equal participation in economic and social life;
- It should preserve the “cultural identity” of the black community (although it would nonetheless consist in leading 'the native' to acceptance of Christian and National principles); and
- It must of necessity be organized and administered by whites. (Enslin, 1986, p.140)

According to Enslin (1986), the foregoing features implied that black education was the responsibility of the Boer nation as senior white trustee of the natives who were in a state of infancy. Thus, Afrikaners took the responsibility to christianize the natives through the provisions of a specially designed education system. As a mechanism for the entrenchment of apartheid policies, education system for blacks was designed to meet Christian and National principles of the Afrikaners, who consider South Africa as their so-called fatherland. One of the objectives of the regime was to make sure that education did not create a platform for competition between black and white people and this objective was carried out by giving blacks inferior knowledge. As a result, education did

not bring social mobility for most black people in South Africa. Instead, it created, sustained, and maintained the ideology of servitude, rather than power and ownership. Furthermore, education promoted the idea of homelands, thus, secondary education was not provided in the urban or township areas. Bantu education aimed to push black people to the infamous "Bantustans" which were also divided in terms of ethnic origins.

Rural or Homeland Education. Frank Molteno (1986) argues that the homelands system was the Afrikaner's effort to fragment blacks and break their national consciousness. The Afrikaners' strategic goal was to defuse African nationalism through a systematic attempt to retribalize in such a way that the resultant fragmentation would obstruct the further development of Black Nationalism. For Molteno, Bantu education was created to reinforce the system of Bantustans. The education was designed to control the direction of thought, to delimit the boundaries of knowledge, to restrict lines of communication, and to curtail contact across language barriers. In addition, apartheid education aimed to dwarf the minds of black children by conditioning them to servitude positions in order to serve the white minority government and provide cheap labor (Molteno, 1986, p.94). Certainly, apartheid education was a plan designed to remove black people psycho-ideologically and resettle them in their place of subordination (p.93). In Verwoerd's notorious words:

There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor. Within his own community, however, all doors are open. For that reason it is to no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subject to a school system which drew him away from his own

community and misled him by showing him the pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze (Christie, 1986, p.12 & Molteno, 1986, p.92).

It was in this spirit that Bantu Education was designed, maintained, and sustained all these years. As is obvious from Verwoerd's words, Bantu education was destined to entrench the ideologies of apartheid further, hence it was essential to build secondary schools in the homelands. It is almost certain that it was the regime's effort to remove people from cities. In theory, homelands had control of their education, but in practice, the Afrikaner government controlled all nine African education systems. To substantiate the above point, an excerpt from a parliamentary speech made by J. N. le Roux in 1945, a prominent Nationalist politician, provides understanding and insight into the grand plan of Bantu Education:

We should not give the native an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labor in the country? I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the laborer in the country. (Molteno, 1986, p. 66)

This last point is important because it indicates that Bantu Education was not a coincidence, but a master strategy to control black people in order to meet the political needs of the Afrikaner people. Against this background, Bantu Education created knowledge to carry on the function of oppression, to create laborers and servitude positions in the community. It is false to think that Verwoerd was the sole proprietor of

the apartheid plan. The plan was supported and strengthened by various committees on the Native Education Committee way before Verwoerd's time. For instance in 1909, one such group commented as follows:

They could not find enjoyment in anything beyond the computation of interest or the value of brick and mortar, or the addition of columns of figures. The black people are the descendents of Ham, according to their ideas. They were meant to be 'the hewers of wood and the drawers of water' through all eternity. Their education should therefore be confined to the narrow circle of learning to appreciate the honor they enjoy at the hands of the white, who allows them to live on the face of God's earth. (p.65-66)

Urban or Townships Education. Sharing the above concerns, Bantu Education in urban areas was also characterized by a lack of resources. The most important feature was a lack of secondary schools in the black townships. As indicated, this absence was a result of the technical strategy and mechanism of the apartheid regime to push blacks to the homelands, where they "belonged". This determination on the part of the regime created community schools which were supposed to be the responsibility of the concerned ethnic community in terms of funding (van Rensburg, 1980, p. 23). On one hand, the government subsidized these schools in respect to teacher salaries, furniture and equipment. On the other hand, other requirements, such as books and consumables were the responsibility of black parents. In some instances, classrooms were built by communities using funds contributed by parents. In the 1980s, the private sector donated funds through programs such as "Teach" in Soweto and Alexandra. Needless to say, these private sectors needed to meet their own private interests in the process of creating

manpower for their own businesses. Since the government was not interested in building higher institutions in townships, the business sectors took it upon themselves to create the mechanism to meet their economic needs.

White education. White South African children had compulsory education. Thus, by law, they attended school from ages 7 to 16. Their schooling was largely free with a free busing system, free stationery, free textbooks, and higher per capita expenditures. Refer to Table 1: Per capita expenditure on education in South Africa. From the table, it is evident that there is a large gap between the money spent on a white child as compared to the money spent on a black child. Although the gap narrowed from 16.59:1 in 1969-70 to 6.57:1 in 1980-1 it rose again in 1982-3 to 8.27:1. As the money spent on the African child increased, so was the money spent on white and other children, hence the gap remained. Christie (1986) notes an important aspect concerning these ratios, that from 1975 onwards the ratios did not include the independent homelands like Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei. As a result, the most neglected African schools had been excluded since it was the responsibility of the homeland governments to fund education (p.101).

Table 4.1

Per Capita Expenditure on education in South Africa.

Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White
1953-4	R1	R2. 35	R2. 35	R7. 53
1969-70	R1	4. 29	4. 76	16. 59
1975-6	R1	3. 33	4. 52	14. 07
1977-8	R1	3. 43	5. 11	12. 17
1980-1	R1	1. 82	3. 69	6. 57
1982-3	R1	3. 40	4. 86	8. 27

In addition, white teachers were generally better qualified than black teachers. Also, white schools had smaller class sizes, better facilities, and better resources than black schools. It was only in 1982 that a law was passed stating that white parents may be compelled to pay certain school fees (Christie, 1986, p.157). At the same time, however, the law was defeated by the very nature of the white parents' economic status. For instance, white business sectors provided support in terms of scholarships for white parents who could not pay school fees.

According to Christie (1986), the National Education Policy Act of 1967 was one of the milestones in the history of South African education and remained a basis for white education until 1994 (p.161). In effect, education for white children was based on the principles of Christian National Education (CNE). According to Christie (1986), the ideas of CNE go back even further than the early days of British settlement at the Cape (p. 50). The Afrikaners wanted to preserve their Calvinist religion and the identity of

Dutch-Afrikaner people, as a result, the National Education Policy Act of 1967 set up a framework of ten principles for white education. Two key principles provided the cornerstones of the Christian-National worldview of white education:

1. Christian Education:

Christian Education in schools shall have a Christian character founded on the Bible and imprinted (a) through religious instruction as a compulsory non-examinable subject, and (b) through the spirit and manner in which all teaching and education, as well as administration and organization, are conducted. The religious convictions of the parents and pupils shall be respected in regards to religious instruction and religious ceremonies. (Christie, 1986, p. 162)

The Christian character of education, which pronounces freedom of religious ceremonies, but on the other hand, demands compulsory attendance was questionable. All other teaching and administrative duties were in the spirit of Christianity. It is almost certain that religious convictions of other parents were not respected. Therefore, some white communities were also excluded, e.g., the Jewish and Islamic communities. Religion has, also, a political aspect which serves to control people and their thoughts. The Afrikaner regime was not controlling blacks only, but to a large extent, the white community as well; and so, white education was also a part of apartheid education.

2. National Education:

National education in schools shall have a broad national character which shall be imprinted (a) through the conscious expansion of every pupil's knowledge of the fatherland, embracing language and cultural heritage, history and traditions, national symbols, the diversity of the population, social and economic conditions,

geographical diversity and national achievement, and (b) ... (iii) achieve a sense of unity and a spirit of co-operation. (Christie, 1986, p.163)

Unlike Bantu education, which was designed to create servitude attitudes, white education was designed to build up a sense of nationalism or at its best, Afrikaner nationalism. Christie's translation of the term nationalism shows that the term did not attempt to unify all white children, but in fact divides them according to their mother tongue. Mother-tongue instructions meant that English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking children would go to different schools.

EVENTS WHICH LEAD TO TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION

The history of protests against apartheid education in South Africa goes far beyond June 16, 1976. Education has been a site of struggle way before the students took it upon themselves to protest against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Christie argues that the earliest resistance to Bantu education came from teachers who were immediately affected by the new education system in the 1950s. Bantu Education meant that black teachers would have to work for double sessions each day; class sizes would be larger; salaries would not be improved; and black teachers would become government employees.

Without doubt, as Christie reports, resistance to Bantu Education extended to universities. The 1959 University Act denied black students entrance to open universities like Witwatersrand and University of Cape Town and also established new tribally based university colleges like Turfloop for the Vhavenda, Basotho, Bapedi, Batswana, and Matshangana people. The University College of Zululand was for Zulu-speakers,

University College of Western Cape was for the Coloured people and the Indian people went to the University College of Durban/Westville.

As a result of these divisions and other factors including discrepant per capita expenditures in terms of race, resistance of Bantu education went on in black universities in the form of boycotts and strikes. Furthermore, as Christie (1986) puts it, protests were not simply school-based. There were also broader political struggles like pass laws, influx control, the group areas act, the homeland policy, and compulsory homeland citizenship. Several important pieces of evidence show that these protests, together with liberation activities in bordering countries like Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia gave rise to the Soweto uprising on June 16, 1976.

The June 16, 1976, uprising began in Soweto over the use of Afrikaans language, a powerful political weapon, in teaching mathematics, science, and social studies. Student protests broadened to other groups and black areas nationwide. According to Brook, Fields and Labbo (1995), more than 400 people were killed, and by October's end, 3000 were arrested. This was considered a landmark event in the history of anti-apartheid protests. Despite these protests, white education in white schools went on as usual. White children went to their white schools as if nothing was happening, while black children were maimed, killed, detained and forced into exile. Christie (1986) argues that white schools were totally unaffected by boycotts, as if South Africa consisted of two worlds and as if Soweto and Lower Houghton were two distant islands (p.243).

In order to curb protests in 1979, a new Education Act, the Education and Training Act, was promulgated to replace the Bantu Education Act of 1953. As expected, the act failed to address major concerns like free and equal education for African Blacks.

As John Davies (1986) noted, black organizations rejected the continuing categorization of education on a racial basis and the retention of a separate department of black education (p.352). As a result, resistance to education continued until it culminated into another round of mass uprisings and school boycotts. This resulted in the closure of schools in 1985.

The trend of resistance to apartheid education continued in such strategies as teachers' chalk-down, go-slow, or even stay-away from work. Teachers' resistance was mainly controlled and pioneered by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the predominantly black teachers union in South Africa. Although representing teachers' labor concerns, SADTU was more of a political platform than a union representing labor related concerns. Since separation of the two issues seemed impossible given the whole political structure of South Africa, SADTU was welcomed and embraced as the other voice to fight the plight of black education. Resistance to Bantu Education was part of a larger struggle; the real resistance, in a larger context, was about apartheid ideologies. Because of the themes raised and other underlying protests nationwide, the regime was forced to reconsider its position and options to reform.

The slow walk to transformation began in the early 1990s. The process of breaking down racial barriers in public places and in schools began in the early 1990s immediately after Mandela's release from prison. Overall, however, progress has been slow. Brook, Fields and Labbo (1995) contend that significant change in education has been in formerly all-white government schools, which are now integrated to some degree, but that there has been no movement of white pupils into all-black townships and rural schools. In addition, Brook et al (1995) note that most of the changes in schooling have

been administrative related and enrolment related rather than contextual. All this is not to imply that there is no progress in transformation, but is to indicate the seemingly superficial change.

Model C Schools. At the end of 1990, there were two types of schools for white South African children: (1) government schools, and (2) private schools. In 1991, after the release of Mandela and other political leaders, the government of President FW de Klerk unilaterally introduced Models A, B, C, and D as options for governance of schools. In reality, Models A, B and C applied to white education while the black schools, considered public and state funded, fell into the Model D category.

To provide clarity and understanding about these models, Karlsson, Pampallis, and Sithole (1996) noted that a Model A school was a full-fledged private school with the power to exclude black children. These schools received a minimal subsidy from the state. A Model B school had the power to admit no more than 50% black children with its 50% state subsidy. In other words, these schools had the power to exclude blacks while enjoying state funds. A Model C school was mainly the former white 100% state-aided schools. These schools were more or less coerced into becoming state-aided (Model C) schools. While their state subsidies were reduced to 75%, their governing bodies were entrusted with a substantial amount of power. Karlsson et al (1996) presented some of the guidelines of governing bodies of Model C schools as follow:

- It has a juristic personality and can sue and be sued in its own name.
- It appoints, promotes, and dismisses staff members subject to applicable labor laws.
- It determines the general thrust of the school policy.

- It decides on additional curriculum programs as deemed desirable by the parents.
- It has autonomy in terms of setting financial policy and the management of the funds of the school, subject to an independent audit.
- It can generate its own funds and resources.
- It has the responsibility for maintenance of physical facilities as well as specific functions related to capital expenditure
- It determines the school admission policy

In this way, these privileged schools managed to maintain and in some way improve their resources and facilities. The general feeling of white principals, teachers, and governing bodies was to exclude blacks in these schools. For instance, Karlsson et al (1996) found that stakeholders displayed a consciousness of the privileged position of their schools and a concern that their privileges and their relatively high quality of education were under threat from a new government which was committed to greater social equity. As a result, some schools developed strategies for exclusion of black children from their schools.

Exclusions came in the form of entrance examinations that were compulsory for the admission of black students. Second, fluency in Afrikaans was one of the requirements. Consequently, many students from mainly African areas were excluded from these schools as a result of language. Moreover, religion and fees were used as barricades to deny access to black students. Black students were also excluded on the grounds that they lived outside the white area (see The Economist, January 21st 1995, p.42). Furthermore, The Economist (January 21st 1995), indicates that some Afrikaner schools went to the extent of asking applicants to agree to be tested for AIDS before they

were admitted to their schools (p.43). Radical black leaders rejected these schools. Karlsson et al (1996) states that these schools were perceived as structures that reintroduced apartheid governance to sustain minority white privilege and gave white parents power to restrict access to these privileged schools as a result of the power vested in the Model C governance structures.

EDUCATION SYSTEM AFTER 1994

In principle, there is a single system of education that replaced the sixteen apartheid education departments. The once racially and ethnically based education departments have been replaced by one ministry of education and nine non-racial provincial departments. In practice, however, township, rural, farm, and suburban schools are still where they were during the apartheid era. The white schools still enjoy the bussing systems, high quality of education, and well-equipped facilities and resources. Black education is still in need of basic resources like classrooms, furniture, textbooks, school buildings, equipment, laboratories and others.

The government released its draft White Paper in September 1994 for public comment. The cabinet adopted this document in February 1995. The White Paper's first mission was to transform apartheid education and set first steps to develop a new system. Education is considered a basic human right to which all people should have access on a lifelong basis, irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age. To achieve these goals, education and training system must be just and equitable, be open and accessible, redress past inequalities, improve delivery, encourage independent and critical thought, and celebrate the diversity of cultures, languages and religious traditions (see Department of Education. Annual Report, June 1994 - December 1995. South Africa).

According to the Department Annual Report (June 1994 - January 1995), the White Paper distinguished between two kinds of change: systematic and developmental. Systematic change means structural and system-wide change. The White Paper identified three key areas of systematic change, namely:

- the development of an integrated approach to education and training based on a new national qualification framework;
- the provision of free and compulsory education for ten years to all children, including restructuring the basis of school ownership, governance, and finance; and
- the restructuring of the higher education system.

To move towards these goals, the Department initiated the following measures that would lead to systematic change:

- National Education Policy Bill
- The South African Qualification Act and work on the Qualification Framework
- Review of School Ownership, Governance and Finance
- National Education Information Management System
- The National Commission on Higher Education
- The National Student Finance Aid Scheme

For the purpose of this research, however, the discussion focuses on three issues that have direct influence on the nature of schooling: Review of School Organization and Ownership, Governance, and Finance. The first comprehensive, feasible and officially sanctioned program for change on a national scale in education was the Hunter Report 2, which gave rise to the Review of School Organization and Ownership, Governance and

Funding. The adoption of the report aroused a nationwide objection from the formerly privileged groups, the white community. On one hand, the implications of the report meant removal of Model C powers. On the other hand, black teachers were concerned with the issue of representation in the composition of the governing structure. Like white parents, black teachers wanted more power. Although their interests were reflected through a different angle, the bottom line was that equal representation gave them equal powers with the parent constituents.

School organization

The framework of the Hunter 2 recommended that there should be two categories of schools: public and independent schools. In other words, the apartheid distinctions between black from white schools were gone. The main difference between the two categories of schools lay in their relationship to the state, specifically the provincial departments of education. The Department Annual Report (June 1994 - January 1995) showed that public schools would:

- be totally or largely funded from the public purse, representing a partnership between the provincial government and the community;
- have their admission policies subject to provincial regulations and national policy; and
- have teachers employed and appointed by the provincial authorities on the recommendation of the governing body of each school.

The defining character of independent schools would be:

- that they are privately owned;
- that teachers are employed and appointed by the owners of the school; and

- that their admissions policies, although subject to the non-discrimination clause of the Constitution, are not subject to provincial regulations and national policy.

The implications of the above were more significant for the former Model C schools. Although Model C schools functioned for more or less three years, the power vested in the governing bodies made a major difference in the re-entrenchment of apartheid structures. Many schools were able constitutionally to exclude black children. Against the background of apartheid Christian National Education, transformation meant total destruction of Afrikaner nationalism, the purist ideology. One problem in this respect was that black children who were taught to be hewers of wood were to share space, resources, and social mobility with the white children. Furthermore, the new school organization and ownership made the state the senior partner responsible for the overall equitable and efficient allocation of resources.

Although the implications of the framework are seen to have a capacity to address disparities, it still leaves open the possibility that white schools will not change much, and black schools will not gain much. Given that white schools inherited fixed assets like buildings, swimming pools, school halls, and gymnasiums from the former government, transfer or sharing of these assets with black schools will create some conflicts. Moreover, the capacity of white parents to pay fees is greater than their black counterparts, who are already in disadvantaged schools without basic resources. However, the Hunter 2 framework has, to some degree, improved the situation in black schools. In addition, in white schools that welcome democracy, changes in attitudes are flourishing.

School governance

The crucial change that came out of the Hunter 2 framework was inclusion of all stakeholders in the governance of school, to include: the school principal as the ex-officio of the governing body, parents, teachers, learners (in secondary schools only), local community members and non-teaching staff. This composition created two problems for the white communities: First, the inclusion of a learner component was problematic to white teachers and parents who perceive learners as voiceless. Next, the inclusion of a non-teaching member meant sharing decisions with laborers, gardeners, and kitchen staff. The framework of inclusivity seemed to threaten the power base of white communities. Thus, conflict was created.

The role of the school's governing body would be to define and adopt school policies, in particular school mission and objectives, finance, relations and communication with parents and the community, use of facilities, and appointment of administrative staff. Governing bodies that demonstrated a strong capacity for management could request "negotiable" power from the provincial department. These powers, as indicated in the Department of Education Annual Report of June 1994 - January 1995, covered matters such as the maintenance of buildings and purchase of textbooks, materials, and equipment.

School finance

The need to redistribute resources and eliminate inequalities in the education system, especially the formerly underprovided black schools was acknowledged by the new government. However, the underlying factor was that the government lacked the capacity to address these inequalities. Redressing on a large scale would deplete financial

resources in a very short time. The Department of Education annual Report for June 1994 - January 1995 indicated that the Committees' (Hunter 2) recommended that public schools, at least for the next five years, should be funded on the basis of a partnership approach which balanced the four key principles of equity, redress, quality and efficiency. The government would pay teacher salaries based on equal staffing formula, but operating costs and additional resources should be met by funds contributed by parents on a voluntary and obligatory basis. Some schools could get more funding through demonstrable needs. Also, the government should make provisions to fulfill the needs of learners with special education needs.

These recommendations seem to have created four problems. First, there is a contradiction in "voluntary and obligatory". It is difficult to understand how payment of fees could be voluntary and at the same time be obligatory. Second, the majority of black parents cannot afford to pay school fees; therefore, black schools will still experience lack of basic funds which are essential for the day to day running of the schools, thus, perpetuating an inferior quality of education mainly in black schools. Third, allocating more funds to black schools will be perceived as reverse discrimination. Fourth, the ANC promised free education for all during its campaign in 1994. As a result, Black parents are reluctant to pay these "voluntary and obligatory" school fees. In addition, parents might argue that the provision of education is still the same, that is, lower quality for blacks, lack of basic resources, and lack of facilities while the education for white children remains of high quality. They resisted apartheid education in the past; why accept it now if provision and delivery remains the same? Besides these seemingly valid arguments, people have a history of resistance, and their past experiences are based on a

culture of non-payment. Therefore, they still find ways to justify their resistance to payment through some shortcomings of the framework.

All this is not to say that the road to transformation is condemned, but it is to confirm Popkewitz's (1991) theory of political sociology regarding understanding school reform as a process in a larger context. Change gives meaning when the new ideas or innovations are familiar to us and when they are drawn from our past experiences. Popkewitz contends that "we have to understand the interrelationship among the historically framed patterns of the reform situation, knowledge/intellectual in the situation, and power relations in the situation. In addition, we need to understand the constant shift among these three concepts" (p.14). Armed with this understanding we can appreciate change when we are given the opportunity to assimilate it to our own experiences. Popkewitz's theory calls on past experiences in the setting and on knowledge formed through these past experiences to give meaning to the new ideas. For example, removing what people used to have, i.e. white parents accustomed to having substantial power to control education while at the same time denying black children access to their schools required an adjustment to change on their parts. These parents have to learn to share power with menial workers, share resources with black people and so on. The removal of apartheid laws and policies created conflict for both groups, i.e. black and white, as letting go of what one knows and embracing something new, which is not predictable, is difficult. Therefore, the more we tend to change, the more we tend to stay the same. Because of this dilemma regarding change, school principals should demonstrate their abilities to manage reform, through understanding people's past history, knowledge, and power relations.

Chapter 5

THE HOLDERS OF THE SHARP EDGES OF THE KNIVES

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the principalship in South Africa, shedding light on the criteria used for appointment of a school principal and in addition, making a claim that for the most part, hidden criteria were used to make specific selections while excluding other qualified candidates. Second, I used pseudonyms to mask the identities of the six Black women elementary school leaders who participated in this study. I created the pseudonyms from the names of materials used for wrapping African knives. In the final section, I present portraits of the personal/professional and private/public lives of the six women. In her own words, each woman discusses her formative years and coming of age; forces in her life; becoming a leader; the meaning of leadership, social justice and power; and final reflections and meanings derived from artifacts and metaphors.

THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ajibade (1993) contends that the principal is the overall head of both the academic and non-academic staff and that entire groups within the school system are accountable to the principal. In his own words he said that:

In the early years of the school system, the principal could be termed the "alpha and the omega", for he had the exclusive right and the power to do all things including hiring and firing of teachers. The society and the parents in particular saw the principal as a semi-god to be worshipped and honored, for he was deemed to be an all rounder, capable of being a teacher, a pastor, a public relations officer,

a counselor, a judge, an interpreter, and a symbol of what education stood for.

(p.31)

During the reign of apartheid, black school principals were recruited using some of the following criteria: bilingualism, age and marital status, teaching experience, ethnicity, religious beliefs, knowledge of departmental hierarchy, residency, and knowledge of rules and regulations of the department (Department of Education and Training: School Principals' Manual, March 1990). These were criteria set in 1990; prior to this period, little documentation existed.

First, basic fluency in both Afrikaans and English was the top priority. To some extent, black inspectors would use Afrikaans as a medium of communication when visiting black schools for the mandatory unpredictable inspections which were conducted on a regular basis without prior notice to the black school principal. As a result, the language of communication in school management meeting was Afrikaans, and is still is in some conservative parts of the country. Second, in general, age and marital status were determining factors for selecting the school principal. To attain school principalship one had to be at least 35 years old and legally married in the western system with a certificate or license to prove the status. Third, to become the school principal, a teacher should have at least ten years of teaching experience. In addition, the candidate was supposed to have a Matric or Std.10 certificate and a minimum category B qualification in order to qualify for the position. The qualification level was raised to category C in the late 1980's. As a result, all older principals with categories A and B were forced to take courses with a university in order to upgrade to category C, or else lose their jobs. For

more insight into standards/grades and teachers' qualifications' structures for African people, refer to Table 5.1 and Table 5.2.

Table 5.1

Standard/Grade Structure for African Students Between 1953 and 1994 in South Africa

Standard/Grade Structure for African Students Between 1953 and 1994 in South Africa				
1953 –1976	1976-1994	1994	Phase	Comments
Sub-Standard A/SSA	SSA	Grade 1	LOWER	
Sub-Standard B/SSB	SSB	Grade 2		
Standard/Std. 1	Std. 1	Grade 3	PRIMARY	
Standard/Std. 2	Std. 2	Grade 4		
Standard/Std. 3	Std. 3	Grade 5	HIGHER	After completion of Std.6, a certificate was granted. This was phased out in 1976 ²
Standard/Std. 4	Std. 4	Grade 6		
Standard/Std. 5	Std. 5	Grade 7	PRIMARY	
Standard/Std. 6				
Form I	Std. 6	Grade 8	JUNIOR	After completion of Form III or JC, a Junior Certificate was granted. This was phased out in 1979.
Form II	Std. 7	Grade 9		
Form III/JC	Std.8	Grade 10	SECONDARY	
Form IV	Std. 9	Grade 11	HIGHER	After completion of Std.10/Matric, a certificate is granted ³
Form V	Std. 10	Grade 12	SECONDARY	

² Std. 6 was phased out in 1976. As a result, there was an outcry of overcrowding in African schools since both Std.5 and Std. 6 students were to be accommodated in the same Form I class.

³ Matric exams are still considered significant as measures to provide or deny access to tertiary education in South Africa.

Table 5.2
Qualification Structure for African Teachers Between 1953 and 1994 in South Africa

Qualification Structure for African Teachers Between 1953 and 1994 in South Africa			
Standard/ Degree and No. of Yrs in Training	Teachers Qualifications: Certificate or Diploma	Category Level	Comments
Std. 8/JC Plus 2yrs of Training	Lower Primary Teachers Certificate-LPTC	A	The lower the grade the less the salary, i.e. lower primary teachers were paid less than higher primary teachers and so forth.
	Primary Teacher Certificate- PTC	A	
	Higher Primary Teachers Certificate- HPTC	A	
Std. 10/Matric Plus 2yrs of Training	Junior Secondary Teachers Certificate- JSTC	B	These were introduced in the early 70s and were mainly taken by male students.
	Senior Secondary Teachers Certificate- SSTC	B	
	Senior Education Certificate- SEC (upgrade) ⁴	B	
Std. 10/Matric Plus 3yrs of Training	Junior Primary Teachers Diploma- JPTD	C	These were introduced in 1982 after the DET Act of 1979
	Primary Teachers Diploma- PTD	C	
	Secondary Teachers Diploma- STD	C	
	Senior Education Diploma- SED (upgrade) ⁵	C	
Std. 10/Matric Plus BA. Degree Plus 1yr of Training	University Education Diploma- UED	D	To attain the next level, teachers had to study for a diploma/s or degree/s irrespective of whether the courses taken were relevant to what they need or not ⁶
	UED/any 3-yrs Diploma Plus B.Ed	E	
	UED/any 3-yrs Diploma Plus M.Ed	F	
	Any Secondary Certificate Plus Diploma Plus M.Ed or 2 Diplomas Plus M.Ed	G	

⁴ SEC as an upgrading certificate was introduced after the DET Act of 1979. Teachers with category A level took it in order to upgrade their qualifications to the B level.

⁵ SED diploma was taken to upgrade level B to C. All these were provided at a fees, hence we still find teachers who are regarded as ill- qualified in the South African education system today. Teachers who could afford the high university fees upgraded their levels with degree qualifications.

⁶ In addition to Education and Mother tongue subjects a large number of teachers took subject such as Biblical Studies, Physiology, Criminology, Anthropology and others. Even though these subject were not offered to main stream education in South African schools (with the exception of Biblical Studies) most teachers took them for the sake of obtaining a higher qualification level, thus higher salary.

Ethnicity was also an essential factor in a principalship, especially in elementary schools. This factor was expressed in that black schools were divided into ethnic groups. The situation was implicit in rural areas, because these areas were already segregated through the system of homelands created by the apartheid rule. School principals were therefore appointed to serve a specific ethnic group. Thus, a Muvenda man or woman would be expected to head a Tshivenda school, a Mosotho for a Sesotho school, Zulu for a Zulu school and so forth. In addition, religious convictions played a role in determining one's chances for promotion. One had to belong to a certain Christian denomination and demonstrate active participation as a member in the church, thus of the three or more required letters of recommendation, it was expected that one letter should be from a minister of a church. Furthermore, knowledge of the departmental hierarchy was fundamental. The candidate had to know all authorities in their order of power, from the minister of Bantu Education to the local school inspector. Residency also determined the selection process in that the candidate had to be a resident of the area in which the school was located. Finally, the significance of knowledge and understanding of the Department of Education and Training's rules and regulation cannot be overemphasized. The candidate was supposed to know the departmental policies by heart. For instance, a candidate was supposed to know that teachers (including himself) were not allowed to belong to any political movement at any given time. Besides his normal duties, the task of the school principal was to report any form of political activity of teachers to the department.

Although these criteria were set in the School Principal's Manual (1990), there appeared to be some laws and criteria which were hidden and not on paper. The first

unscripted criterion appeared to be sexism. The selection process tended to discriminate against women. It was an expectation that a good school principal must be male. As a result, male teachers stood a good chance of promotion creating anomalies of Black women who found themselves in these positions. This trend of excluding women in senior positions is still visible in the new era of democracy in South Africa. Table 5.3 below indicates the 10th school day gender statistics in District N6, one of the school districts in Soweto.

Table 5.3

10th School Day Gender Statistics in District N6 of the Gauteng Province in South Africa

POST	MALE		FEMALE		Total
	NO.	%	NO.	%	
Principal	83	76.15	26	23.85	109
Post Level 4					
Deputy	63	61.76	39	38.24	102
Post Level 3					
H.O.D	133	39.94	200	60.06	333
Post Level 2					
Teacher	421	22.54	1447	77.46	1868
Post Level 1					
Staff	700		1712		2412
Summary	29.02		70.98		

From the above statistics, it is evident that men hold most of the senior positions. For instance, out of 109 principals 83 are men, and out of 102 deputy principals, 63 are men. If one considers that out of 2412 staff members, only 700 are men, and who at the same time enjoy and occupy 76.15% and 61.76% of the leadership positions, it is reasonable to say that there are still major imbalances in gender composition in school leadership in South Africa, with specific reference to the District N6 in the Gauteng Department of Education.

A second hidden criterion manifests itself through nepotism. Nepotism was and is still a powerful unscripted criterion. To become a school principal during the apartheid era, one had to know and have a strong connection to certain people. This does not invalidate the appointments of other people who were appointed on their own merits without what is called 'broerskap' or brotherhood. However, in most cases black inspectors selected their own relatives and friends for senior positions. The question, which now arises, is whether the trend toward nepotism was successfully terminated or not.

Not infrequently, the third hidden criterion is based on the leadership style of top-down management, where the school principal both had and was the final word. Thus, the principal made decisions unilaterally and teachers were expected to comply without the opportunity to make any inputs whatsoever. In other words, organizations were molded according to the philosophy of Taylorism that perceives leadership through issuing commands, enforcing compliance, and controlling the activities of others (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1993, p. 12). According to this line of thinking, the only relevant leadership style that gives meaning is embedded in the entrenchment of orders through autocracy. Power is defined through domination and subordination and authorities owned power to the extent that they did not want to let go or even share it with people who are directly affected by the exercise of that power. The above criteria are typical characteristics of a state that perpetuates its hegemony through power. For example, Ajibade (1993) indicated that the principal could employ and fire as he wished (p.31).

In conclusion, although South Africa's situation seems to be messy and complex, the new Department of Education is facing the challenge of transforming education and

training firmly and boldly. Given that education is a political issue, the women in my study experience education both personally and professionally within the conditions discussed in the foregoing sections. In practice, as Popkewitz (1991) maintains “the forms of knowledge in schooling frame and classify the world and the nature of work, which in turn, have the potential to organize and shape the individual identity” (p.15). In this context, knowledge provides the rules and standards, which also organize perception, ways of acting and conceptions of self. How we see the world around us is defined by our social epistemology. For instance, the six women’s world was defined through a view of domination and subordination. Moreover, Popkewitz asserts “that power rests in the complex sets of relations and practices by which individuals construct their subjective experiences and assume an identity in the social affairs” (p.14). For these women, their identities were constructed through the whole historical experience of oppression, lack of power, and voice.

INTRODUCING THE WOMEN: HOLDERS OF THE SHARP EDGES.

Knives are “blades of beauty and death” (Blackmun & Hautelet, 1990, p.5). Knives are made of iron and copper. The blade is forged from iron which has been heated, shaped, hammered repeatedly until it loses impurities and becomes strong and supple. According to Blackmun and Hautelet, ancient African knives were not only functional weapons, but also beautiful instruments of death as legendary as King Arthur’s sword (p.3). Many knives were made to be carried around or tossed in the air during ceremonial occasions. While knives conferred judicial or religious authority upon their owners, they were also used for fighting, hunting, and tattooing. Blackmun and Hautelet (1990) maintain that copper signifies royalty, luxury, and brilliance of the leopard’s pelt. Its

redness symbolizes blood, a vital and dangerous substance, as ambiguous as the transition of conception to birth, maturity, age and death. It is, therefore, a royal metal, signifying knowledge of mysterious power (p.5). Blackmun and Hautelet (1990) claim that throughout traditional Africa, sumptuary restrictions were enforced so that only those who possessed authority over others could use copper. Unauthorized use of copper jewelry, for example, was considered an insubordinate and hostile act (p.5).

The knives in this study do not symbolize blades of ceremonial, emblematic, ritual implements or of exchange as perceived by Blackmun and Hautelet (1990). I perceive these blades as tools and weapons of power, designed and designated to cut and shred. As a result, the knives in this study symbolize power and authority over others, the cutting blades of inequalities, oppression, domination and subordination. The handles of these knives may be beautifully wrapped with copper, ivory, steel, wood, leather, horn, brass, lead, glass, shells, iron, cord, monitorskin, silver and gold (see Fischer & Zirngibl, 1978; Blackmun & Hautelet, 1990 and Wood & Reiners, 1991).

For lack of relevant South African names of knives, I decided to use the names of the materials that are used for wrapping the knives to reflect their differences and similarities. For instance, iron, copper, steel, lead, silver and brass are not only characterized by their strength, but are also considered soft, malleable and durable. Having decided upon distinctions among the symbolically powerful knives, I undertook to link their unique individual characteristics with those of each of the six women participants in the study by establishing a naming process.

I named the first woman Iron, “The magnet, the attractor of opportunities”, because from her story, it is evident that she has a way of attracting other stakeholders to the

causes of justice. She demonstrated the ability to develop linkages beyond the borders and boundaries of South Africa to include European countries like Belgium, France and Germany. The second woman was named Copper, “The creator of opportunities”, because like Iron, she exposes others to opportunities. She goes out, tirelessly, in search of other avenues in order to uplift her school and environment. She attracted the likes of the German embassy, where her school is one of the few elementary schools that offers German. In the early 90’s, even before the new government, her school had a computer center with at least twenty computers from IBM.

The third woman was named Steel, “The driver not the engine”, because she uses the metaphor of a driver, who has no control of the car if the engine is in a bad condition. I named the fourth woman Lead, “The mother who puts children first”, because Lead’s story revolves around children and the love she has for them. The fifth woman is named Silver, “The survivor of all trials”, because she stood firm, through thick and thin, suffering loss of beloved ones in her personal life and facing various challenges in her professional life. The sixth woman is named Brass, “The patient and determined”, because even after eighteen years of heading a school without buildings, she did not lose hope. From their stories, like the metals used to wrap the African knives, these women epitomize strength, resistance, dependability, reliability, and inner power.

The six women in my study represent five ethnic groups of South Africa. See Table 5.4 below that reveals the six women’s ages, ethnicity, and social background during formative years, marital status, qualifications, number of years in education, and number of years as school principal.

Table 5.4

The Women: Holders of the Sharp Edges of Knives

Name & Age	Ethnicity	Social background during formative years	Marital Status	Qualifications	No. Yrs in Education	No. Yrs as Principal
Iron 62yrs	Motswana	Parents migrant domestic workers in Jhb	Married	PTC, BA, HED, BA Honors, Author	38	9
Copper 47yrs	Mutshangana	Graduate father and mother with Std.6	Widow	JSTC, BA, BA Honors, B.Ed	25	10
Steel 47yrs	Muvenda	Father laborer and mother a homemaker	Married	PTC, BA, B.Ed in Educational Management	18	7
Lead 47yrs	Mosotho	Father politician and mother Nursing Sister	Married	BA, UED, B.Ed	21	10
Silver 49yrs	UmXhosa	Parents migrant domestic workers in Jhb	Widow	PTC, SEC, SED, BA, currently enrolled for a B.Ed	27	11
Brass 53yrs	Muvenda	Parents domestic workers in Jhb	Married	HPTC, SEC, SED, BA. currently enrolled for a B.Ed	31	27

Iron is a 62 year old Motswana woman. She lost her mother at the age of six and was raised by her eldest sister. Her father was a garden boy all his life, and as a result, she grew up very poor. In her 38 years of experience as an educator she was a teacher and lecturer at a college. She is presently in her 9th year as an elementary school principal. She is married to a high school principal and they have two daughters and a son.

Copper is a 47 year old recently widowed Mutshangana woman. She grew up in a black middle class family, where her father was the first BA. graduated in the rural homeland of Gazankulu in the early 1950s. She is the fifth of nine siblings. She is still in

her mourning clothes after losing her husband to many years of illness in October 1999. In her 25 years as an educator, she has been a teacher, Head of Department (HOD) and is currently in her 10th year as an elementary school principal. She has two daughters and a son.

Steel is a 47 years old Muvenda woman, the oldest of four siblings. She was born in Alexandra Township to working class parents; her father was a laborer and her mother a homemaker. She lived with her paternal grandparents when she was in elementary school. She is married and has three children. Her 18 years of experience as an educator include teaching at her present school, radio announcer, high school teacher, and subject advisor at a regional level, adult night school teacher/head and a church elder. She is in her 7th year as an elementary school principal.

Lead is a 47 years old Mosotho woman, the oldest of two siblings and was born in Soweto township. Her Mopedi mother was a nursing sister while her Mosotho father was a politician who was always on the run from the apartheid South African government. As a result, she and her brother were always on the move: exile in Ghana at 3 years of age and exile in Lesotho at the age of 6. She came back to rural South Africa at the age of 15 after her mother took them without her paternal grandfather's consent while her father was in detention. In the process, she was raised by both paternal and maternal grandparents and has never lived with any of her biological parents in her lifetime. She is married to a Mutshangana high school teacher and they have four children. In her 21 years as an educator, she has been a high school teacher, HOD, and deputy principal of a high school before coming to her present position in January 1990.

Silver is a 49 year old widowed UmXhosa woman. She was born in the rural homeland of Transkei. She is the last of four sisters and was raised by both her migrant laborer father and eldest sister who was a domestic servant in Johannesburg. Death seems to follow her everywhere – she lost her mother in 1972, her father died in 1988, her eldest sister died mysteriously in 1990, her husband was murdered during the political struggles in 1991, and her mother-in-law died in 1993. She lost her 19 year old son in July, 1999. In her 27 years of experience as an educator, she taught in the present elementary school, became HOD and then an assistant principal. She is in her 11th year in her principalship.

The sixth woman, Brass, is a 53 year old Muvenda woman. She was born in Alexandra Township in Johannesburg. Her Muvenda father and Motswana mother were domestic servants in the white suburbs of Johannesburg. As a result, she was forced to live with her paternal grand parents in the rural Vendlana at the age of 15. In her 31 years of teaching experiences, she taught for four years in an elementary school before becoming a school principal. She moved from school to school for almost 20 years before the new government built her current school in 1997. She is in her 27th year as a school principal and she is married to a Mutshangana man and they have one daughter.

The six women were selected by individuals or groups who either work or live in the areas where the schools are located. Second, the women were selected by individuals or groups who have had some encounter with the women at some stage or who have heard about the women's work within the different communities. For instance, Iron's name was mentioned by at least six individuals from diverse career backgrounds and environments. First, she was identified by one of my close former colleagues; she was identified by the

former Member of the Provincial Executive Councils (MEC) of education, Mary Metcalfe, and other principals including some who are part of this study. The snowball effect strategy was also used to identify other participants. For example, Silver was identified by Copper, who in turn was also identified by Iron, and so on. It was exciting to note that principals who had agreed to participate in this study would suggest a name, just to find that the person was already part of this study. My choice was also influenced by the fact that I selected the townships that I am familiar with, i.e. Meadowlands and Diepkloof. For example, my mother grew up in Meadowland, while I was born in Diepkloof.

The women in this study were educated under the apartheid's Bantu Education system in the early 1960s. As a result, they all received their elementary education in their mother tongue instruction. Iron and Copper were born and raised in the rural areas, while the rest of the women were born in the cities, but had to go to the rural areas for their secondary schooling. This was in line with Verwoerd's grand plan of separate development. It is clear that these women would have very different childhood experiences given their diverse upbringings.

Besides Copper, whose father was the first person in their rural area to obtain a BA degree, and Lead, whose mother was a professional nurse, these women are from a low social status. Also, Iron and Silver share some similarities in that they lost their mothers at an early age, their fathers were migrant laborers, and their elder sisters were forced to dropout of school to take the responsibility of taking care of the younger siblings. Their experiences support the claims of Wing and Carvalho (1998) who argue that the nature of patriarchy and sexism was reflected in the norms created by society, such as the different

expectations that parents had for their sons and daughters (p.388). It can be seen that Black families placed more emphasis on education of the male children, while girls were the first selected to leave schools to help their families. Thus, it was expected of both Iron and Silver's elder sisters to drop out of school without a career in order to take care of the younger children in their families. Steel and Brass had to go to the homeland to live with their grandparents at some point in their lives, because their migrant parents who were working as domestic servants in the white suburbs of Johannesburg were not able to take care of them.

The women were also prepared for unequal participation in the South African economic and social life. These women grew up with the understanding that their education should preserve the cultural identity of their community, in particular, and their ethnic origin in general. These are women who are responsible for the well being of other extended family members. For example, Steel pays for her youngest siblings' college fees while Brass takes care of her elderly parents' monthly medical needs. Since her parents live 600km away in the Northern Province, which used to be the homeland of the Vhavenda people, it is her sole responsibility to provide transport to bring them to Johannesburg where better health care services are available. Silver still supports her nieces and nephews. In some instances, these women take care of orphans and street children from their schools and neighborhoods.

With the exception of Copper, who lost her husband to a long period of illness three months before our meeting, and Silver, whose husband was killed during the political struggle ten years ago, Iron, Steel, Lead and Brass are still married to their first husbands. From their stories, we get to hear of many experiences, and challenges of

gender, culture and ethnicity. These are women who still uphold their ethnic origins and are appreciative of who they are in the midst of all trials and tribulations.

From their stories, it is evident that all these women's choice of career was coerced. They either wanted to become nurses or social workers before choosing teaching as a profession. For example, Iron failed her first year at the nursing college before deciding to try teaching, Brass trained as a teacher so that she could get a job and help support her family, Copper was influenced by her father who was a teacher. Lead who obtained a bachelor's degree wanted to become a medical doctor or pharmacist, but she was refused entrance to the department. She was told that medicine was not for Black women. Silver had to get a career that would enable her to be home in order to support and take care of her nieces and nephews. And Steel would stand in front of the mirror with a paper cape and cap pretending to be a nurse, but chose teaching as the last resort.

It is not surprising that these women's choices of career were limited to care giving professions. As dictated by Verwoerd, blacks were assigned specific and inferior career options that would enable them to serve their communities, to use Verwoerd's (1955) words: " There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor. Within his own community, however, all doors are open" (Christie, 1986, p.12 & Molteno, 1986, p.92). For that reason, there was no reason for black people to be trained in other professions that would allow them to serve or compete with white people. Teaching or nursing professions allowed black people to remain in their communities, so that the education system could not, " misled him by showing him the pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze. We should not give the native an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this

we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labor in the country?" (Christie, 1986, p. 12 & Molteno, 1986, p. 66).

The six women became teachers during the apartheid rule in South Africa and as a result, they have experienced both systems of education in South Africa, the old Bantu Education in the apartheid regime, and the new single education system governed by the ethos of a democratic rule. Since these school leaders became principals during the reign of apartheid, it is likely that they were also recruited through some of the following criteria: bilingualism, age and marital status, teaching experience, ethnicity, religious beliefs, knowledge of departmental hierarchy, residency, knowledge of rules and regulations of the department. For example, all six women are fluent in both English and Afrikaans, became principal when they were above 30, were married, had taught for more than 10 years before becoming a school principal, belonged to a specific ethnic group, claimed to belong to a Christian religion, lived within the same area of the school where they became a principal, and had thorough understanding of the department's rules and regulations.

PORTRAITS OF THE HOLDERS OF SHARP BLADES

Iron: "The Magnet, the Attractor of Opportunities"

"Iron is dynamic, you have to meet"! "She is one of the most amazing women I have ever met, you need to find out how she does it!" (Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). These are some of the remarks that came my way as I started my journey of searching for a black woman school leader who is seen as a transformative

leader and working for social justice in her school and environment. Even before meeting with her, I was intimidated by what I had already heard and learned about her wonderful work in the community. I expected to see a huge African woman, who fits the mental picture I had already formed, because only greatness befits all I learned and the great deeds about this mysterious woman. Her voice on the phone when I called to arrange for our first meeting did nothing to prepare me or to give me a slight glimpse into the kind of person I was about to meet. And the fact that she agreed to see me the very same day did not help to ease things. I was a nervous wreck.

Iron is a petite 62 year old Motswana woman whose energy is felt vibrating in the room. Within our first 30 minutes of meeting I had learned so much about this small woman. For one, within 5 minutes of my entering her office, three things happened. First, the chairperson of the school governing council arrived to finalize the arrangements for a parent welcoming party to be held on Saturday of the same week. Thus, I had an opportunity to talk with him about the activities of the school. From our brief discussion, I learned a great deal about Iron's commitment to the uplifting of education of the black children in that area. The chairperson could not stop singing praises about Iron. Second, a group from the AIDS Awareness campaign arrived to conduct and present a drama on AIDS awareness. I was amazed because it was right at the beginning of the school year, on the 26th of January to be exact, just short twelve days after the start of a new academic year. From my own experiences as a school principal, this is a very busy time when most school principals would have been preoccupied with admissions, distribution of stationery and textbooks, solving the past year's issues and so forth. A campaign on AIDS awareness education, a noncompulsory activity, was not what I expected to witness

at that time of the year in a black school in Soweto. The third instance involved the arrival of the delegation from the department of education with the news that Iron was nominated to represent all school principals in South Africa in a forthcoming visit to France. That was just too much information in less than 20 minutes. Before I could even recover from the shock, she had signed the interview consent forms and set the date and time for our first interview, the very next day at 3 pm at her school, before sending me off.

Ikaneng Primary school was built some time in the late 1970s in the predominantly Tswana section of the historically ethnic segregated Soweto Townships. Ikaneng is a Tswana word that literally means, “ Make a pledge” What is noticeable and different about this primary is the expensive blue steel fence. The fence was purchased from the funds raised by the staff and parents in collaboration with business sectors from Belgium.

Initially, Iron had suggested that we meet at her school at 3pm, but later she decided that an interview of this nature would require her undivided attention, thus we conducted all our interviews in the privacy of her home. The first thing she did was to pray, thanking God for our safety and also requesting His blessings for my research. That was the first step to our friendship, and we bonded like iron and “magnet.”

Iron's formative years and coming of age: In her own words. I was born in a small village in Rustenburg, a rural area in a homeland assigned for the Batswana people of South Africa. I'm from a working class family, my father was a laborer (garden-boy) all his life. After losing my mother at the age of six, and as the last of the three daughters, my eldest sister had to go and look for a job in order to take care of me and my other siblings. She

worked as a domestic servant, cleaning homes and looking after other people's children. I had a very hard life, some times food was scarce and I had to survive on crumbs.

I started my primary school at a farm school near my home. I was a very brilliant child. I used to get the first position all the time. Even though I was always top in my class, after completing standard 8, I had nobody to take me further on. I applied for a nursing career and trained at Kalafong Hospital for a year. Surprisingly, things didn't work out well for me. For the first time in my life I failed; I failed the preliminary examinations. My failing the preliminary exams was an indication that nursing was not my calling. I went to Melville in Johannesburg to live with my eldest sister. I had a dream, and in my dreams I saw this woman who said she was my mother. She told me that she knew that I wanted to go to back to school. She said she was going to help me. When I woke up, I described the woman to my sister who confirmed that indeed the woman in my dreams was my mother, who, of course I did not know since she passed away when I was only six. Since education for black people was neither free nor compulsory, I took pen and paper and applied for a loan. By the way, there were no free bursaries or scholarship for black people in those years. To my surprise, after completing my studies, I got a letter telling me that I should not repay the loan. That was a miracle from God. May be that's what my mother told me in my dreams; her prophesy came true.

I went to Christian teacher's training in Bethesda. I become a devoted Christian and a leader of the Student Christian Movement (SCM). I used to counsel other girls, help talk to them when they were in trouble. My Christian faith formed at an early age as a result of poverty. My parents were not Christian, and I was influenced by my education. My mentor was also a very devoted Christian who used to conduct a women's prayer

program with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) every Thursday afternoon. I tell you, I put every thing to God. I pray to Him for love and direction. Prayer is my salvation.

I started teaching in Meadowlands in 1969. I did not wait, but went on to correspond for my Matric through the Damelin institution. After completing my BA, I was not allowed to teach in the primary school any more. I think I was too qualified to teach at the not so important level, you know what I mean (laughter). I went to a high school, where I worked for some few years before becoming a Head of Department/Vice-principal. In 1981, I was requested to join Soweto College of Education in order to help start the Primary Teacher's Diploma (PTD) teacher's course. In the past, teachers received a certificate, the so-called Primary Teachers' Certificate (PTC). The change was in line with the new education Act of 1979, where the government was trying to address the imbalances, to move black teachers from an inferior qualification to that recognized as equal to that of white teachers. All hell broke loose! That's when the so-called category C mentality started. Black teachers flocked to Soweto College to improve their qualifications in efforts to meet the new requirements and also to get more money. Mind you, these courses were very expensive.

And in my opinion, I don't think we taught these poor teachers anything new. It was just another law to control black people's thinking. To impress on them the inferiority complex over and over again! I had an opportunity to go to UK for 3 months to take a course in Learner Centered Methods at Leeds University in 1985. That is why I find Outcome Based Education (OBE) very relevant. I completed my Higher Education Diploma (HED) and honors in Setswana with the University of South Africa (UNISA) in

1986. I was appointed to this principalship post in 1991. By the way, I write Setswana textbooks. I have written books for grades 7 – 10, and they are still being used in the new education system.

On becoming a leader: In her own words. Leaving the college was again a calling from above. I had to move on. I took teaching as a calling, not as a career. Hence, I believe my failing the nursing preliminary exams was a sign that I was not destined to be there. I had a vision of mobilizing the community into positive thinking. Before my time as a principal, people used to think that if you are a principal you are a know all, do all. It was my challenge to change their thinking. We have to work together. We grow because we learn; we copy and implement what we have learned.

I'm like a magnet; I attract others to come and join me. I invite them to come and see what is happening in these classrooms, and let them see what these children are doing. After getting a donation from a company, I make some follow up, I give them feedback, I make them responsible for their generosity. Right now, we are receiving donations to build three of the classrooms we need. We are not going to wait for the government to do it. My parents are very supportive. It took me many years to make them understand that the school belongs to them, not to the teachers or me. And that it does not belong to the government. Hence I'm just an organ and the parents are the brain, I do what they want. I believe in visions, as long as you know there is a vision, there is hope. As a transformative leader, to me, the governing body is like the main brain that coordinates all the functions of the body. We work as a team. That is why Ikaneng is one of the best primary schools in Soweto.

As a transformative leader, I change the approach of teaching and learning. To me, three elements are important, that is, pupil, teacher and parent. They can never work without each other. They make a triangle that is equidistant apart. I can never run the school without parents and teachers. You should bridge the gap between you and the parents. Parents think we, as educators, know all. We should show them that education is a team effort. I would like to be seen just as an ordinary person because I don't want to build any gaps between me and the others, and I'm really very proud as a leader because I am not proud, I am so approachable, but I have got something that God gave me.

I am black, and as a black woman black woman I started with nothing. So, I always tell people that where there is vision there is solution. And people can't say that because of lack of resources some form of quality teaching cannot be done. They can definitely do it, as long as there is a vision, as long as people see that the work of the day has to be done. I moved the school from the bottom to where it is today. There are vegetable gardens for the needy families. I also started a preschool class so that the black poor parents do not have to pay exorbitant fees in the private white schools. As you know, the government does not provide preschool education in our country. I think I really try to uplift my communities in different ways. We also have a system of referring the poorest of the poor to social services for extra help.

Forces in my life: In her own words. There have been positive and negative forces in my life. The most powerful force behind and beside me is my faith in God. He has done wonders for my family and me. Moreover, my husband, children and sisters have been pillars of my life. I'm married to a very good man! We have two daughters and a son who are young adults. We have had trying times in our lives. But there are some experiences

that will remain with me forever. For example, in 1976, we were staying in Meadowlands when my second child was only three months old. We lived next to a Zulu hostel – Zulus were used against other ethnic groups; they were told to go out and kill. People would say “Mazulu keo” (the Zulus are coming). We ran all the night and hid ourselves in the fields in Dobsonville which is about 10-15 Km away. We did not even have a car then. The incident brought anger into our lives. Boers brought guns to kill us!

Even when we had money to purchase a better house, because of segregation and the group areas act, we were confined to the four-roomed house until we were allowed to extend it and add more rooms. As black people we didn't grow because of motivation. As black people we saw education not for its worth, not only for enlightenment, but also as a vehicle to enable us to run away from starvation, poverty, hunger, and violence. One believes that the more one gets educated, the better one would earn more and be able to move away from the ghettos, the black townships. Education's aim is not necessarily to uplift the black communities, but to enable those who manage to escape to move away from their communities, and leave the poorest of the poor as helpless as ever. Education reproduces poverty and starvation in the name of enlightenment.

But as a leader, my challengers were not only from the outsiders nor were they from the racist government, but they were from the insiders, my very own people. The more you advance, the more they pull you down. People don't want us to progress, especially as Black women we are seen as threats. We are suffering from the so-called PHDs, not your Ph.D. You know! The “Pull Her Down syndrome!” For instance, the school used to accommodate the grade 1-4 classes. After some time, we felt we needed to grow and expand to grade 7. Parents were excited about the idea. Instead, the principals

from the neighboring higher primary schools interrupted the whole process. They went to the extent of using Congress of South African Students (COSAS) to stop us. This is my major problem. I really hate it when people use children to move their own agendas. Another such force was the interference from South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). I try by all means to divorce myself from politics in education. It is a problem when politicians want to push their agenda to suppress us through education. And especially people who don't want progress.

Another impediment is the shortage of classrooms and funds. This is another thing that is impeding our progress. We were very hopeful that we were going to have four additional classrooms. And mind you, not from the government, you can't get anything from the current government, honestly. So, in this case, two companies promised to build 4 classrooms. The problems arose when the second company decided to withdraw at the last minute. And fortunately, what is happening right now is that parents agreed to work hard to raise the needed R68 000 through fundraising campaigns in order to build the fourth classroom. Presently, we have raised R25 000 and with the projects we are running so far, I believe we are really going to make it.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words.

I believe that a leader is a leader because of people and that educational leadership must consider the followers, because you are a leader because of the followers. A leader is someone who wants to learn, and you must be a follower also, a good listener, and be able to share ideas with other people. Leadership should be seen as the ability to take people from one point to the other. Leadership includes growth, displaying skill and ability to do things justly. You are a leader by understanding the situation of other people.

Being a good leader means you are able to create democratic school governance where there is peace, harmony, and responsibility from everybody who is in the community. And everybody, every member should be actively involved.

I understand social justice as fairness by one person or group to the other. To me, it translates to respect for human beings, not to undermining one's intellect, not knowing what one can contribute. Respect people's gender, where they live or reside, their abilities and skills. I do not discriminate people by merely looking at them. I do not judge people by their appearance and looks, or whether they come from a shack or big house. In other words, their social background is immaterial to me. Education should uplift the social status of our poor black nation, that's social justice for me. Social justice should lead to a school where people are not afraid to contribute and will accept other people's opinions. And a just school is a school that's not oppressive, a school where people are praised for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and it is not stagnant, people move together.

I see power as authority vested on someone to do something. It is the right to execute duties and take responsibility. Power mandates authority, whether one uses it or not. And to have power is to be open, without any hidden agendas, and people must know you as a fair person, who doesn't carry favors. You have power when people know your true colors.

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words. I think women school leaders are better school leaders. For example, when you look around the schools, especially high schools with good results, they are all lead by women. Take for example Reashuma (the literal translation is "we work") and the other one in

deep Soweto, they have been producing at least more than 80% Matric results in the last three or so years, and the principals are women! I think women work harder to prove that they can lead better. With primary schools, there is no question about that. A woman is a natural born leader, she listens, she likes her work, she is a mother leader, and she is not hard. Schools led by women are orderly; there is a culture of learning and discipline. Teachers are usually punctual.

As I look back as a woman school leader, I like everything about myself. My strength lies in my ability to set examples. For example, because I expect my staff to be punctual, I arrive at least thirty minutes before the school starts. I try to live by my rules or those we had agreed upon. Though what I like the least is my lenient nature. Some times people take advantage of that fact. My other weakness is that I'm a perfectionist and at times it becomes very hard for other to meet my standards. I tend to forget that we are just human beings and we are destined to fail. My other great joy comes from my teachers, because they are hard workers.

As I look back, my life has been like light to those who need progress. It has been like a book to the coming generation. Making sense of my life as a Black woman has been like a motivational source to other Black women. My first artifact is the picture of the flower blossoming. Everyday when I enter my office and see this picture on the wall it represents me. The blossoming flower gives life around others, that's me. The golden vase represents the richness of others, what they can contribute to the causes of justice. Like a triangle, we give each other support and energy. When I look at this magnet, it represents me; I attract others. Like a magnet, people are drawn to me. I have proved that beyond doubt. I have succeeded well in attracting others, especially the local business

sector and those from abroad. As a principal yourself, you know it is a great challenge to a great number of black principals to locate and secure funding from white private sectors. For me, it was the hand of God that guided me through. My third artifact is the picture of this little star. Like a little star, I shine in the darkness. I give light to those in the dark. I shine to attract our parents and community at large! What I can advise people to do is that they must not carry the load alone and they must know that there are others outside who are ready to help if invited and given the opportunity. And there is no need for leaders to kill themselves by carrying the burden alone.

Copper: “The Creator of Opportunities”

“That school is amazing, you can’t believe it is a Shangaan school! They have a computer lab and they teach German! You know, Copper was very young when she started and the school has been doing well since. You definitely need to meet her!”

(Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). With all these remarks, I had no choice but to meet Copper, a 47 years old Mutshangana woman who just lost her husband three months prior to our meeting. I got her telephone number from one district official and we set an appointment for the next day at her school.

As I enter the school, all you can hear are teachers’ voices and children's humming as they go on with the day's work. The difference between Khomanani Primary School and the rest of other primary schools in Soweto is that it has a computer laboratory with 20 computers: a donation from IBM. Khomanani is a Shangaan word, which literally means, “Hold on to each other.” The school was built in the late 70s in a predominately Shangaan area to cater to the community. What is outstanding about this

school lies in its beautiful gardens and the well-kept yard. It is no wonder that the school has occupied the first position as the cleanest school in the district for the past three years.

I waited some 30 minutes before Copper finally entered the office. I was shocked to discover that the lady in question was my former high school colleague during my first year. After introducing my study, it felt like she had been waiting for that kind of study for a long time. With an ice-cold drink in my hands, we started talking and sharing experiences since our last encounter 15 years ago. At times I was tempted to take out my tape recorder and start with the interviews since some of the issues under discussion were overlapping with some of the questions in my study. Our very first meeting was so comfortable I forgot that when we were teachers at the high school our relationship was based on control and compliance. For example, she was one of the two women in senior positions as an HOD of African languages. As a result, I looked up to her as an authority. After signing the interview consent forms, we set our first appointment for the next day at her school.

Copper's formative years and coming of age: In her own words. I was born in Valdesia in the rural Gazankulu area in the Northern Province, the former homeland for the Matshangana people. I had a very good life; in fact, I did not suffer like most kids my age. First of all, my father was the principal of the local school and also the first Mutshangana to obtain a BA degree in the whole of Gazankulu in the early 50's. Later on, he became an inspector of schools before working for the then Gazankulu department of education as one of the policy makers. I didn't have to walk far to school since the school was next to my house. In fact, we lived on the school premises also as care takers

of the school. You can see how it impacted on my education, there was no way that I'd end up a nonentity. I knew from childhood that my parents expected great things from my siblings and me.

Although my mother had a Std 6 certificate that was good enough for a teacher's training at that time, she stayed home and raised her nine children. My father did not allow her to work, instead, she worked in the family's small vegetable garden. We are quite a big family! We meet every once a year during the Christmas holidays for what the Americans would call Thanksgiving. I'm from a very religious family. I did all the Christian rituals like the girls' initiation.

As I grew up, I started questioning the Christian religion in so many ways. Right now, I have an English name and could not use my Xitshangana name at all. Otherwise, my parents were going to be labeled hedons or non-believers if they had tried to use our Xitshangana names. I believe Christianity destroyed our roots, our origin and culture. Although I grew up being aware of the traditional rituals, I was not allowed to practice them. Those were referred to as hedonic practices. We were not allowed to practice Xitshangana activities like Tikhomba or girls' initiation school. We had to do the Christian one in the church. At least the boys were allowed to go to a traditional circumcision school because these were not yet done in the hospitals like they do nowadays. You see, girls were discriminated against even then! Now that I know what I want in life, I make sure that our traditional activities, our Xitshangana dances and cultural norms are upheld. We have specific days to practice them in this school. We invite parents and other people to come and help teach our children some of our valuable norms and cultural rites.

I have three children, two girls and a boy. Rest assured, they do not have English names! I had a good marriage, but my husband was sick for a very long time. For most of our married life, I had to take care of every one, support him, pay private schools fees, clothe and feed everyone. You can imagine the suffering I had to endure. In 1992 my eldest child, my son, died in a car accident. And of course, my husband passed away in October, three months ago. At least in our Xitshangana culture the widow is not forced to wear black mourning clothes for a year or two like it is with other ethnic groups. I just have to cover my hair or put on a hat for a year as a symbol of mourning. Of course this is also not fair, because most men do not mourn at all. In a year or less men can get married again, with no questions asked. As a woman, if you do that, you are in trouble. It means you killed your husband or you are glad that he is dead. What a culture!

I believe women can change most of these beliefs and stereotypes if they so wish. If we refuse to wear those black clothes no one can force us. People will talk, and why don't we let them! When a woman dies, no one is responsible, no one killed her, and it's just God's will! Look at what's happening today, just this year three incidences occurred where a man killed his wife for one reason or the other. I mean I'm talking about 1st to 27th January 2000! That's scary! If the present government does not do anything about this, God knows what will happen to us.

I did my Matric when most people would end at Std 8 and go on for their teacher's training. I trained as a secondary teacher rather than a primary one, what was called Junior Secundare Onderwys Kurse in Afrikaans or Junior Secondary Teachers Course in English. So, in other words, I was considered highly educated taking into account that most teachers at the high schools were men and with Primary Teacher Certificate

qualifications. It was rare that a woman could be allowed to teach at a high school. After getting married I moved to Soweto and got a teaching job at a predominately Xitshangana and Tshivenda high school. I believe I got the job because the then principal was a Mutshangana old man who also knew my prominent father. Otherwise, I would have suffered like most women in the cities. The old man retired and surprisingly, a Zulu man was appointed as a principal of a predominately Xitshangana and Tshivenda high school. After working for a few years, I decided to go to the university for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree on a full time basis. My two young children lived with my parents in Gazankulu. I did not have to pay for their well being, neither did my husband. In fact, my parents used to send me money for fees and allowance for my university education. After my BA degree I corresponded my Honors degree in African languages with UNISA. I got a promotion to this position in 1990 and in 1996 I completed my Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) with the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). Right now I'm busy with a computer-training course offered for the first time for black people by the government.

On becoming a leader: In her own words. As compared to nursing, I think teaching is better. I did not like teaching at first. Besides the fact that my father had some influence, for most Black women, teaching was a non-option. The choice of careers for Black women was limited. Now, I like teaching and I enjoy working with kids. I love people and I never regretted the career choice afterwards. For me, leadership comes naturally. I have been a leader of one sort or the other all my life. I was a chief prefect at high school and college. I am a president of various women organizations. I don't know what these people see in me, but I end up in leadership positions.

I was always committed to my work, even in the earlier years of my teaching when teachers would go on strikes and boycotts. I enjoyed challenges associated with my role and responsibilities. As a school leader I work well with my teachers. I involve them in every thing that happens in this school and I try to be as transparent as possible. We work in team and committees. For instance, in the meeting you just observed, I do not control the funds, especially those from fundraising campaigns. There is a chairperson and treasurer in every committee. They do everything and they just give me feedback on their activities. Of course I play a major role as an advisor; they also get ideas from me and implement if they feel the idea is viable.

I involve parents in the running of the school. We call meetings on a regular basis. Although most parents do not come to meetings, because most are still afraid and they do not understand that this is their school and that they should contribute also in terms of ideas. But on the other hand, I really don't blame them. They were not given an opportunity to act in the past. So, they do not know how to do that. I have done so much in my time as the principal; we have a partnership with the German embassy. We offer German as a subject, thus giving these children an opportunity to go on after they leave this school. The German government assists with resources, we have computers from IBM, we have Read Educate And Develop (READ). I go out there and talk to people, I invite them to the school, I find out how they can contribute to the education of the black child.

The community around us is very proud of this school. We let them use the facilities for community purposes. We inform them when there are functions at this school. Parents from as far as Meadowlands and Tshiawelo bring their children to this

school because we are trying to produce the best result, even in these conditions. Most parents removed their kids from the former Model C schools because they believe that what we are offering is as good as what those white schools offer. Why should our poor black parents have to pay all those high fees and transport costs when we can deliver the same goods?

As educators we are responsible for educating these children who are under our care. We are responsible for imparting knowledge, for preparing the child to become a responsible adult to the community as she grows up. We have a responsibility to teach these children so that they mature and be able to differentiate between good and bad.

Forces in my life: In her own words. The most positive force in my life is my extended family, that is, my parents, six brothers and two sisters. They are a source of support and strength. As I said before, we are a very strong family and we go all out to support each other. Although I consider my husband as a good man and good husband, I had to do most of the things especially financially since he was sick for a very long time. That was my first challenge.

Ethnicity is still a big problem in South Africa. As a Muvenda yourself, I think you understand what I mean. Those who belong to the major ethnic groups like the Zulu and Sotho will deny that we are still treated unequally. I consider myself a highly educated person, but I will not deny such an obvious thing. For example, we do not have a Xitshangana or Tshivenda TV channel, let alone a program. We have to learn IsiZulu or Sesotho to watch TV news and at the same time we are supposed to pay the same TV license fees. In our principals' meeting, I'm seen as a Mutshangana woman first before I become a person. My being a school principal of a very successful school is secondary to

my ethnicity. Our present government ignores this problem and concentrates on racial difference. You may not have thought about this, but race does not play a big role in our daily lives in our schools. I mean, we do not have white schools in Soweto, we do not interact with white people on a constant basis and I do not witness oppression in my every day existence.

However, I see unequal treatment among black or rather African groups as the main challenge as compared to race. Of course, the apartheid system regarded me as a Third Class Citizen, maybe not even a citizen but an "alien", but the main machinery was ethnic separation introduced and perpetuated by the apartheid system. Because the Matshangana people are few in number, apartheid encouraged other African groups to think that they are better than me as a Mutshangana person. In general, the AmaZulu and the AmaXhosa feel superior to me. Because of your ethnicity they put you down as a human being. Even when you are strong, there is a "Pull Her Down Syndrome." Even other women, they pull you down. Even when you are like a rock or builder and can't be moved, they try to move you until they are sure and convinced that you are unshakeable – they will try their level best. There is no appreciation of your efforts.

Although I was never a member of SADTU, I align with its ideology. At first, I really liked National Education Union Of South Africa (NEUSA) which then became SADTU. For example, there was a disparity of salary scales between Black and White and male and female. The salary issue was only resolved in the early 90's where male and female teachers with the same qualifications could get the same salary. However, issues of subsidies were still not resolved. Women could not be subsidized for houses, and other benefits were not available for them. During the times of the political struggles,

SADTU had a sense of direction. At a later stage people lost direction, and I believe they did not know what they were doing. I never supported the ideology of “Liberation before Education.” I believed that education was important and that oppression will never be lifted without education.

Another major challenge is in terms of lack of parental involvement in the running of our schools. I think, again, this is because of where we come from. Our past knowledge and beliefs! All along, our parents and community thought the school belonged to the government. As a result, the government should be responsible for everything and anything. They never played a role. At first, even when the school was under construction, black communities were never approached; they were never told of what was happening right under their noses. They would see the buildings coming up or maybe find out from the workers who were building the school as to the kind of school and so on. Usually, in a normal situation, the community must be contacted and be part of the decision-making. In that way, the communities will take ownership, support and protect the school. I think this thinking contributed a lot to burglary and vandalism. If communities are made part of the whole process and decision making, a sense of ownership is possible. They will see the school as theirs. Because they saw these schools as the property of the oppressive rich government, they did not mind taking things from them. The very members of the community served by the school stole things like TV's, doors, and equipment. These people thought the government would replace what was taken from these schools and the government never did.

What I like most is working with children; I enjoy looking at children growing up and maturing in front of me, I enjoying witnessing the success and progress. And what I

hate are the pains of failing to reach my goals. My strong point is that I able to bring people together, I am good at motivating people into working hard. And my weak point is that at times I get tired when I realize that what ever I am doing is not succeeding, and I tend to be discourage.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words. I define

leadership as the ability to guide others, to have vision in life, to have goals and know where you are going, to have a positive attitude, to have empathy. A transformative leader is able to move, to realize that the past is not written off but should take the old and combine with new. People are no longer so bitter about change and the new.

Transformative leadership is about making people take back ownership, to understand that these schools belong to them not the government. Leadership is involvement, and openness. If you consult you became open and you ultimately share. And when you are an approachable person, people are able to come to you even when they have done something wrong. They know you are there to listen without passing judgment. I think leadership is something that you learn through time, the experiences you learn through education and guidance from others. You just don't take things for granted. There is planning, organizing and control in leadership. At times one has to be autocratic to see that things are done on time.

Social justice involves equal distribution of resources in terms of materials and human ability. I don't think I have a better definition since I have never experienced what social justice is. There is no social justice, not at the school level anyway. It is easier in whites' schools, because stakeholders are whites who are managers of companies. For me, Mandela's regime moved white parents and communities closer to their schools.

They now work harder and support their schools more since the new government. And because whites own companies, there is no social justice; distribution will never be the same. White schools will get more forever, in my opinion; there will never be any equity in the next 50 years. Even now in the new dispensation, poor workers are not treated alike. For me, there is no new South Africa. Not at the moment because white people still enjoy certain benefits and a middle/upper class citizenship.

I see power as strength over others. For instance, men have power, whites have power, and at times you get power because of your financial position. Education gives the status of power. Political status also gives power. You have to attain power, you have to empower yourself, and others do not give you power. You can attain power by educational qualifications and educational achievements.

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words

My motto is, don't wait for other people to appreciate you, do it yourself. I believe that as leaders we have the ability to give others the opportunity, which could not be achieved if we had not extended beyond the call of duty. We need to transcend the boundaries of oppression. I create opportunities and I think positively on a long term while building on what I have. I don't believe in destroying what we had, but I prefer to put more layers than to start again. That is how I perceive the transition from apartheid education to the new order. We cannot denounce everything created by apartheid as bad and evil because there are things that worked then. What we need is to remove the worst and build on the good. We still have to hold on to those we consider good ethics, like punctuality, teacher ethics, respect and discipline. Don't take me wrong, corporal punishment was a devil, but education without discipline is a worse devil!

As I look back, I see my life as an oak tree which can stand all the conditions. You cannot easily destroy it, unless you dig and remove all its roots. I really stood the test of time for one lifetime. As a transformative leader, my life has been like that of a trained horse or dog. Once trained, the dog will do what it should. When it hears a noise, it stops, watches and continues. If not trained, the dog chases after its tail and every little noise distracts it. A trained one knows its goal. If you want to transform, you do what ever comes your way. Like an untrained dog, leaders without transformative visions wait for opportunities to avail themselves. I create opportunities. Making sense of my life and work as a Black African Woman has been my pride. Every day is like an eye opener, like a toddler when she starts moving; you can't stop her. No one can stop me now, not for one moment! I'll go on venturing into new avenues, though I'll fall on the way, but I'll tread on.

Steel: "The Driver not the Engine"

"Have you met Steel yet? You can't study women creating social justice, especially in Soweto without making Steel of part of your study!" "We go to her school to learn about OBE and other related subjects, I don't know how she does all that!" (Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). How can I ignore such wonderful remarks! She returned my call one morning after three failed attempts. I had to cancel all appointments for the day to take the opportunity to meet this marvelous woman.

Livhuwani Primary School is situated in a section predominantly for the Vhavenda group. Livhuwani is a Tshivenda word that literally means, "be thankful". The

school was built in the early 1970's in the area specifically allocated for the Vhavenda speaking people of South Africa. Steel met me at the school door and I immediately had a sense of encountering a strong personality. My very first encounter confirmed most of the observations that my colleagues and the people who recommended her had made including her warm nature and energetic personality. I felt at ease.

Steel's office is rather too small for her personality. My attention was drawn to the two life sized pictures hanging on the office walls: one of Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk shaking hands and the other of Hector Petersen's lifeless body carried by an older student, the first victim of the June 16, 1976 Soweto schools boycotts. I could not help but wonder at the outstanding contradictions. Here on the one wall is Mandela shaking hand with the enemy and in the same room, a picture of a lifeless innocent 13-year-old boy whose life came to an end as a result of de Klerk's government. I was to learn the meaning she derives from the contradictions later in her description of her artifacts. The two pictures symbolize hope and motivation. She believes that if Nelson Mandela can forgive FW de Klerk for the 27 years of pain and suffering on Robben Island, then, everything else is possible, and that we can be motivated to strive on. These are symbols of "hope in hopelessness".

We ended up talking for more than the 20 minutes allocated for my first visit. Our first interview was set for the next Monday afternoon at her school. I arrived 30 minutes early for that appointment and was able to observe her as she went about her work.

Steel's formative years and coming of age: In her own words. I was born on January 1, 1953, in Alexandra Township. My mother and I went back to Venda when I was still a baby. As a first child, I was left with my paternal grandmother when my mother came

back to Johannesburg in order to conceive her second child. After the second child was born, my mother refused to go back to Venda to face yet another existence of poverty, hunger, hard work, poor health and lack of care that most women in the rural areas experience. She joined her husband who was working as a laborer at OK Bazaars. I only joined my parents in 1964 when I was in Std 3. In a month, I was promoted to Std 4 at Dzata primary school, the only school in Soweto for the Vhavenda people at that time. I did my Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) after Junior Certificate (JC) at Vendaland Teachers' Training College.

I started teaching with a JC qualification and a PTC in 1972 here at Livhuwani Primary School. And in 1982, I also taught in a night school, teaching adults basic literacy until 1999. In 1975, I started to correspond for my Matric and completed it in 1978. I continued studying and did my Bachelor of Arts in 1981-1984 with UNISA. My major subjects were Tshivenda and Afrikaans. In 1998, I completed my B.Ed in Educational Management with UNISA. I still have two incomplete courses with UNISA because I had started to study for an honors degree in Applied Linguistics in 1988 because, then, I was a subject adviser for African languages.

When we were growing up, there were no opportunities for special talents. When I was still at Dzata primary school, there was a teacher who was our girls' choir conductor. Because I am dark she didn't want me to stand in front. She said I should hide myself between two girls who were lighter in complexion. She told me "I just want to hear your sweet voice and not your black face!" (At this point, we both cried). My self-identity, well... I have a very negative self-image; because of my color and dark complexion. I think I'm not good looking. People told me that I was not good looking; in

fact some said that I was ugly...and I thought I wasn't good for anybody. As a result, I developed a very negative self-image. However, coming to education and learning, it was a different story. Teachers used to say she is bright. And I said to myself, even if I'm not that pretty, my brains are pretty enough and I will get those people who think I'm ugly in class. And I told myself that I was not going to change who I was. I did not use any skin lightening creams that has had damaging effect on many African women and some men.

As I was growing up, I thought that nobody could love or marry me. I had a friend and we used to talk a lot about ourselves and we decided to become Catholic nuns because we knew they were not allowed to marry. And I just thought that nobody could love me. I never trusted any one, especially a boy. Boys used to write letters pronouncing their love for me, but I never believed them. Nonetheless, I'm married to a very good man, who loves me dearly... and we have been together for a blissful 25 years. We have four children, three girls and boy. And the two girls are working while the third one is doing journalism at RAU. The first one is a Sales Manager, the second one is a Banker, and the fourth one, my son, is a learner at special school. He has some disabilities. I have my immediate family (my husband and my children) and my extended family including my parents and in-laws who are still alive.

I am a Christian and I grew up in the Full Gospel church before joining my husband's Lutheran church. For the past six years, I have been a church elder, and I am also a preacher. I also belong to our church choir. While living with my grandmother in Vendaland, I ran away to go to attend the traditional initiation school "Musevhetho". Since my grandmother was very religious, she didn't like these traditional rituals and

cultural activities. Because of friends who called us Mashuvhuru which is a derogative term for those who are not initiated, I had to run away and join the Musevhetho.

However, in addition, I had to attend the Christian initiation school Vhusha since I was from a Christian family. This school was different because they use the bible to teach the girls some rules and laws on becoming a young woman. Judging by my age, things have not changed. When I grew up, girls were always in the kitchen. But in my family, we grew up with the understanding that we had to share tasks and chores in the kitchen or in our home. My mother did not say this task was for boys or this was for girls.

I wanted to become a nurse. I would stand in front of the mirror! You know nurses had a cape and a cap! And I would fold a white paper to make a cap and stand in front of the mirror and put it on my head. Unfortunately, I did not become a nurse. As I was growing up and visiting clinics and hospitals and seeing people vomit and blood everywhere, I did not have the heart for it. I knew that I was not going to cope with such challenges. I also became a teacher because I wanted to. My aunt went to Vendaland Teachers Training College a year before me. During the holidays she brought with her photo albums. And looking at those photos made me envy her and then I knew I wanted to teach and have a photo album, too. Yet my secondary school principal encouraged me to go ahead and do Matric, but I refused. I was a brilliant student and I could have made it. Matric was this so-called gorilla which could be passed by a handful of special chosen students! In his efforts to keep me, the principal refused to sign the application forms from the teachers' training college. He came all the way to my home to try to convince my parents to force me to do Matric. Since my parents were not educated, they did not know the difference, they just said to him, "if she wants to become a teacher, then she is

going to become one!” My high school principal even went to Mr. Khangale, my former primary school principal to ask him to go and talk to my parents. And he was also defeated. My parents said that she wants to go to the Tshakhuma and we cannot force her to do what she doesn’t want to do. Now, looking back, I don’t know if that was the right decision. I don’t know whether to regret it or not. I don’t know, sometimes I do regret. Maybe I would have become a teacher, but with better qualifications. I would not have had to waste so many precious years, time, and money trying to upgrade my qualification.

On becoming a leader: In her own words. I became a head of department- HOD of African languages at Progress High in 1985. We had many African languages like Setswana, IsiZulu, Tshivenda, Xitsonga/Xitshangana and Sesotho. In the same year in 1985, I became head teacher of Progress Adult School until the end of last year, 1999. It is something like a principalship where you are responsible for the running of the center. I think I did a good job because some of my adult students started at standard 1 and they went on beyond Matric. Today, some of my adult students are graduates. I become so proud when they come and show me their achievement. It is always a pleasure to hear them say, “Mrs. Steel, you made us and we are what we are today because of you”

I left night school because of the new policy. As a full time teacher, you are not allowed to teach at an adult school. Although the policy gives other people an opportunity to secure a job, I think it fails in one way or the other. All the experienced teachers were removed from the system and most of the new teachers had never set foot in a normal classroom let alone the experience of teaching younger students during the day. These young people are expected to teach adults who come to these centers tired and

frustrated! And these young teachers are not trained for that kind of teaching. These are the so-called new laws or policies in the so-called new South Africa. Because I have been a supervising teacher for fourteen years, I have been assigned a duty of training new supervisor teachers until the end of this year.

Before becoming the principal of this school, I was a subject adviser for African languages on a regional level from 1991 to 1993. Then, I was promoted to this principalship post in 1994. When I first started at this school, the school account had something like R400. And nothing was happening. Even basic resources like typewriters that could be purchased from the limited school funds were not available. I just did not know how these people worked! Then, I came up with ideas of how to raise funds. Mind you, I got this position in 1994. And between 1994 and in 1995 we had raised R16, 000; we had bought a typewriter and a photocopier. And today we have a Computer, TV, fridge, printers, and carpets. And we got funds from parents and from hiring out our classrooms to some of the local churches. When I came here, the local vendors used to sit outside of the schoolyard. And I told them that they could come inside of the schoolyard. And they give us R5 or something per week as rental. We also arrange activities like Valentine's Day, Taxies day and so forth. We have to be very innovative to raise our funds. As you know, local businesses are not very keen on supporting local schools.

Forces in my life: In her own words. Being Muvenda has helped me to know most of the languages that are spoken in South Africa. For example, in Meadowlands High, we used to have Tshivenda, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiZulu, Xitsonga or Xitshangana, and Sepedi. And we could not speak our Tshivenda language in public! It was like you were a sub-human to speak another language other than the dominant Sesotho or IsiZulu. And we

were forced to know their languages. Hence I can speak Sesotho, IsiZulu and I have a good command of the other African languages that are part of the eleven official languages of South Africa. I can't communicate well nor can I speak the Afrikaans language fluently, but I can write it. I used to teach Afrikaans from STD 6 to 7, but now... it's a matter of attitude. For instance, when I became the SABC radio announcer for the Tshivenda language in 1972, I was also a primary teacher at that time. Those people, the SABC officials, would not speak any other language except English and Afrikaans. And if you did not know how to express yourself in English or Afrikaans, you were not welcome to work there. I told myself that I was going to study. I read a lot of English books, and a lot of newspapers. Language had played a discriminatory role in different ways in my life. But I had to succeed and work harder to know the language in power.

Being a Muvenda woman has its disadvantages, too. In a way, you are expected to do more as a female teacher than men. As the only HOD, and also a woman, I had a hard time. When I was an HOD of African Languages at Progress high school, there was an UmZulu teacher who wouldn't like to take instructions from a woman. And also, a Mosotho old man who taught English and who thought I was inferior because I am a Muvenda. And since the Deputy principal was also a woman, the principal as the only man in the leading position in this high school, this was seen as an anomaly. The old man used to complain and make remarks such as "This school is under a petticoat government". "This school is under X and Steel." I think he would not have felt that way if the situation was reversed and the two others or rather X and Steel were men! I think the stereotype went further to the extent that these men felt that because you are a

woman, then your leadership skills were questionable. And the English teacher, the old man, kept on saying that the school will never become right because it was under a petticoat government.

I know that I am Muvenda and I will remain a Muvenda and I am very proud to be a Muvenda. Normally, as Vhavenda we are looked down upon, regarded as inferior or rather, as less intelligent. You know, this is a very sensitive issue and I don't think we should be talking about ethnicity...after all; we are all Africans. We should move beyond ethnicity, we should look at each other as Africans whether you are black or white, as long as you were born in Africa. Another challenge was from the government itself. As teachers in the former government, even with the same qualifications and in most cases, with higher qualifications, women could not get the same salary as men. We used to get less than them.

Another thorny issue is the issue of unions. If I had power, I would say that teachers must not belong to Unions. Things like subordination, intimidation, all emanated from and are supported by teachers unions. In my opinion, low teachers, low morale, lack of self-respect, absenteeism, problems of punctuality are the result of a relationship between unions and politicians. If I had powers I would say, perhaps, that the government should not align with certain unions. If the government is standing on one side, and the Union is on its own side, I think we would have had better control of/in our education. But since the union is part of the government, we will always have problems.

We, as principals, like to work with the governing bodies and believe in parental involvement but sometimes the members abuse their powers. Like in my case, there is this woman, who is a vice secretary of our governing body, who likes to accuse and insult

me for no apparent reason. Last week she went to an extent of physically assaulting me, I mean, literally hitting me with fists in public and in front of the whole school! She said things like, “You are not running the school the way it should be”; “ the school must be run by the governing body.” I remember when we had a meeting; one of the governing body members asked her, “Mrs. A, in your opinion, who is supposed to manage the school?” And she said that it was the responsibility of the governing body. And the man asked her again “Then, what is the role of the principal, why is she supposed to be here?” And to that question she answered, ‘the principal is a robot’! And because of that and other such things, I feel my progress as a principal is being hampered. Somehow, somebody is trying to apply her PHDs on me. And just when you really want to work and make things happen in your school, here comes a person who is trying to break all your efforts.

But on the other hand, I think it is because of lack of knowledge and little education. Little education is very dangerous. Some people feel that they know a lot because they are politically active! And even when we conduct our meetings she always complains that the meeting is not procedural. I think the department should have trained these people before allowing them to be placed in positions of power. What is the meaning of capacity building then? These people can do better if they are trained and know their roles.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words. I don’t do things on my own and I always tell my colleagues that I am a driver and that they are the engine. And when the engine is not in a right order the driver cannot do anything. A leader is always the one who initiates things, somebody who does things, a person who comes up

with the good ideas and sells them to the people she is leading, in such a way that the teachers believe that such ideas come from them. A leader is a person who when she has a dream, lets others realize it for her. We have a family type-relationship; we are a big family, like sisters and brothers. And there is a lot of teamwork and delegation. When I delegate duties, I give them the responsibility with the equal accountability. My communication is transparent and our working spirit is quite good. And because teachers are so dedicated, when we close school at the end of the year, I give them presents and sometimes I organize lunches for them. It makes a difference. In general, I can say the relationship between the teachers and me is good. I don't know, as a leader they say, "love them all and trust no one" but I do trust them. I don't work in isolation and I am not the old type of principal, and I do listen and take the ideas of other into consideration.

As leaders, we are in the business of schooling, the business of transforming people, providing a better future for people, to change a person to becoming knowledgeable. It is my job to remove people from darkness, so that they begin to understand things better, and to widen their world. Learning gives that kind of power. I think by now I understand that as a leader you are not a boss, you have to make things happen, and lead the people. But sometimes you become a boss if you want to. I understand that a school is not just an organization; it is like any other business. We have to conduct it like a real business to satisfy our clients, and our clients are the parents who are bringing their children to our schools. Because if there is no production the business will fall, and as a school, if we do not deliver, parents will take their children to other schools! And we will remain empty, and as a result, our teachers will be redeployed. In my leadership, efficiency is the number one priority. We have to be efficient and

effective if we want to conduct our business here at our school, so as to have quality in our education.

As a leader, I would like to be seen as a person who is always a woman; as women we have a caring nature. I am very ambitious and pushing, and whenever I set up to do a thing I want to succeed. And if I don't succeed I don't stop trying. I am always trying for the best. And as for this school, I always wanted it to be a model school. In a way, I can safely say that it is a model school although we have not reached where I want it to be. I consider myself as a powerful leader, somebody who has a vision, who can make things happen.

I am bringing the culture of teaching and learning back into our school with the support of parents. We cannot have that culture of learning without having parental involvement. In addition, the school, the community, business people, and all stakeholders must come together, and work hand in hand. Because these components are not working hand in hand with the school, that is why we find some members of the community selling drugs to our students and also allowing students to stay in their houses when they are supposed to be at school.

To create and to maintain healthy relationships, you have to allow people to participate and to get involved in what you are doing, and a healthy relationship is important and once a relationship is not healthy, then as a leader you will never achieve what ever you want to achieve. As much as we are caring, sometimes we should be very strict in not allowing things that are not acceptable. We don't have to be loved by doing wrong things; I think we should always try to do the right things. That is why schools that are headed by women are doing better, more especially in high schools. If you can check

the Matric results, schools that are lead by women are better than those lead by men. Although we are very understanding, very caring and loving, we don't allow laissez- faire situations, but we lead! In terms of power, I can have power here in the school, the government has power, in my family I have certain powers, and every situation has its own kind of power. I don't think that we initially have power, or rather that power emanates from us. Nobody has power! We need to be empowered. We are empowered by others.

Social justice! How do I begin to define that? Social justice is at least equal access, equal distribution of resources. I thought the new government was going to address those disparities and provide equally for all South Africans. Without even going further than racial differences, right now, Mandela is going from school to school in the Eastern Cape, the AmaXhosa areas, building primary schools! Just this year, about four or five new, well built schools were officially opened by various organizations on TV, with Mandela standing by and smiling, while preaching the "back to school, culture of learning and teaching sermon!" Have you ever heard of or seen any new school from Venda, let alone the Northern Province? Maybe that is our understanding of social justice. The social justice that gives one ethnic group more than the others!

Now that we are allowed to go to the former white schools we can now see the difference, and that we have been exploited for so long. Look at this school for example, like most African schools, there is a general lack of basic resources. This office, the principal's office, it cannot even be compare to a storeroom in the whites' school! We hear all the noises about redress and equal access, and I haven't seen it yet and it is almost six years now. They should have started with schools, to give us better

classrooms. And, at least give us buildings and administration blocks. And we are still using this block, as dilapidated as it was 10 years ago. And according to me there is no difference between the old regime and this new one. And they are trying to redress and have equity, and as far I am concerned... let me talk about buildings. For example, we don't have administration, and if you go to white schools there is no compromise at all. And coming to resources such as basic things that schools must have, things like a photocopier and computers, black schools have to raise funds and get their own. The department is not giving us any of those things and I feel that equity is not yet here. Maybe it is still on its way. We'll live to see that in another ten years. To have anything in most Soweto schools, parents have to bleed, give the little they already do not have.

I have been involved in adult education, and I taught quite a number of people and some of them have made it in life, and for me this is social justice. Giving some one an opportunity they would otherwise not get. And I organize classes for the students who are doing Tshivenda grade 12. And by the way, I do not get paid for the service, I have to foot the bill, drive them to their homes after our sessions, and at times provide them with food and transport fares. And also, as a church elder, I cannot divorce myself from the community. Whenever we hear that there is something like death, even if the person did not belong to our church, we organize the other women and go and offer a prayer and condolences to the family. As a school, when there is a death in the community, we visit the family and offer our support in terms of a classroom, furniture and whatever we can offer. That is social justice to me!

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words.

If you have a dream, let others realize it for you. When I do things, I always want to be a

winner; I don't want to be second best to any one. I don't want to work alone, I use other people's potentials. These are some of the remarks I need to write and paste on the wall to be seen and read by all. These remarks define me! I have learnt through time that it is significant to create and to maintain healthy relationships, and to allow people to participate, to get them involved even in what you are doing. As I look back, I don't regret the choice I made of becoming a teacher because I love children. I want to continue to create conducive learning environments in our schools and communities.

One of my main weaknesses is that I sometimes became emotional and short tempered. For instance, if a person does something wrong once and I warn or advise her, when she does it again, I don't expect to give her the same advice over again. I just lose it. What I find as one of my strengths in my leadership style is my ability to delegate. As I said before, I don't work alone. I invite others to work with me. I'm not the engine of this car, but just a mere driver.

One of my artifacts is this small three-legged pot I'm holding in my hands. If one leg breaks, the pot will lose its balance. It will not be able to stand on its own. Therefore, I see the relationship among the teachers as educators, students and parents as a team effort. We have to work together to maintain the equilibrium. The second and third are the two big posters on the wall. Here on the one wall is Mandela shaking the hand of the enemy and on the other side of the wall, a picture of a lifeless innocent 13-year-old boy, Hector Petersen, whose life came to an end at the hands of de Klerk's government. Black and white people had to die to pave the way to freedom. I believe that if Mandela can find it in his heart to shake hands with his enemy who caused him so much pain for 27 years in Robben Island, and torture his family for most of the 27 years, then, everything

is possible. I believe there is hope even in a hopeless situation like education in our black schools. Like Mandela, we as black leaders should strive and hope for the best in all our endeavors. My third artifact is the largest poster on the furthest side of the wall, with Mandela's first public speech on the day he was released from prison on February 11, 1990. As I look at the words, his cry for education in black schools, I become more motivated to go an extra mile and help these kids. When I look at these words, every day becomes a new day of motivation to me. These are symbols of hope in hopelessness.

As I look back, my life has been like climbing a mountain of challenges, but I have probably left some footprints on the sands of time. My practice as a transformative educational leader has been very difficult in that the education department had a top-down type of management style. While I wanted to share responsibilities with my colleagues, at times, I had to infringe on some of the rules and regulation of the department at my own cost. It was not comfortable because I knew the consequences would be high if found out.

Making sense of my life and work as a Black African Woman has been a difficult task. To achieve leadership is not God-given because many people assume that men are better leaders than women or women should learn to act like men when they are leaders. I feel that in leadership, both men and women need to be involved without discrimination. In my leadership as a Black African woman, if it were not for my strong character, I could have crumbled under the pressures created by gender, ethnicity and cultural/traditional expectations, that women cannot lead a community. My task from now and henceforth is also to foster a climate of shared values and principles essential to a free and democratic society.

Lead: “The mother who puts children first”

“You re going to meet one of the very few thoughtful African women I have ever met.” “Lead is powerful, I wished she had stayed on and become principal of Veritus high school, she was doing a great job.” “Lead has done so much for that poor school in such a short period of time, if other principals could learn from people like her, our schools could be better.” (Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). At first I was hesitant to call her, because it was still early on a Sunday morning. When I finally made the call, I found out that the friend who recommended her had already called to introduce me. We set an appointment to meet at her school, the next Monday morning.

Tiyang is a primary school built in the early 70’s in one of Sesotho speaking section of Soweto townships. Tiyang means, “be strong”. This is a school 200 meters away from the dump mines. It is inevitable that the windy season takes its toll, blowing all the dump waste on these poor black children from the already impoverished families. Unlike all other primary schools in this study, Tiyang is in the remote outskirts of the township. Surprisingly, the principals’ office, however small, was spotless with not even a speck of dust anywhere. At first she seemed shy, but after our first meeting, she was open, and relaxed to a point of excitement. At times I had to redirect our conversations because she would provide every detail of her various experiences. For the first time in her life, she had a voice, she felt free to express and share her innermost experiences. Every interview we had took more than two hours of very rich and lengthy conversations.

Lead’s formative years and coming of age: In her own words. I was born in Johannesburg some 46 years ago. I’m a first child to a Mosotho political activist father, a staunch

member of Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and a Mopedi mother who was a Nursing Sister at Baragwanath Hospital. And in the 1960's, my father was banned and I think it is where their marriage problems started. I had parents but I never had an opportunity to live with either one of them. My brother and I were brought up by our maternal and paternal grandparents at different stages in our lives. We joined my father in exile in Uganda when I was something like three or four years old. After three years, we moved to Lesotho where we lived with my paternal grandparents. And my mother remained in Johannesburg working as a nurse at the hospital. I can't say I know my father because he was not there to be my father. And I also knew my maternal grandmother more than my mother, because my mother was working in Johannesburg when we moved back to South Africa.

In 1970, the Lesotho political problems erupted to the extent of a state of emergency. My father was an opposing politician against the government of Lesotho. And it was difficult for him to get a job, and as a result, it was very hard for my brother and me to survive, but we survived. My father was arrested during the state of emergency and my grandmother was already dead. So, we had a grandfather who acted as both a mother and a father. And my mother could not even come to Lesotho to see us because the South African regime was very difficult. Actually, I don't know my mother but I always wondered and marveled at her strength. Even though she was far away from us, she actually guided us somehow; she was a strong woman. Fortunately, I was the blessed one; I was a brilliant child. I really missed a normal life of growing up and going to school in front of my real parents. I think I told myself that one day I am going to do it. At the age of 15 years, my mother kidnapped us, I don't know if I should use this term,

but she took us on pretense of a visit to Johannesburg. We had left all our clothes in Lesotho. Because of cultural beliefs, she knew our grandfather would not let us stay and live with her in Johannesburg. Sitting down and looking at the whole thing, I feel pity for my father who was in detention. Just imagine, you are in detention, and your wife takes your children, and she is not even in your country! It was just confusion, we were also confused. We did not know whether these people, our parents, were still married and what was happening. But somehow, my father disappointed my mother because he was not working as a result of his politics. So, those things always made us hopeless.

At that time, education in South Africa was not compulsory for Blacks. And by the way, in Lesotho there was no Afrikaans. Coming to South Africa and living in the rural areas of Pietersburg with my maternal grandparents posed several problems in terms of language. First, I had to learn Afrikaans in standard 7. In addition, I had to learn Sepedi, which is far more difficult and complicated than Sesotho, with its many dialects. And then, as a result of the two languages problems, I was demoted to a lower standard. I just told myself that I must do it. My maternal grandfather bought me an Afrikaans dictionary so that I could translate from English to Afrikaans. I was surprised when I got position 2 in my class at the end of the year. Then I realized that I was something better, and that I could do it. The two languages did not hinder my progress at all; I passed my Matric with an exemption. Although, however, I met the required number of points for admission to either a medical or Bachelor of Science (B.SC) Degree, my application was not approved because I was a black woman. It was rare for a Black woman to qualify. My second choice was to become a social worker. I always loved to work with people. I passed my ordinary BA degree in 1978, and then did my University Education Diploma

(UED). I was 25 years old when I started teaching at a high school in Potgittersrus, not only the youngest on the staff, but the only one with a degree.

Somehow I could feel that people who were above me were really threatened by my qualifications, my approach to kids. I took kids as human beings. I could be angry and they knew it, but I also opened the door for them to come to me. And to my surprise, I related well with other teachers. I started upgrading other teachers. The schools had more women, and sometimes I'd teach them how to care for these kids. I really knew that these kids depended on me 100 % of the time. They did not have any library, or any other source of knowledge. I think it was 1980 when I started as a new teacher; the Matric math results were not that good, and during my second year the results became better, and the third year I beat the whole district! I had beaten even the teachers that had more teaching experience than me. My credibility rose. In 1983, I came to Veritus High School in Soweto. I had been teaching for two years when I was promoted HOD of Math and Science. I sometimes asked myself why, but I know it was because I qualified for it. I have my senior degree, a B.Ed from UNISA. And it was difficult. I started reading for it during 1986, and also being a mother of two young ones. I remember I was expecting my son when I went to my graduation in 1988. My younger daughter was one year.

On becoming a leader: In her own words. By 1987, I was a Deputy principal of a high school. Somehow it just happened. I never used to shy away from my responsibility and sometimes when teachers did not want to do their job, I use to go ahead and do them. Since I worked in the same school with my husband, things were very difficult. He was supposed to just stand by and watch as teachers and others took advantage of me or become insubordinate. However, I was brave enough to face the teachers and all their

concerns. But it never occurred to me that one day I will lead a high school and as a black woman! In 1988, I was an acting principal of about 1500 high school students in a very dangerous community. And I was still a young mother of two who had just got married. I just had to do what I had to do. And I had to make sure that everything was in order. Sometimes as a woman, you are treated like a donkey! You are not expected to get tired, everybody just kicks you, teachers, and students, without warning, even your own kids. And still you have to produce results.

By the way, I was a full time teacher and also principal of the school. And sometimes in the morning I had to admit new students, solve problems and conflicts, and spend time with administrative work when I was expected/supposed to be teaching a Matric math class. So I realized that if I have to make these kids pass at the end of the year, I must create time. I was still a mother with very young kids who needed 100% of my time and attention. But I also had to give 100% of my time to the other kids. I remember I sat down and said to the students, I am going to create time and you are also required to (help me to create it. So, you are going to have extra lessons in the morning and afternoon in order to cover the syllabus. I'm one person who doesn't become very happy if students don't finish the work. I'd rather do it and cover everything, even if it means that I could not do it thoroughly. The fact is that they must know at least something. In 1988, as the principal of Veritus high school, we produced the best results of its time. You can imagine, during that time, teachers were really into the slowdown and chalk-down syndrome. They would not honor their periods; they would come late to school, and the morale was very low. Nevertheless, under my leadership, the school produced the best results ever.

I remember one teacher asking me why I was in this position, and I told her I knew why, because I put children first. But the experience was terrible and I just told myself this is the job, my job and I wanted to do it. And in 1989, the principal post for this primary school was advertised. I remember applying for it you know. Apparently, there were three men and two women who applied for the post. And I felt intimidated that I was competing with people who had experience of teaching in the primary school, while I was high school teacher/ acting principal. The interviews were tough, but I got the position. I remember the promise I made to myself, to take care and look after this school.

I think my education helped me, because I was able to analyze my staff, understand them and their fears and even make them feel at home. I think by coming here I was like fresh air, and I was the youngest and first female principal in the history of this school. It was a challenge to the staff, parents and me. The first year in 1989 was hard because I was not accepted hundred percent. I had problems, both as a new principal in a primary school setting and also as a woman leading men. You know what, even the children had no concept of a female principal. Whenever I enter their various class they would say, "Good morning/afternoon Sir." It took a while for these kids to get used to the idea that I am a woman and they should address me as Mam. Besides, I thought women would be on my side; what a joke. It was like they were rejoicing, trying to see this woman who thinks she is a man. They would either be neutral and kept quiet when some male teachers were defiant. Women would rather gossip about it than to defend or be on my side. For example, this male teacher who taught electrical engineering to a group of Std 4 and Std 5 classes had to accompany children to a technical school for their practicals every Tuesday of the week. I noticed that they were going alone in the bus without him or rather without

any supervision. I found this happening and no one taking any note of it. It went on the first Tuesday and the kids went alone. Then as a beginner sometimes you just keep quiet. The following week it happened and I said no, this is going rather too far. I confronted the teacher. And then I made my first charge as a woman, young, black, and our culture did not allow me to tell a man what to do. I had to do it, and you could see that he was surprised. I'm sure he said to himself, "I cannot be told what to do by a woman."

These are the people who were used to doing things their way, and suddenly, they had to change. They were just not prepared to take orders especially not from a woman; they refused. My first priority is the kids, and I made a promise that I cannot allow the kids to go to the bus alone, because kids are kids and anything can happen while unattended. Politely, I talked to the teacher and I was surprised by his reaction. He said, "I was expecting a confrontation and I was ready all these three months, waiting for you to approach me. Your approach surprised me. I have never been lead by a woman and as you understand our culture, if you are a woman you are a woman!" And I know that, even our Basotho boys don't take orders from their mothers. The whole thing is perpetuated at a very early age in the boy's live. When a boy is born in a family, a man is born! Men teach their male children that women are not important. I managed to pass that first test, and I can tell you after two days the male teacher became one of the best teachers I ever had.

The first year people would pass me looking for the principal! And ask, where is the principal of this school? And they were not expecting a young lady to be a principal. It has always been a norm that older males would be appointed for the principal post. The former principal was already 50 years old when he was appointed. It was a very strange thing for the community, just a mere young women running a school! But I turned these

mountains into anthills. I believe the community behaves toward you according to how you work. At first I knew I was not welcome at all, but I extended myself to the community. Now, they see in me, their leader who is willing to go an extra mile for their children.

Forces in my life: In her own words. My main positive force in my life is achieving higher education. It gave me pride. It made me feel free to present myself within other races. I know that I have something to offer, and I must not shy away from my opinion. It gave me a kind of right to talk and talk back. As a black person, I feel I contribute greatly to my nation. In a way my education made me a role model to my kids and other kids. As a black woman I have come this far and it makes me very proud. Also because we are very few educated Black women. I have always been challenged by the fact that I have been first in most places and positions in my lifetime. I was the first youngest graduate teacher at the high school in Potgetersrus. And also the first woman math teacher for that matter! I was the first woman acting principal at a high school of about 1500 students. In addition, I was the first graduate in my family. And of course, I'm the first woman principal in the history of this school. As a black woman, higher education gave me a way and an identity. People no longer refer to me as that woman, but as that educated black woman.

My other positive force is my positive outlook of life. I am always hopeful that things will go my way. And most of time, where I have control, they do happen. With the exception of resources and policies which are beyond my reach, most things do go my way. I like the way they depend on my judgment. And I dislike the fact that sometimes teachers take advantages of my soft nature and think that I'm either stupid or weak.

Sometimes I had to act out to show that one cannot just come to school and relax. And I will stand up with my very soft nature and make my weight felt. I don't have to be harsh to see to it that things are done accordingly. But, that's what I hate about me. I think my teachers are right, I am to an extent too soft.

On the other hand, achievement of higher education has no great influence on our culture. At home we are still expected to do our chores when our husbands sit and read newspapers. He expects me to put food in front of him, take care of the children, do my work, and study for my degrees. I don't mean that we need to change our culture as we get more educated, but that we need to reconsider some of the expectations, especially those that put women down, to be trodden on and those expectations that take away our self respect.

Another great impediment in my life experiences is the ethnicity issue. I remember the teacher I was telling you about who used to sing a Xitshangana song whenever I appeared. And he would sing it in a derogative and demeaning way. I remember some old man coming here demanding that I admit his child right in the middle of the school year without any proof of previous school records. He came in and said, "I am a Mosotho and I am the founder of this school, and you as a Shangaan, you can't tell me any thing!" That somehow, made my work very difficult. People saw a Mutshangana first before seeing a human being. Even a night watchman used to defy me as a result of ethnicity. I came here and that language followed me too. And by the way, I am a Mosotho. This is all the result of apartheid. It was impressed on us by apartheid and all its support systems.

Furthermore, language played various roles in my life. Having a Mosotho father, a Mopedi mother and a Mutshangana husband has proved to be quite a challenge. I can never belong to one ethnic group in the full sense. My Sesotho has a dialect of Sepedi that betrays me at all times. And through my Xitshangana last name, I witnessed the real ethnic discrimination. Just because my last name is Xitshangana, teachers started spreading the gossip that the Basotho people and their school were going to be led by a Shangaan woman. On the other hand, the Matshangana people do not accept me as one of them. There is a feeling of isolation. I speak a little bit of Xitshangana, but I will never become one of them. How do you get to win such a powerful battle?

Moreover, apartheid laws have really messed us up. I was born here in South Africa, while my brother was born in Lesotho. But he was registered as a South African and I could not get the so-called doompass, the identity document. And to think I had a birth certificate that proved that I was a full South African; it is just amazing how the system worked. It was very efficient! I think that strengthened me because as I told you before, I wanted to do something and I wanted to show this country that I could be something. I went on without an identity document for a very long time. Sometimes because I was a young lady, the white officials would even try to ask for sexual favors in return for the doompass. I just told myself that the time will come. But at the end, after obtaining my B.A it took only two hours to get it! Amazingly, it took my young Afrikaner white female friend two hours to get me an Identity Document (ID) that I could not get in ten years. So, I was 25 years when I got my very first doompass. You can only imagine what that meant. Color or rather race is everything.

In addition to these, our spouses cause other barriers too. If only you could interview our partners! As a woman, even when you want to do something, you find out that your partner is not that approachable. Even when we have good ideas, it's not easy to get our partners' whole support. They feel threatened by our achievements and success! We end up doing what is best to sustain a peaceful existence and in most cases we do it at our own expense. Sometimes we find most of our time spent trying to please our partners, not spending time on what we believe to be right and or what we actually want to do. For example, I could have had the position of principalship a long time ago. But my husband kept on saying that I don't need the problems and challenges that come with the position. I was just frustrated and I wanted to keep peace in my family, for the benefit of my children. For instance, sometimes even if the suggestion is good, because it is from you, then it's not good enough. It is a problem that we educated woman have in our homes. You earn more, but, even if you don't mention it, you already have a problem because your husband wants to remind you that your money does not make you the man of the house. And once you are independent, then you are a threat and you want to become manly. For me, if I want whatever I want I buy it and I tell you later. Education has liberated us to a certain extent, but not yet fully.

And also, our cultural background taught us to want to satisfy our partner at the expense of our happiness. Even in our communities, most women are frustrated because their men do not support their successes and achievements. When I look at the whole picture, not only the issues in our families, but at the whole apartheid ideology, the oppressors created the whole thing. The western culture/ apartheid, or rather the white man made sure that he dominated our black men, who in turn dominated their Black

women. Women in turn get angry with their kids because they cannot fight back; they cannot fight their men. It is a vicious circle.

Oh well, we still have what is called PHDs, the pull her down mentality? I sometimes become very frustrated because I have this vision, which I want to share with my staff. But, they just keep quiet during our meetings. But when they go outside they say too much. And sometimes they will say it to parents and parents feel confused about the whole thing. And at times I find that some parents become negative because of some of what these teachers tell them or say. And most of it is against me. And sometimes I just read it from the way they talk to me. Consequently, I think these things are somehow impeding the progress of the school. I remember just last week, I got quite a high number of phone calls from parents. This year we raised the school fees. In the past we'd be asking for extra five Rand on a constant basis from parents to supplement the low school fees. This year, we thought the best strategy would be to ask for an increased fee for the whole year round. First of all, I sat down with the teachers before suggesting the strategy to the governing body. With all the stakeholders, we presented to the idea to the parents, who were very receptive. Amongst the teachers, there were those who were against the idea. As a result, these teachers spread the gossip that I made the decision without consulting anyone. And that we were going to misuse the parents' money and so on. And our very teachers influenced the community.

The PHD syndrome is so strong in our schools that it is scary. Instead of learning from each other you will look at the mistake that one makes. And instead of assisting to rectify those mistakes and appreciate the little effort the person is trying to make, people tend to pull you down. In most cases what we hear is, "She thinks she is better than us."

Instead of helping the sister, other sisters pull her down! We are having that problem as leaders, because once you are educated like I am, people don't appreciate your success. Even when you get married to a nice man, or a man who cares enough to help you with house chores, people tend to say to one another "this woman is going to pull her husband by his nose."

At times, we as leaders are faced by institutional oppression, where the officials expect you to jump at their beck and call. I don't want to be told to do things; I am a manager of this school, and a leader. If I have to take my kids somewhere for an educational tour, I must inform, not ask for permission. Sometimes they say no there is no need for you to go... I hate that. In most cases I find myself defying authority because someone wants to decide for me what is best for my students. And that I cannot make those decisions without them. I know it is risky to take the law into your hands, but when you are left with no choice you just do it as long as you are convinced that what you are doing is right and for the benefit of the child in the classroom. For instance, I planned a trip to a civic theater and art center in order to expose my children to the other side of education, since we do not have that part in our curriculum. I sent the forms and everything. When we were due to go, I was told that the inspector had not been in the office or was too busy to sign the forms, or whatever, but he had not signed the forms yet. And the forms were sent a month or so ago. There was no way that I was going to stop the whole thing to please or lift someone's ego; people who do not do their jobs properly do not have my sympathy. I refused and went on with the arranged trip. I had to write a report after that. And I think even with my so-called soft nature, I have written a few too many reports challenging the system or the order of the day so far! You have to show me

what negative impact will make to the student, convince be, but don't order me around. I refuse to be ordered around especially when I know that what I'm doing is right.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words. Leadership is based on fairness, caring, warmth, sympathy and firmness. I like to be seen as a good leader, as somebody who is trying to change the status of others for the best. I want to be seen as somebody who helps people as much as I could and to be remembered for a long time. I don't want my children to fear me, I want to be trusted, I want them to be able to confide and rely on me without being afraid that I will disappoint them. I want to help them socially and as much as I could.

And as a mother you are already a family leader even if we are not recognized as leaders in our families. But in our families we convinced these men to be exactly what we want them to be. We just let them think that they are the ones that came with the ideas, while the ideas originated from us all this time. For example, like the furniture in the house, I influence on what to buy or what I want. Naturally you are a mother, you are warm and you have to be strong, you have to make people believe in you. And as a black leader and a woman I think that natural leadership come in, and then it helps you as a formal leader. As women we are also ambitious, but our ambition is not put in front of other people's needs. Women do not use other people to climb the ladder of success. We do it our way, we work double hard.

I was able to create a climate of satisfaction where people feel at home while doing their job. I like to deal with problems in a diplomatic way, where an individual does not feel insulted at the end of the day. I work hard so that we arrive at a common solution. Even when I see that something is not right, I look for a diplomatic way of

changing it. People need to operate and have an effective school day even when I'm not in for the day. I do not like a situation where things go wrong and people say, "Oh we thank God, and she is absent today". We work together and eat together. I don't remember a time when high school teachers complain about kids coming from this school. There was a year when the high school we feed gave achievement awards. And every first position from Std 6- 10 was a kid from this school. So, the principal was so proud, he even brought the awards for us to see. I didn't take the credit because I was not teaching these kids. Teachers have to be credited for their products. May be, I may be credited for my management.

I think I am not autocratic, and that is also my weak point. I don't like to oppress people. Sometimes if I have to confront people, as I have said before, it must be a situation that is not offensive. It must not offend him/her, but at times even if I have to confront, I like to be positive and use my points and not my temper. I usually have a bad temper. And when I feel that I'm going to lose my temper I just walk away and cool down. I like my positive outlook of life.

If I had an opportunity to share my leadership skills with a black woman, I would tell my sister first, to be herself, secondly, to follow her dreams, set goals and strive to achieve them. For example, if she wants something she must not allow anybody to discourage her. She should seek advice, but must be her own judge. She must know that being a leader especially, as Black women we have so much to do, because we should be uplifting those woman who never knew their rights, who even when they are shown their rights are still not sure of how to take them and make them their own. They still believe that somebody will give them these rights. But, as a black woman leader you must know

that you have got multi jobs, your job does not end in the classroom or office of your school. As an educational leader you are everything to those woman who are still down and you must try to uplift them as much you can without humiliating them. If a black woman believes that a man is everything, it becomes very hard to convince her otherwise.

I have a friend who is just like that. She and her husband both come from work at the same time. And she has to make a snack for him before she starts preparing dinner for the whole family, while he reads a newspaper, watches TV or takes a nap. And mind you, they do the same job during the day, and they are both teachers. The problem is my friend, as educated as she is, she really believes that it's her God-given duty to do that! These are the people we need to make realize what they are doing to themselves without antagonizing them, and at the same time try to educate their partners without being arrogant. At first these poor men will feel at loss and threatened that the women has taken some of their rights. At the same time you educate, and educate and educate again and again.

The term social justice is confusing. When we have social justice, it is when everybody is treated fairly and has equal access to things like schools, health care services, jobs, housing, and freedom of speech. In short, equal treatment. Thus, there is no discrimination in terms of race, gender, age and all. People are here to serve other people and justice must be there for all. Because if you think that you are a higher being than other people and are treated as such, then there is no justice. I try to be as fair as I can in my leadership. I practice with my students and kids. The boys need to know that sweeping floors is not only for girls, they also have to do it. We are socialized by our

culture to know that boys and girls have different chores. I discovered it even among the kids that you are a gender more than a human.

I think power is something that it taken for granted by most people. You need mental power to work things out. You need verbal power; when you talk people must understand you. As a leader you want something to be done, and you have to put it across. Power is something that is used with control and how you use it is important. It is not power to oppress others. And when power is used for oppression, then it loses it value and meaning because the people oppressed don't actually respect the oppressor. I say mental power, verbal power, because people must respect you. When you stand up they must sit down and listen, and there is no way that they can challenge you after you have presented your verbal and mental power.

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words

As I enter my office and look at this picture of joined hands, it is my source of inspiration. To me, it symbolizes teamwork and collaboration. If we work together, we can succeed and achieve greatly. They say in Sesotho “monwana o leese ao nopi mmele....” A literal English translation is “one finger cannot pick up corn!” When hands are joined, the work becomes light. My second artifact is the artwork on the wall. The artwork depicting a flower made of matchsticks glued together. This is bonded together to create a view of beauty. Together we can overcome all discrimination, segregation and create beautiful schools full of life and beauty. The last artifact is the mission statement on the wall. It reads thus: “The C4 district is committed to the reconstruction and development of education which is based on equity, quality, access, accountability and

redress.” I try to bring the above through my small acts of working with parents and the local community.

My leadership shows a journey through the most difficult time of our history, i.e. liberation struggle, where our children and colleagues needed guidance from enlightened people in positions of leadership and one could not afford to falter as your one mistake would have affected and influenced the behavioral patterns which might have been difficult to cure. It was double difficult as a mother, wife, leader and woman to lead in such a circumstance, but sheer determination saw me through.

I see my life as a fresh breeze blowing the old and unwanted away and creating the new. As a leader I am like sunshine, and as sunshine, you feel that you have to love, and create a happy environment. I’m like sunshine and fresh air! As I look back, my life has been like swimming in the dark, always with a glimmer of light from knowing that I will reach my destination no matter what it takes. It has been like rain after a long drought where one does not even mind about getting wet. In this case, doing things for the institution that one might not do under normal circumstance. For example, after the new toilets were built, I cleaned them myself with the help of some pupils when teachers refused to supervise the cleaning chores. Like water in the desert, having to come out of my cultural cover and be in the forefront of fragile things like education, which is life itself, has been challenging indeed.

My life experiences proved that as black educational women leaders we can be endangered species if we do not join forces and work together. We as women in positions of influence should not let go. I have seen problems not as mountains but molehills to be easily climbed even though one gets bruises, but the fact that you are

overcoming the problems was always a gratifying factor that makes you forget the problem you encountered along the way. I now realized that women were thought to be weak, but they have granite- like determination to go after what they think is worth pursuing. I think through out my life I have met many circumstances and I have learned how to overcome them. And in the process, I kept my dream of becoming someone one day. Whatever the problems I have encountered, I learned from them and I never allowed any of them to overcome me. I knew what I have to do and say, but am not sure whether I am doing the right thing. This has also made me realize that though I have come, I haven't really arrived. I must strive to make the girl children realize their potential to go after what they need without surrendering their gentleness and femininity.

Silver: "The Survivor of All Trials"

"Silver is a great leader." " I just don't know how she manages to help those poor kids, most of them are from the informal settlement areas, the poorest of the poor!" "Silver is very strong, she is doing wonders for Elitheni." (Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). Some of these remarks are just unbelievable until you meet the person in question. Silver is a rather quiet and shy person. Unlike the other women who were more outgoing and talkative, Silver was different. At first, I found myself initiating every conversation. It was only during our second interview that she opened up and talked a bit more. I found it very interesting as to how a quiet and shy woman leads with such a powerful hand.

Elitheni is an IsiXhosa word that translates to " the small glittering light in the dark." The school accommodates the AmaXhosa children from the predominantly

informal settlement area in Diepkloof. A great number of these children are from very poor families, where either one or both parents are unemployed. One could tell from the old torn and dirty uniform most of the children wear. While in most of the schools in this study only a small percentage of children receive free lunch, at Elitheni all the children are classified as needy and thus get free snacks and lunch.

Silver's formative years and coming of age: in her own words. I was born in 1951, in the rural small town of Herschel in the Eastern Cape. I am the fourth and last-born of four girls. My parents used to work in Johannesburg, my mother as a domestic worker cleaning white people's homes, and my father as a laborer at a firm in Johannesburg. My mother soon left Johannesburg and stayed with us in the Eastern Cape. We grew up as our mother's kids. My mother used to do great things. Although she was not educated, she wanted all of her girls to get an education. My father used to pay us a visit once a year for a month and then he would disappear back to Johannesburg. Our only means of communication for the rest of the year was through letters, and he would send money and clothes whenever possible. It was a tough life.

Since I grew up in a family of four girls, I did not have a direct contact with and experience of gender discrimination, but from other households it prevailed. Girls used to do most of the chores whilst boys just went to school, looked after the livestock, and got food on the plate. Girls and women did everything; they had to cook, keep the house clean, do the laundry, make sure fathers, boys and the younger children were fed and bathed! As a woman, it is my responsibility to take care of them.

I started my Sub A in the Eastern Cape. And one of my best teachers was a Mosotho woman by the name of Mrs. Mokoena. Although the Eastern Cape is

predominantly for the AmaXhosa people, there were areas that had both AmaXhosa and Basotho people. Thus, I had a little exposure to another culture at an early age. I went on through until I passed my Std 6. In the primary school, the medium of instruction was IsiXhosa. So, when we got to the secondary school, things changed and everything was in English, no longer in IsiXhosa any more! In the primary school I was one of the best students in class, to an extent that I easily obtained first positions. You know, when you get a first class pass in Std 6, it was something great. When I got to the high school, I was nice and frustrated. You know, I could look at a teacher and not understand a word. I passed my JC, with a second-class pass. By the way, after Junior Certificate we used to get a certificate and it was like a degree for most people because you could train as a teacher, police officer or nurse. Only those who could afford would go on and do Matric. After that, I obtained my PTC teachers qualifications in 1972 and I started teaching in 1973. I got a teaching post that was nearer my home in the Easter Cape.

After PTC, I corresponded my Matric, and I passed. After that, I registered with Vista University to do Secondary Education Certificate (SEC), and then I continued to do the Secondary Education diploma (SED). Thereafter, I enrolled with UNISA to do my junior degree. All these studies after PTC were completed while I was already married with children and a family. I'm still struggling with my last course now, the Sociology 1. I wrote my supplementary paper last week before meeting with you. (Sometime in February, she called to tell me that she passed her last course, and I took her to lunch to celebrate her achievement! In addition, she invited me to her graduation ceremony in May)

By the way, in July 1972, when I was in my final year at the teacher's college, my mother passed away. Therefore, the first born in the family had to leave school and home and come to Johannesburg to work as a domestic servant. I completed and got a post just next to my home. I taught there and stayed with my sister's two sons including my cousin's two girls. I stayed with the children as they grew up before I got married in 1974. Because my husband was a police officer in Johannesburg, I had to come over to join him. It was sad since I had to leave the kids alone in the rural areas with no one to take care of them. We had to hire somebody to look after them for a while before one of my elder sisters took over after her divorce. And life went on, and I was still in Johannesburg struggling to get a post. In January 1976, I gave birth to my baby girl. I struggled searching for a teaching post; because I was a married woman, the chances were very slim for getting a permanent post. I moved from one temporary post to another for almost two years until I got one from this school. I was appointed to a permanent post for the first time in Joburg in January 1977.

My father passed away in 1988, and in 1990, my eldest sister who was working as a domestic worker just fell, and was hit by the stroke, and she passed away. And by the way, her children did not get any compensation or some kind of insurance benefits from her former employers. They just called us and gave us half of the salary and expected us to pay for all the funeral expenses, and after she had served them for almost eighteen years. What a life! And in May 1991, my husband was killed. It was during the political violence where policemen were randomly killed as they were seen as sell-outs and collaborators to the then apartheid regime. Police were seen as the main enemies of the Black people as they were the direct tools and the enforcers of the apartheid laws. A

group of people entered our house while he was relaxing with a friend who was also a police officer. They were both killed in our house while seven other people, including some policemen in our street, were also murdered. I could have been killed too, but fortunately I had gone to Protea to write an assignment with a friend. While I was in this state of misery, SADTU was also harassing me. It was really tough for me, and in 1993, my mother-in-law passed away. You know, it was not easy because I had to make all funeral arrangements, pay all expenses.

And I had two children. My second one was born in April 1980, and he passed away in July of last year in 1999. At the time of his death, he was already a young man, studying for a diploma in Motor Engineering at a college in Soweto. I couldn't understand, as he was my pride and my life. He became sick after coming back from a visit to his paternal grandfather in the Eastern Cape in December 1998. After his trip, he came back with a persistent cough that did stop. And my sister, who is a Nursing Sister, advised me to take him for a Tuberculosis (TB) examination, but the results came negative. As the blood test remained negative, I didn't know what to do. We went up and down looking for a cure. I even tried the traditional doctors and herbalists, but everything failed. They told me that my son had been bewitched and that there was nothing they could do. We struggled to the last resort.

However, there were some contradictory findings and some of the medical reports did not correlate with the initial tests. The whole thing was just a puzzle. I am still confused...I don't know what went wrong with my child. I was to learn later in the day that Silver was faced with enormous financial constraints in her arrangements for the erection of her son's tombstone. She was to arrange for the transportation of the heavy

tombstone to some 1125-mile away to the Easter Cape where his grave lies and at the insistence of her father-in-law, both her husband and son were buried in the far remote Eastern Cape. Even though her husband died almost ten years ago, her father-in-law was still in control and she was expected to foot the bill alone!

On becoming a leader: In her own words. In 1986, I was promoted to an HOD post. I was the only female head of department. We went on working with the teachers and the male principal. The principal decided that I must teach the Substandard A (SSA), to enable me to get to know the conditions in the lower primary. You can imagine, as a first grade teacher and also an HOD with little experience of teaching younger children, it was very difficult. But, I managed and survived! My principal died of cancer in 1989 and I acted in his position until my permanent appointment in January of 1990.

We started in 1990, and everything went smoothly until things changed when the unions were introduced. In 1991 it was NEUSA, and it wasn't as radical as SADTU. We went on and it was not easy. NEUSA become SADTU came and things got tough. They said nothing doing, principals don't interfere with teachers, teachers know their duties You must remain in the office and no class visits, nothing. It was tough, and it was worse to find that in white schools things were normal and the work was done. There were class visits and children were learning and teachers were committed and all that. With us here, teachers would just go out, march out. Meetings for SADTU were held during school hours even in the morning by 10 a.m. The so-called "liberation now, education later" was the culture of the day. And some of the teachers took advantage of that and misused the call for their own interest. The situation got worse because principals were seen as collaborators and perpetrators of the apartheid's oppressive policies. As a result, some

teachers wanted to remove principals so that they could get easy access to these posts. Most teachers believed that after the old regime, all school principals were going to be fired and that teachers who were active in SADTU would take these posts.

In 1994, things were too bad. When we convened meetings with teachers, they would come and sit and just look at you, first, because you are a woman and second, because you are not a SADTU member. And I just said to myself, this is the organization I am not going to join. They don't care about your leadership skill, even when you are transforming and working hard for the school; as long as you are a woman and not a member of SADTU, then you are nothing!

Forces in my life: In her own words. The only positive force I can think of is from my family, the support from my sisters and father. I may be overlooking some major positive forces in my life, but right now what springs to my mind are the barriers and hindrances created by other external forces. I don't know whether to see death as a force or natural force. Some how, it has been following me every step of the way. I lost almost all my beloved ones at a very young age in my life. Most of my peer groups still have parents, in-laws, or at least surviving husbands. Apartheid took my husband from me when I needed him most. And mind you, I was only 39 years old! On top of that, gender discrimination denied me a better salary with which to support my children and extended family. For instance, in the same position, same job, same qualifications, when it comes to the salary part of it, women earned less every month, and men always had all the benefits, housing, and rights to other privileges. I lived through gender discrimination all my life. When you want to open an account, any account, even a bank account to save your own money you have earned every month, your husband is required to countersign;

in short, you need his consent to run your financial transactions, because you are a child. Therefore, it is not a right but a privilege to own an account even if you are the accountholder. We are always supposed to be subjected to our husbands, always treated like children.

I'm not saying everything about our culture is or was wrong. Take for instance, Lobola⁷. It is something honorable. Lobola should be paid to the bride's parents because if a man wants to get a wife without paying anything, he cannot have the pride of ownership. As blacks we are always taken as the inferior nation, inferior group so much so that even our education was made to be inferior to be able to work for the white people. I also believe that because I was a married woman, I could not get a permanent post. All married women were considered temporary teachers.

As I was growing up, I did not experience any form of ethnic discrimination given that I grew up in a homogenous Xhosa community with a very small Sotho minority, until I came to Johannesburg. First of all, I couldn't get a teaching post in Meadowlands, especially in IsiZulu schools. The main experience of ethnic discrimination happened here in this area. When I became a principal, we were under a North Sotho or Mopedi Inspector. The SSA teacher resigned and left the class without a teacher. I asked for an additional teaching post to replace the vacant one, but the inspector refused completely. And to my surprise, he gave two posts to a North Sotho school next to ours. There was a crisis; I was made to go on without a post, nor sufficient teachers because of being an

⁷ Lobola is a dowry that is given to the bride's father. 10 to 12 heads of cattle used to be an acceptable number for the exchange. Although, Lobola's function is to create friendship between the two families, it also serves as a symbol of ownership. The African husband believes that paying Lobola is an exchange of commodity. Hence, it gives him the right to ownership of his wife and all her production.

UmXhosa. As a result, the two SSA classes had to be combined and the second teacher was faced with 110 six years old pupils in one class! It was a disaster!

I went to the district office and I was told that the same thing happened to the principal of another IsiXhosa school in Zone 5. I was told to complete some forms, and send them to the Assistance Director. The Assistance Director called me and indicated that he had noticed that something was wrong and that there was a problem. From the school's files, we discovered that the school qualified for two more teaching posts. The Assistant Director indicated that he was waiting for my Inspector's recommendation before releasing the posts. Still, the Assistant Director could not do any thing because of the bureaucratic and hierarchy thing. Nothing could be done without the Inspector's recommendation. We spent the whole year in that situation without any additional posts. I only got additional teaching posts the following year when the Mopedi Inspector was transferred to another district.

I think unemployment is one of our worst enemies destroying our society. Our schools will forever suffer lack of resources because most parents are unemployed. Take for example, this school is situated next to one of the largest informal settlements in Soweto. As a result, our demand and pleas for payment of school fees fall onto deaf ears. How do you pay school fees when your kids are hungry? Where do you get the money if you are unemployed? Another supporting factor is lack of knowledge. We have a very low literacy rate. Most parents cannot read or write. When we speak of parental involvement, to some that does not mean anything. We invite parents to parents' meeting and explain some of these changes, but you are lucky if you get a 50% attendance rate.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words. I define leadership as commitment and dedication, teamwork and making a commitment to teachers. Leadership is when every body has an opportunity to make decisions; everybody's ideas are taken into consideration. "There is no one man show". And one other thing is that when people are allowed to make decisions and are given responsibilities, those responsibilities need to be stated out clearly to them because some of them don't participate because they are not aware of what is expected of them. When you give people responsibilities you need to give them accountability and authority or rather informed responsibility. It is not enough just to say you are part of everything that is going on in the school; teachers and everyone need to know their duties. Leadership is openness and it should allow participation and sharing, learning and also praying together. Leadership does not impose on others, and everybody is part of the whole. I am too tolerant and I think I am too soft, to an extent that sometimes teachers take me for granted and thus take advantage of my soft nature. But when that happens, I stand firm and make sure people know who is in charge.

Social justice... it would be a situation where no one is under pressure. Socially just environment is an environment where there is no crime and everybody is free and has a right to live. Social justice is when everybody is satisfied by what has been done. For example, I have many parents who cannot afford to pay school fees for their children. To earn a little extra, I invite them to come and do some work in the school. I also give portions of the schoolyard to be used as vegetable gardens to families especially from the squatter camps/informal settlement areas. I really try to extend a hand and be of service to

the needy and poor. I think, “Anybody who has knowledge has power”. You cannot be given power - you get power by acquiring knowledge and skills.

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words.

As I look back, higher education has given me more confidence; I gained knowledge and I am able to deal with different issues in the different ways. For example, the fear of the white man is vanishing and I see a white person as any other person. I feel I have gained more power now because in the past, women were looked down upon even salary wise. Men usually got higher salaries than women for the same job and with the same qualifications. At least the government is gradually closing the gap. We are now equal because education is now the same. In the past we had different education systems that produced different knowledge for different rights. Now that the government recognizes all the eleven official languages, we just hope the ethnicity issue will disappear in time.

If I were to share some words of wisdom with other aspiring women leaders, I would say they should be dedicated, be able to set goals and work towards achieving those goals. As leaders they should be confident, and to develop that confidence they must read. In addition, they have to work double hard as human beings, to prove to men and the world that “although you are a woman you can do it and you can succeed.”

As a leader, I see myself like a fowl, like a hen, because a hen protects her chicks. So, I protect my staff against everything. You know, so much that at times I feel scared when I realize that I am putting my job at risk. Because at times I overlook some of the regulations that I see as oppressive to the staff and just pretend as if I don't see some of the things. For example, teachers are supposed to sign a logbook when they are late for school. I just call the person concerned and talk to him or her. I don't see why should we

be confined to using all these rules and regulation if they can't help change the climate in the school. As a leader, one has to create an environment of trust. People can be late for many various reasons beyond their control. I see myself as a very sympathetic person, as a very thoughtful person who cares for others. I take personal relationships very seriously. Like a hen that protects her children or her chicks, I manage to give my children and relatives shelter. I brought up my sisters' and cousin's children. They grew up to be young responsible adults with responsible careers and families of their own. I advanced myself, built a house in the former white suburbs. A hen is capable of fighting to protect her chicks from danger. During my time I had to fight to keep this position, and I had to fight for my rights. That's why I didn't take the Volunteer Severance Package (VSP) when I had an opportunity. VSPs were offered to educators as an effort to encourage teachers who had been in the field for long periods to consider early retirement. In my opinion it was another way of removing the unqualified teachers. People assumed that principals from the former government would take the option and leave the system. It was also seen as the new government strategy to reduce, redeploy and retrench educators.

Making sense of my life and work as a black African woman has been like a steep hill because of oppression. I experience double or rather, multiple oppression because of being black, woman, and widow. In general, both single and married women tend to discriminate against you when you are widowed. I think they also feel threatened by your presence. Even the friends you used to have feel threatened. They are not as free and relaxed as before. They think that you are going to steal their husbands! I am now closer to single women, and I interact more with women who are not married. The

discrimination is also felt in the community. For example, when there are community meetings the points you raise as a widowed woman are not taken seriously. Even in the church people say, "Whose wife is this one?" As if you have to belong to someone for you to be able to make a valid point. I am not prepared to marry again because usually stepfathers abuse their stepchildren. As a single, widowed black woman, I will raise my voice and someone will listen to me one day. I have learned to be more observant. I now realize that I can fight back, by proving to my oppressors that I can do what they can, even though I am woman. Even though I'm a black woman.

When I look at this glass plate, it is my every day prayer. I know that through God, everything is possible.

God grant me the SERENITY to accept the things I cannot change
COURAGE – to change the things I can
WISDOM – to know the difference.

My second artifact is our school's mission statement on the wall. I look at this school climate as a family of caring. This is a climate of harmony where we live, work and strive together as brothers and sisters. I always say: Be an inviting family school by being:

1. Co-operative
2. Have a sense of belonging
3. Then expect good results

Of course, this big-framed picture of ten black girls with joined hands forming a circle, singing and dancing with the eleventh girl in the center means teamwork. We have to work together and at the same time enjoy doing it. I remember as a child, my mother

used to sing songs as she was going about her work. Music and songs make the work light.

Brass: “The Patient and Determined”

“Brass is very humble, a tireless worker indeed!” “ She serves her community well, she is the person you need to study.” (Selected statements from conversations with Mary Metcalfe, the former MEC of education in Gauteng, colleagues, district staff, and others). I met this humble tireless woman early in my research, but our first interview came only after six weeks of trials, missed opportunities and disappointments. At some point, I felt like giving up, ruling her out and studying someone else. Nonetheless, when we finally met, the waiting was worthwhile.

Tsumbedzo is one of the most beautiful primary schools in Meadowlands Zone 5. It is one of the A school built after two decades of inception. The Tshivenda word Tsumbedzo literally means, “that which has been shown or proved”. When I entered the beautiful yard with its paved driveway, it felt like entering one of the white schools in the urban areas. Hence the local community refers to it as a multiracial school⁸ in Soweto. If I were brought in the schoolyard blindfolded, I would not have believed that I was in a primary school in Soweto. When I entered her spacious, splendid office, she informed her secretary to cancel all her appointments, to unhook the telephone line, and then she locked the door. We were in the locked office for three hours!

⁸ The term “multiracial schools” referred to the white private schools that accepted black children during the reigns of apartheid South Africa. It was also used to refer to the Model C white schools of the 90s when these were opened up to enroll blacks. Model C schools offer a high quality of education, but parents have to pay high school fees to get access to them. Only a fraction of black parents could afford to take their children to these schools.

Brass's formative years and coming of age: In her own words : I was born in Alexandra Township, on 19 October, 1947. I grew up in both the urban and rural communities. My first fifteen years were spent in Johannesburg before joining my paternal grandparents in Venda. My father is Muvenda from Loustrichart, and my mother is a Motswana from Klerkdorp. My parents met here in Johannesburg while working as domestic servants for white families. Today you can't tell that my mother is from another ethnic group, over the years she has adapted to the Venda culture so well.

I attended public schools in Tshiawelo Township where I started Sub A, until I passed my Std 6 before going to Venda. By the way, I had to go to the homeland since there were no high schools for black children, especially in the area where I lived, which was predominantly for the Vhavenda and Matshangana groups. I completed my JC and then went on to train as a senior primary teacher in Vendaland Teachers Training College. After more than ten years, I continued and wrote my Matric before studying with UNISA. I completed my further diplomas, the SEC and SED. I also have a further diploma in Educational Management with RAU. I'm currently taking a course in Computer training offered by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The GDE is trying its best to redress some of the past inequalities.

I grew up doing all the expected chores like carrying water from the river or fountain, collecting wood from the forest and so forth. My father is my role model. He sacrificed to give me an education. He would spend all the money on me to make sure that I did not lack anything. He really did! The day I left for the boarding school I would take all the money and leave them with nothing.

I met my husband back in 1966 while we were still youngsters. We have only one daughter and two grand children. I have brothers and sisters and my father and my mother are still alive. Because they are now older, I take care of them. I make sure they get their medical check up every time. I feel very fortunate to have both parents at my age. I am very active in the church of Christ. I conduct prayer meetings to comfort those in need and in trouble.

I really do not have outstanding memories of ethnic discrimination. Somehow I feel that the color of my skin had a role to play. As you can see, I have a lighter complexion than most Vhavenda people. Because we originate from the Northern parts of South Africa, most of our Vhavenda people are dark in complexion. I took the lighter complexion after my mother because most Batswana people have a lighter skin color. As a result, people were more receptive, and I was not treated like most of my Vhavenda friends. I remember one day when I was on a line in one of the stores in Loustrichart where a young white Afrikaner was in attendance. I was way far behind, but she summoned me to come in the front and served me before my turn! I didn't understand why until later at the boarding school. I think it was because of my complexion and the fact that I could speak Afrikaans so well. As a result, my white teachers used to like me a lot! I never experienced ethnic rivalry or rather discrimination because I am a Muvenda woman. May be it is because I can speak all the eleven official languages in South Africa.

The apartheid laws were really cruel. One experience that sticks out in my memory is when I nearly got arrested in Diepkloof where I was visiting my husband. Back then, one was not allowed to spend a night in a different Township without a permit. I mean, I'm talking about Tshiawelo and Diepkloof Townships which are both in

Soweto. It takes you 10 to 15 minutes to travel from Tshiawelo to Diepkloof. But I was supposed to carry a permit in case I decided to put up in different township. So, in this case, it was at around 2am. or 3am. when the police came searching for illegal residents. There I was, without a permit. I told them that I got lost and found my way to a friend's house. They gave me a warning and told me to go back home first thing in the morning. From then onwards I had to carry a temporary permit whenever I decided to visit my husband. Or else, I was going to end up behind bars. That was the time of influx control. The experience was so dehumanizing. People without permits were reduced to animals. For instance, these policemen would start their raid from one end of the street to the other, knocking at each and every house with their batons. Every person arrested was to tag along in the cold until the truck was full before being taken to the police station. In most cases, these people would tag along till 6a.m. before they were taken to the cells. Can you imagine what happened in the rain? What about those ice cold winter Johannesburg mornings? That was very bad, very inhuman!

Bantu education really affected us because after passing Std 8, we wouldn't go anywhere except for teaching or nursing. We were not encouraged to go for Matric because it was very difficult. As a girl, you were told that Matric and Math were for boys. At first, Matric was difficult because it was controlled by the Joint Matric Board (JMB) and was based on the white education standards. How do you expect to write and pass an examination based on other forms of knowledge other than the Bantu education you were fed? Nonetheless, a few black people did pass these exams and made it to the universities. I was interested in nursing, but because of the disturbing thought of people dying, I choose teaching.

Schooling is very important. When you have someone to pay for your fees, and when you still have the opportunity to study, you tend to take schooling for granted. But once you are out there, you realize how hard your parents had to sacrifice for your education. I found that out when I was older struggling with my senior qualifications. There is no end to learning and education. I know the moment I stop studying for one qualification or another, it will be the end of my growth. When you study further the knowledge helps your memory; if you stop everything stops. You have to keep yourself up to date and keep going.

At times we can say these things go with luck, and you just find yourself on the other side. Most people could not get an education because their parents were too poor to afford an education. The worst cases are found in the rural areas where the rate of poverty is higher. I believe education is for knowledge not for wealth. There are so many people with so many diplomas, but they are not rich. For instance, medical doctors spent seven years studying and when they come back they have nothing. You must study for education not for poverty and all other material things. Higher education really helped me. It gave me knowledge and the ability to see the best from people. I'm more assertive and more confident. I operate from a higher level of knowledge. Knowledge is power. In addition, today's woman is taking the lead. And I am so happy when I watch the TV to see so many Black women taking powerful positions of leadership in businesses and other avenues that were previously unavailable to them.

But higher education can also be a barrier, for, when you are more educated than your husband, it is always a challenge. With us, my husband and I, we study together. Like this year, we enrolled with UNISA together. Because I don't want to leave him

behind, and I don't want him to feel that I'm superior to him. Because of our traditional norm, we have to accommodate our husbands' fears. We have to embrace both cultures. At work I'm the boss, I'm the leader of my school. But coming home, the situation changes. At home we are man and woman, husband and wife, and we should understand that. Otherwise, if I show him that I'm also a leader it will mean a divorce. As a woman, it is my role to know when my husband is angry and choose my words or rather keep quiet. I cannot raise my voice to my husband, instead when I'm angry, I should calm down and he can raise his voice as he wish.

On becoming a leader: In her own words: I started teaching in 1969 and got married in 1970 to a Mutshangana man from Diepkloof. I only taught for about four years at Mangwele primary school before getting a promotion to start a new school for the Vhavenda people in Pimville. All the schools were for other ethnic groups and unwilling to accommodate our Vhavenda children. I worked there from 1975 up to 1977. In Pimville we started so badly because for almost two months we were compelled to teach under the trees before we got accommodation at Mdla Shongwane. We were given three classes to accommodate five standards. We had Sub A and B in one class, Std 1 in the second one, and standard 2 & 3 in the third classroom. Five classes among three teachers! Because the school had about ten classrooms that were already overcrowded, we had to adopt the platoon system. Some classes will begin in the morning from 8 to 1pm., and the next group will start at 12 to 5pm. At least, we would be overcrowded for only one hour before the morning class leaves at 1pm. That was tough because it meant that the same teacher would be on duty from 8 to 6. We were happy because we could teach in a better environment than under the tree.

In 1978, I was taken to start yet another school for the Vhavenda people in Meadowlands. Now, when I look back and reflect on all of it, I have mixed feelings about the whole thing. I was removed from the school and a new male principal was appointed. After some few months the buildings for that school were erected. I was told that I did a good job at starting that school and that my services were required to start yet another one in Meadowlands. We were promised that this new school would be built in less than a year. It was almost eighteen years later when the new government came into power that our dream school was built. I don't know whether the school was given to a new principal because I'm a woman. Of course, I was the first woman principal of a Tshivenda school in Soweto.

The second school I started was housed at Dzata primary from 1978 up to mid 1997. I was running the school very well with Mr. Mauda until he retired. And after his retirement, the officials wanted me to combine the two schools, and I said I couldn't join the schools because the other school had many problems and there wasn't any progress at all. And all this time, we were housed in a few classrooms. We could not grow because even when parents wanted their children to be registered in my school, at times it was difficult because we did not have space to accommodate them.

It was through Mary Metcalfe's efforts that we got our own buildings. One day Mary Metcalfe said to me, "Mam, I understand you had the plan of your school for almost ten years and the former government did not care to build it". And indeed, the school was built and we moved into the new building in the middle of 1997. A beautiful school indeed! I once heard Mandela praising the school in the radio saying that the African National Congress (ANC) built the most beautiful school in Zone 5

Meadowlands. And here we are now and the way we are progressing we have forgotten all about our troubles and bad experiences. We are now working for the top. We have achieved so much. As you can see everywhere on the walls, we have awards for different things, for math, science, effective teaching, cleanliness and so on. Take time to look around before you leave. It was more difficult back then to be a woman in leadership. Fortunately, I only handled lower primary schools which were dominated by female teachers; as a result, everything went well.

Some men don't respect women. This reminds me of one Inspector who came in demanding this and that without giving me a break to explain or find the files he was looking for. I said to him if you want any cooperation from me don't come and confuse us. State what you need and we will give it to you. Just take a seat, and relax. I think he was embarrassed; he wanted to prove his manhood by bossing me around. I just could not accept that. Especially when I knew that whatever he wanted was in order.

Although the new government is ready to help us, we still need the cooperation of all the parents to meet other needs of the school. In this school we get most of our resources and assistance through competition. Because we work very hard, we win most of the resources and funds. It is about performance; it is about quality teaching. The department gave us the computer, fax machines; in fact, we won everything through hard work.

At the beginning of the year, I call all the parents. If possible, you must know the parents individually. You cannot run the school without the cooperation of all the parents. And you must listen to what they want for the education of their children, let them make choices for their children, the subjects they want their children to take; these are the

points you need to gather and plan before the beginning of a new year. My dear, you don't just do your own thing! In addition, you must have the priorities. Although you won't be able to do everything at the same time, you must prioritize and plan. Planning, organizing and feedback is essential for the smooth running of the school.

One great transformation so far is that we are accommodating every ethnic group without discrimination. Parents see how we work and want to bring their children here irrespective of the fact that the school is for the Vhavenda group. We have Matshangana, Basotho, AmaXhosa and amaZulu groups. This is a multiracial school in Soweto. The other day one UmZulu parent said “ anginandaba ne Sivenda, abatwana bami bazongena khona lapha,” in English, she meant, “ I don't care for the Tshivenda language, my children will attend here.” Fortunately our medium of instruction is English and we teach Tshivenda as a subject. We are moving away from the ethnic separation which was introduced by apartheid.

As I was growing up in Alexandra Township, being a Muvenda was not a big deal. We had everyone, I mean everyone there. There were White, Indian and Colored families; there were immigrant families from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and all over the world living in the same place. I knew how to speak languages like Tshikalanga and Tshinyasa, languages from Zimbabwe and Malawi. Until 1954, when the Separate Development Act and the grand apartheid policies came into effect, black and white communities lived together. As leaders we need to move away from this killer plan. We still have to celebrate our cultures, our identities, celebrate who we are. For instance, my school is the number one in Tshivenda traditional dance, the Tshigombela dance. We are invited to welcome guests from all over the world. Just last week, I hope you saw my

children in the TV and newspapers; in fact, I will show you a copy of one of the weekend newspapers featuring our children. We performed for the international delegation that came to South Africa for the 2006 World Soccer bid.

What I like most about my work is to see the improvement in these children. For instance, I'm helping a Grade 5 group of slow learners with their reading. And most of these children are from outside, some from neighboring schools and most from Venda, where you find that they were taught in their Tshivenda mother tongue from Grade 1 and had a very limited exposure to the English language. I really like to see the sparks in their eyes when they develop the confidence of mastering the language. It is a good feeling.

I hate laziness and absenteeism. My teachers know that I don't take kindly to people who will just come in and sit in front of the class. How do you teach effectively when you are sitting down? I don't have to tell the teacher what to do. They all know why there are here in the first place. Teachers need to feel free to come to me when they are experiencing problems. So far, I don't have such problems with my staff. .

My weakness is that I can't say no. I like to help out by all means. For example, I was summoned to a house in the neighborhood to help a young woman who was in labor. What do I do? I'm not a midwife, but I can't say no. I had to call an ambulance, leave my work and go and help. I ended up helping with the delivery of the baby because the ambulance arrived an hour or two later! That is how our systems work around here. You call the police or ambulance for an emergency and they take their time. One reason that is given frequently is that they do not have enough cars to serve Soweto, but you see the police cars in Shebeens and other places, and you wonder what they are doing there. The other day, a woman came in running half naked and fleeing from her husband who was

assaulting her. I had to intervene. Right now, the young couple comes to me for help and guidance when they have some problems. I'm glad the young man has improved greatly. He now has a sense of respect for his wife.

My advice for the upcoming young Black women leaders is that as Black women we are no longer inferiors; in fact, we were never inferior. We were made to feel inferior. Right now, we are the same with the white women. But today we have the right to say something. Black women, go out there and be counted. You can do it, you did it when you were down and below everyone, now with all these rights, and you can still do it and better!

Forces in my life: In her own words: Because I'm patient, I don't see things as barriers but as obstacles to be overcome in time. I take my time and go slowly. But, at the end of the day, I come out a winner. I had many challenges, but the main one that will follow me everywhere is my Tshivenda culture. You know, when you get married, the Tshivenda culture puts you down. There are things that you cannot do as a woman. For example, when you have an argument or some misunderstandings with your husband, you cannot answer or talk back. This is so difficult for me even today. I just get angry and keep quiet. I'm considered a leader in my job, not everywhere. Some one once said, "it is just like when you are a rubbish collector, people don't see you as one once you leave the place of your employment and get into your house. It should be the same case with you, once you leave your office and enter your husband's house; you are no longer Brass the principal. You became Mr. Brass's wife, not Brass the principal." But, that is impossible because being a principal is a 24-hour job. You are always one; you like it or not. You will always

be principal so and so. Thidzi, I'm sure people still refer to you as the principal of Tsakani primary school, right! As women, we wear these different hats all the time.

The meaning of leadership, power and social justice: In her own words: Leadership entails deep thinking, seriously taking people into account. As a leader, I'm a role model, a mother, a sister and a comforter. I'm also compassionate. As a transformative leader I reach out to the parents and community at large. Leadership is about teamwork and team spirit. As teams, we want everybody's views not one person's alone. Leadership is teamwork. Look at my governing council...they are so good. These parents are running the school. Today they are helping us with school policies, they manage the school funds, maintain the discipline and so on. We make joint decisions where everybody becomes a part. It is not only one person's voice; it is the committee that decides. So that when we go to the parents, I mean the whole parent body, it becomes easy to use the governing body's voice. At the end, parents are not going to say, "OK, she is just telling us what she wants to do, she did not consult us". And yet when it is from the governing body, they know that it is from the person they chose, the person who represents them. Furthermore, with the school funds issue, parents know that the governing body is there to manage and oversee the use of the funds. The governing body is there to witness all.

Social justice is about equality. Treating everybody the same way. Our government did not understand the concept of an equal society. Thus, our leaders, our principals did not understand the concept, too. There is a lot of discrimination in terms of who gets what from the government. Even now, although it is not as rife and clearly defined as before, there is still a lot of discrimination in terms of ethnicity and gender. A just society is an equal society at all costs and in all aspects of its existence. Social justice

practices come out through our deeds as leaders: how we lead, how we extend ourselves to others, what we bring to make their lives better. For example, the community around here knows that it can use the school's resources: the classrooms for church services, meetings, and all the civic activities. I invite the youth to use the school ground for sporting activities. And in return these people take care of the school and look after it.

Power is relationships. You cannot say that you have power because you may be wrong. I'm scared to use the word power. Your relationship to the people you are leading is what gives you power. If you use power to control and dominate others, some will resist, and if they resist, it means your power is ineffective. But if you have a sound relationship with others, then you have power.

Final reflections: Meanings from artifacts, documents and metaphors: In her own words:

I have two artifacts that bring meaning to my leadership. One is a clay calabash, a useful Tshivenda traditional dishware that is still in use today. Smaller calabashes are used as cups, middle-sized ones are used as pitchers for the Tshivenda traditional beer, and the bigger sizes are used as containers of large quantities of water. The large calabash is filled with water, and then placed on a woman's head who carries it for a long distance back to her home in order to use it for her beloved ones. Like these women, I carry mine to the fountain of education, fill it up before I take it back to my beloved children, parents and teachers. This clay calabash is delicate and can break any time; like education, we have to be careful how we deal with the people who make it possible- our children, parents and teachers.

When I look at this potted plant, I think of its roots that go deep down under the soil in search of nutrients. As leaders, we are like trees. We are always searching for

opportunities to feed our children. We are always seeking new forms to transform, to bring justice where it never prevailed. Just like a tree that sends down its branched roots, we as leaders need knowledge and skill because without the knowledge and skills we cannot do anything. As I look back, my life has been like that of a tortoise. I started like a tortoise, a tortoise stretches its neck out slowly, exposing its head as far as possible in order to see what lies beyond. As a tortoise, I enter competitions and end up a winner. I'm where I am today because I take chances and I see opportunities and make use of them. You know, to be a democratic leader demands a lot from one. Because I'm tolerant and patient, I take my time and I go smoothly. Like a tortoise, even if a problem is difficult I know I will overcome it and I don't rush. I just go smoothly and where I pass I try by all means that I see that no dust is left. I have been a school principal without a school for almost eighteen years. I could have resigned, quit, but I did not.

My practice as a transformative educational leader has been like a model, an example. I set good examples for people to follow. I receive visitors every day trying to find out how I do things, how I managed to keep my cool and still come out up top. Most visitors from overseas are sent to our school to come and see how we work, how we are transforming the education. We have proved that transformation is possible even for a school in Soweto. Look at the bulletin board and in this file; there are letters from all over the world thanking us for giving people an opportunity to see the other side of education in Soweto. My teachers are so dedicated... I was surprised to learn that some teachers were coming during the Easter holidays to catch up with their lessons. It takes a leader to instill that spirit!

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**“MUSADZI U FARA LUFHANGA NGA HU FHIRAHO”: BLACK WOMEN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEADERS CREATING SOCIALLY JUST AND
EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Volume II

By

Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

A DISSERTATION

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Chapter 6

WHAT MIGHT WE LEARN FROM THE HOLDERS OF THE SHARP BLADES

Introduction

One of the purposes of this research is to define what it means for women to live, work, and create environments conducive for social justice for children and youth against the backdrop of the prevailing discourse that seeks to silence them. Tyack and Cuban (1994) state that all people and institutions are products of history, the past events; therefore, people use history to interpret the past events when they make choices about the present and future. From the stories told by these women, it is evident that the past history of apartheid and its oppressive nature had a great impact in shaping and molding their unique individual identities in making them who they are in the present South Africa.

Initially, I provide an overview of the four themes before I engage in a comprehensive discussion. In my discussion, I present a picture of what it means to be an educational leader who is challenged by various social constructs and at the same time strives to create socially just schools and environments in Soweto. I conclude each theme with a critical review of related literature and contributions from other scholars. Table 6.1 gives a brief insight into the biographical data of the six women, and at the same time, serves as an effort to remind us who these women are.

My analysis, drawing on interviews, field notes from shadowing the women, conversations from the group dialogue, and meaning derived from documents and artifacts forwarded four major themes:

- Personal and public struggle to gain a scholarly education.
- Language of oppression versus language of liberation.
- Power and privileges: tensions within and across the personal, the school institutions, and the broader society.
- Challenges to school transformation due to tensions across leadership styles.

The theme of personal and public struggle to gain a scholarly education runs across all six women's life stories. It has been sufficiently demonstrated that education is significant in uplifting people's social status. The theme is revealed through the struggles these particular Black women had to face to reach where they are today; struggles created by low socioeconomic background of parents, challenges of multiple roles and challenges created by adult learning which prevailed and contributed greatly to both the quantity and quality of scholarly education attained. What these women have learned through their own stories of struggle is reflected in the work they do as school leaders.

The theme of language of oppression versus language of liberation is revealed when women talk about apartheid policies that denied married women access to permanent teaching positions, gave them lower salaries, and restricted their movements. The language of oppression is evident in the phrases they use to reveal their domination, segregation, oppression, and liberation. While the language of oppression is more evident when the women talk about apartheid policies and gender and ethnic domination, the language of liberation also emerges in their discourse. In fact, the language of liberation is almost equated with their definition of social justice.

The theme of power and privilege: tensions within and across the personal, the school institutions, and the broader society runs across the women's conversations. All

the women reveal the theme with passion, especially when they talk about their experiences with gender inequalities, ethnic discrimination, and language. This theme emerges when women talk about their roles as women in their homes, schools, and broader society. There are many tensions created by power and privilege on personal, school, and societal levels.

The theme of challenges to school transformation due to tensions across leadership styles is evident throughout the women's experiences. The women emphasize creation of linkages and partnerships with parents and the business sector. This indicates a shift from the traditional leadership styles that tend to exclude other role players like teachers, parents, and the broad society. The women in this study expressed the belief that parents have a major role in bringing back the culture of learning and teaching in the schools in Soweto.

Table 6.1

Women: Holders of the Sharp Edges of Knives

Name & Age	Ethnicity	Social background during formative years	Marital Status	Qualifications	No. Yrs in Education
Iron 62yrs	Motswana	Parents migrant domestic workers in Jhb	Married	PTC, BA, HED, BA Honors, Author	38
Copper 47yrs	Mutshangan a	Graduate father and mother with Std.6	Widow	JSTC, BA, BA Honors, B.Ed	25
Steel 47yrs	Muvenda	Father laborer and mother a homemaker	Married	PTC, BA, B.Ed in Educational Management	18
Lead 47yrs	Mosotho	Father politician and mother Nursing Sister	Married	BA, UED, B.Ed	21
Silver 49yrs	UmXhosa	Parents migrant domestic workers in Jhb	Widow	PTC, SEC, SED, BA, currently enrolled for a B.Ed	27
Brass 53yrs	Muvenda	Parents domestic workers in Jhb	Married	HPTC, SEC, SED, BA. currently enrolled for a B.Ed	31

Theme: Personal and Public Struggle to Gain a Scholarly Education

Personal struggle to gain a scholarly education. On a personal level, factors such as low socioeconomic background and the challenges of multiple roles contributed greatly to both the quantity and quality of scholarly education attained. The socioeconomic background of the parents and the level of qualifications the women attained influenced the educational lives of the women. Iron, Steel, Silver and Brass mentioned that their parents were uneducated domestic workers and laborers who could not afford to give them more than the basic Std 8 and a PTC qualification. From Iron, Silver and Brass' s comments, it is evident that these women come from low socioeconomic backgrounds:

I'm from a working class family, my father was a laborer (garden-boy) all his life. After losing my mother at the age of six, and as the last of the three daughters, my eldest sister had to go and look for a job in order to take care of me and my other siblings. She worked as a domestic servant, cleaning homes and looking after other people's children. I had a very hard life, sometimes food was scarce and I had to survive on crumbs. (Iron, interviews)

My parents used to work in Johannesburg, my mother as a domestic worker cleaning white people's homes, and my father as a laborer at a firm in Johannesburg. My mother soon left Johannesburg and stayed with us in the Eastern Cape. We grew up as our mother's kids. My mother used to do great things. Although she was not educated, she wanted all of her girls to get an education. By the way, after Junior Certificate we used to get a certificate and it was like a degree for most people because you could train as a teacher, police or nurse. Only those who could afford would go on and do Matric. After PTC, I corresponded my Matric, and I passed. (Silver, interviews)

I grew up doing all the expected chores. Like carrying water from the river or fountain, collecting wood from the forest and so forth. My father is my role model. He sacrificed to give me an education. He would spend all the money on me to make sure that I don't lack anything. He really did! Because the day I left for the boarding school I would take all the money and leave them with nothing. (Brass, interviews)

From their comments, education was a personal struggle in which some members of the family had to sacrifice to see them through. On the one hand, Iron and Silver lost their mothers at an early age where their elder sisters were compelled to leave school to go and work in the urban cities of Johannesburg to help support their younger siblings. On the other hand, Brass' comment indicates that her father would spare nothing to see her getting through the teacher's college. From these comments, however, it is obvious that each woman struggled to reach where she is today, to achieve the educational level she has today.

In contrast, Copper and Lead who grew up in relatively middle socioeconomic backgrounds indicate that they were able to complete Matric before training as high school teachers, thus achieving a higher status of teaching at a high school as a result of their higher qualifications. In their own words:

I did my Matric when most people would end at Std 8 and go on for their teacher's training. I trained as a secondary teacher rather than a primary one, what was called JSOK in Afrikaans or JSTC in English. So, in other words I was considered highly educated taking into account that most teachers at the high schools were men and with PTC qualifications. It was rare that a woman could be allowed to teach at a high school (Copper)

My maternal grandfather bought me an Afrikaans dictionary so that I could translate from English to Afrikaans. I was surprised when I got position 2 in my class at the end of the year. Then I realized that I was something better, and that I could do it. Nevertheless, the two languages did not hinder my progress at all, I passed my Matric with an exemption. I passed my ordinary BA degree in 1978, and then did my UED. I was 25 years old when I started teaching at a high school in Potgietersrus, not only the youngest in the staff, but the only one with a degree! (Lead)

Copper's father was a graduate and a principal of a school before becoming a government policy maker and Lead's mother was a nurse, while her father was a politician. Because of their professional qualifications, they had certain expectations and

capacities to support their children to gain certain scholarly education and qualifications.

Although the two women also struggled to attain scholarly education, they were better off than the other four.

In addition to socioeconomic factors, the women were faced with traditional, cultural multiple roles and obligations. In addition to the struggles of writing assignments, tests and examinations, they are obligated to reserve time to see to the needs of their families and others in their communities. For example, the six women were married and had young children when they studied for their degrees and senior degrees.

For instance, Copper, Lead, Steel, and Silver shared:

After working for a few years, I decided to go to the university for a BA degree on a full time basis. My two young children lived with my parents in Gazankulu. After my BA degree I corresponded my Honors degree in African languages with UNISA. I got a promotion to this position in 1990 and in 1996 I completed my B.Ed. with RAU University. Right now I'm busy with a computer-training course offered for the first time for black people by the government (Copper)

In 1975 I started to correspond for my Matric and I completed it in 1978. I continued studying and did my B.A. in 1981-1984 with UNISA. My major subjects were Venda and Afrikaans. In 1998 I completed my B.Ed in Educational Management with UNISA. I still have two incomplete courses with UNISA because I had started to study for an honors degree in Applied Linguistics in 1988 because, then, I was a subject adviser for African languages. And on top of it all, I was working a fulltime job, being a mother, wife, and community leader, and still, expected to succeed (Steel)

I have my senior degree, a B.Ed from UNISA. And it was difficult. I started reading for it during 1986, and also being a mother of two young ones. I remember I was expecting my son when I went to my Graduations in 1988. My younger daughter was one year (Lead)

After that, I registered with VISTA to do SEC, and then I continued to do SED, there after I enrolled with UNISA to do my junior degree. All these studies after PTC were completed while I was already married with children and a family. I'm still struggling with my last course now, the Sociology I. I wrote my supplementary paper last week before meeting with you (Silver)

To these women, gaining a scholarly education is an unending struggle because they also face challenges from their spouses who tend to feel inferior and shadowed by their wives' achievements. Brass notes:

But higher education can also be a barrier, for, when you are more educated than your husband, it is always a challenge. With us, my husband and I, we study together. Like this year, we enrolled with UNISA together. Because I don't want to leave him behind, and I don't want him to feel that I'm superior to him. Because of our traditional norm, we have to accommodate our husband's fears (Brass)

It is clear from these statements that to gain a scholarly education has been a continuous personal struggle for the six women. They are the women who are expected to carry out a multitude of roles: motherhood, spouse, educator, and leader of communities, and at the same time do well and gain a scholarly education.

Public struggle to gain a scholarly education. On a public level, the women revealed some powerful forces that had to be overcome to gain a scholarly education. Among the factors that impeded the women's progress were:

- the nature of Bantu education that was neither free nor compulsory;
- limited choices of career for Black women;
- lack and or limited number of secondary schools in urban/city areas;
- limited access to post secondary education; and
- language barriers/ medium of instruction.

Education was not a free commodity for black people in South Africa. As well, African students did not receive any form of funding or financial support from nongovernmental organizations and other institutions. With these constraints in mind, along with being children of parents with low socioeconomic capacity, very few black students managed to attain certain levels of scholarly education. Moreover, the Bantu

Education Act of 1954 expected African people to finance their own education which was at the same time in the hands and control of the white minority government. As a result, the women in this study revealed that their's was a great struggle to overcome financial constraints to gain a scholarly education. Iron shares her views in an interview in which she said:

Even though I was always top in my class, after completing Std 8, I had nobody to take me further on. Since education for black people was neither free nor compulsory, I took pen and paper and applied for a loan. By the way, there were no free bursaries or scholarship for black people in those years bursary. I just trusted that God would see me through. (Iron)

Another public constraint was in that only a limited number of career options were open for black people in South Africa. Furthermore, the accessible options were also limited to the care-giving careers such as teaching, nursing and social work. For example, Iron first trained as a nurse before switching to a career in education. In addition, Copper and Brass comment:

Besides the fact that my father had some influence, for most Black women, teaching is a non-option. The choice of careers for Black women was limited. (Copper)

Bantu education really affected us because after passing Std 8, we wouldn't go anywhere except for teaching or nursing. We were not encouraged to go for Matric because it was very difficult. (Brass)

Added to these limitations, there were very few secondary schools in the urban areas. As a result of the stipulations from the Bantu Education Act which was in support of and also supported by the whole apartheid plan, the government built secondary schools in the rural areas in an effort to push Africans to the homelands or the so-called Bantustans. Consequently, all six women received their training in the rural areas. From

the women's stories it is evident that they were forced to go to the rural areas in search of a scholarly education. Brass described her experiences:

I attended public schools in Tshiawelo Township where I started Sub A until I passed my Std 6 before going to Venda. By the way, I had to go to the homeland since there were no high schools for black children, especially in the area where I lived, which was predominantly for the Vhavenda and Matshangana groups. (Brass)

To gain a scholarly education, the women were faced with constraints created by limited access to higher education. In addition, access to university education was also defined in terms of gender. For example, Lead, who is the only woman who received a university education after high school and indicates that although she met the basic requirements for a Medical or B.Sc. degree by far, she was told in no uncertain terms that those careers were not for Black women. In her own words she describes the experience, and says:

Although, however, I met the required number of points for admission to either a Medical or B.SC Degree at a university, my application was not approved because I was a black woman. It was rare for a Black woman to qualify to enter a university! (Lead)

Furthermore, access to higher education was denied through the use of different mechanisms such as race and standards. Steel and Brass shared their experiences in light of limited access to higher education:

... Yet my secondary school principal encouraged me to go ahead and do Matric, but I refused. I was a brilliant student and I could have made it! Matric was this so-called "gorilla" which could be passed by a handful of special chosen students! (Steel)

As a girl, you were told that Matric and Math were for boys. At first, Matric was difficult because it was controlled by the Joint Matric Board - JMB and was based on the white education standards. How do you expect to write and pass an examination based on other forms of knowledge other than the Bantu education you were fed? Nonetheless, few black people did pass these exams and made it to the universities. (Brass)

Language barriers created yet another impediment. English as a medium of instruction served to exclude students from the education system. For example, the medium of instruction in primary education was the specific mother tongue up to Std. 6. After this standard, all subjects were taught in English. From these and other comments, it is clear that language also serves as a power instrument, has the ability to demote students to lower grades and also to reduce or lower their performance. All these women had to survive beyond the barriers caused by language. Steel, Lead and Silver talk about their experiences that reveal the difficulty they had to endure to succeed and to gain a scholarly education. They say that:

I told myself that I was going to study. I read a lot of English books, and a lot of newspapers. Language had played a discriminatory role in different ways in my life. But I had to succeed and work harder to know the language in “power”, English and Afrikaans. (Steel)

And by the way, in Lesotho there was no Afrikaans. Coming to South Africa and living in the rural areas of Pietersburg with my maternal grandparents posed several problems in terms of language. First, I had to learn Afrikaans in Std7. In addition, I had to learn Sepedi, which is far more difficult and complicated than Sesotho, with its many dialects. And then, as a result of the two languages problems I was demoted to a lower standard. (Lead)

I went on through until I passed my Std 6. In the primary school the medium of instruction was IsiXhosa. So, when we got to the secondary school, things changed and everything was in English, no longer in IsiXhosa any more! In the primary school I was one of the best students in class, to an extent that I easily obtained first positions. You know, when you get a first class pass in Std 6, it was something great. When I got to the high school, I was “nice and frustrated”. You know, I could look at a teacher and not understand a word. I passed my JC, with a second-class pass. (Silver)

Brass also introduces another aspect of limitations brought about by the workings of ethnicity. Since schools in South Africa were not only separated and segregated in terms of race, but also in terms of ethnicity and mother tongue, the six women received

their elementary education from schools that served and provided their ethnic mother tongue. This segregation also translated into further divisions in that the few available secondary or high schools were mainly provided for the AmaZulu or Basotho speaking groups, especially in Soweto, while the other ethnic group had no choice but to send their children to the homeland or adopt the language provided. In short, some ethnic groups were afforded more access to schools than others. This is also evident from Brass's experiences as a school principal of a school taught under the tree, because other ethnic groups refuse to accommodate the Vhavenda children.

What does theory say about the role of education in our society? One of the main objectives of education is the capacity to deliver a democratic existence that guarantees basic political rights for all the citizens. In view of the foregoing stories, I understand the six women's personal and public struggle to gain a scholarly education according to the three educational goals proposed by Labaree (1997), that is, democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility.

From the democratic equality approach to schooling, Labaree (1997) argues that: "democratic society cannot persist unless it prepares all its young with equal care to take full responsibility of citizenship in a complete manner. Schools must promote both effective citizenship and relative equality. Schools must prepare children to play constructive roles in a democratic society" (p.42). In contrast, Verwoerd's oppressive government of divide and rule had something totally different in mind for the education of black children in South Africa. Since the government was not founded under the ethos of democracy, it is not surprising that its education systems were neither created for equal citizenship nor for equal treatment. In fact, blacks in general were referred to as third

class citizens in South Africa. In Copper's own words ,“ The apartheid system regarded me as a third class citizen, may be not even a citizen but an alien. I was not given a choice. I never had rights! Thus one grew up without confidence of being oneself!” (Copper). In addition, Iron reports that, “I was aware of the Bantu Education Act of 1954. It created a lot of inferiority complex. To get rid of it, one had to have a high self-esteem. BEA did not stop me from anything!” (Iron). No wonder the apartheid education system failed to, “ ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship” (Labaree, 1997, p.45).

Labaree also asserts that education should provide equal treatment for all people regardless of age, race, ethnicity and sex to reduce discriminatory practice in the classroom and that all students be held to the same high level of education, performance, and standards (p.45). This assertion contradicts what Bantu Education was all about. It was an education for separate development, divide and rule based on race, gender, class, ethnicity, language, culture and religious affiliation. These divisions served to entrench separate development in all aspects of life in South Africa. The ideologies of apartheid existence were supported through these divisions. To an extent, these goals served the interest of the politicians in the apartheid regime. It is arguable that under no circumstance would unequal education yield equal benefits, outcomes and opportunities for all its citizens. Also, this type of education could not provide equal access where every citizen has equal opportunity to acquire an education at any education level. From their stories, the six women reveal that they had to leave the city life and struggle in the rural homelands for the benefit of gaining a scholarly education.

The second goal of education is social efficiency. Labaree (1997) says that education should prepare the young to carry out useful economic roles with competency for the economic well being of the country (p.46). Therefore, education is a public good designed to prepare workers to fill structurally necessary market roles. In the same light, schooling should provide people with skills that will enhance their productivity, to promote economic growth. As a result, “education is not just a moral matter or political correctness but a matter of good economic sense” (Labaree, 1997, p.47). In the South African context, while education was also a matter of good economic sense, in that it created subservient black citizens to meet the labor needs of the white government, education was mainly for political correctness more than for a moral issue. For instance, Verwoerd, from his famous statements, maintains “there is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor” (Christie, 1986, p.12 & Molteno, 1986, p.92). Therefore, Bantu education was designed with a grand plan in mind, that is, to reflect the job market and to purposefully allocate participation in the unequal workforce. Furthermore, as Labaree (1997) sees it, schools create educational channels that efficiently carry groups of students towards different locations in the occupational structure (p.55). In response, the policy makers of the apartheid regime warned, “we should not give the native an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with a number of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labor in the country?” (Molteno, 1986, p.66). Evidence from the women’s stories reflects these patterns where education was designed to meet specific interests of a particular group in power, that of the Afrikaner government.

The third educational goal is social mobility. Labaree (1997) and other scholars perceive social mobility as one of the objectives to be attained by education. Labaree maintains that, “education is a commodity, it provides individual students with competitive advantage in the struggle for desirable social positions. Education is seen as a private good designed to prepare individual for successful social competition for more desirable market roles” (p. 51). Seen from Labaree’s point of view, black schools failed to provide its students with educational credentials they needed in order to get ahead in the social structure and to compete with white students. The Bantu education system created inferior status and had a great impact on the political, social and economic survival of blacks in South Africa. In order to escape the vicious cycle of poverty, low status, and inferiority, these Black women saw education as a vehicle for redress. Hence they struggled to gain a scholarly education. For example Iron commented:

As black people we didn’t grow because of motivation. As black people we see education not for it’s worth, not only for enlightenment, but also as a vehicle to enable one to run away from starvation, poverty, hunger, violence... For example, when I was still a lecturer at a college of education, during the peak riots when students were actively involved, my students used to remain in my class until my period was over. They knew that they were going to miss a lot. They wouldn’t miss my class for anything! Another related remark, “Sometimes education’s aim is not necessarily to uplift the black communities, but to move away from them” When people become more educated, they can afford to move out of the ghettos of Soweto. They turn their backs on the poor black people who cannot achieve or reach the levels they have... But all in all, “The only key to open all doors is education. (Iron)

Labaree (1997) claims that social mobility means bottom up, to meet individual's needs (unlike social efficiency which means top down and collective needs). Social mobility emphasizes individual status attainment. Benefits of education are for specific individuals and are selective and differential rather than collective and equal. Bantu

education, seen in the above light, contradicted the above claim by all means. Bantu education was more for social efficiency than social mobility. Consequently, all these Black women leaders conceive education as a liberator, a creator of opportunities. Moreover, Labaree (1997) contends that while social mobility is a consumer's commodity, it also treats education as a form of exchange value in contrast with the use value. The value of education is extrinsic, i.e. job, standards of living, financial security, social power and cultural prestige (p.55). In the same note, Copper reports that:

I never supported the ideology of Liberation before Education. I believed that education was important and that oppression will never be lifted without education... I was able to applied for this position because of my better my qualification... One good advantage about education is that at the end it also go hand in hand with financial position in life. Once you get education, you get something which is good. And it makes you a better person, you won't depend on others for everything, and it delivers you from the poverty and after it has delivered you from the poverty you start understanding, comparing, asking yourself a lot of questions, you no longer take anything as you see them. You ask questions! You don't just say ok, it was like that! (Copper)

In addition, Labaree (1997) asserts that educational value is not from knowledge symbolized but the kind of job that can be exchanged (p.55). The women in this study indicated that they had to struggle to gain a scholarly education through correspondence with higher institutions regardless of the curriculum offered. As a result, a number of women studied subjects like Biblical studies, Physiology, Criminology, African languages, and so forth. This is also supported by Steel and Brass in their comments:

You wanted to go and advance yourself and get to the next categories so that you can earn a better salary. Black teachers were graded in terms of categories A-G. The next higher category meant more money or higher salary. But then, this was all because of extrinsic motivation. In my case, I also had some intrinsic motivation. (Steel)

Brass's comment was: "Bantu education really affect us because after passing Std 8, we wouldn't go anywhere. We had to either go for matric or teaching, or you

go for nursing. With the matric it was so difficult, because it was JMB, the same exam taken by white students with better education. The competition was way far..." (Brass)

As a result of the 'Category C' mentality, you were judged by the type of qualification you had, that also had a direct impact on how much you make a year, your salary scale...I had to improve my qualifications and correspond with UNISA. After that, I joined RAU for a course in educational management. At the moment I'm busy with the computer-training course. (Brass)

These comments support the idea that education is not about knowledge students learn in school, but about the credentials they acquire there. Grades, credits, certificates, diplomas and degrees become the objects to be pursued. Higher qualifications meant increases in salary – economic advancement, higher social status, and recognition. The women in this study used education to counteract the perilous nature of Bantu education, to challenge the ideologies of apartheid in general and its psychological effect of creating inferior human beings in particular. They had to struggle to be able to rise above apartheid's expectations to advance their social status and to improve their economic positions and may be in the process of their struggle to gain a scholarly education, be able to advance others. Finally, while one of the main objectives of education is the capacity to deliver a democratic existence that guarantees basic political rights for all the citizens, education reflects more instrumental features as a means to improving material living standards, i.e. alleviation of poverty, improved health, etc. As Labaree (1997) shows, "any healthy society needs an education system that helps to produce good citizens, good workers, and good social opportunities. Preparing young people to enter into full involvement in a complex society is itself a complex task that necessarily requires educators to balance a variety of competing concerns, and the educational institutions that result from this effort necessarily are going to embody these tensions" (p.72).

Theme: Language of Oppression versus Language of Liberation

This theme reflects the way these women speak, the words they choose to use to describe their experiences, and the phrases they use to reveal their subjectivity, domination, segregation, oppression, and liberation. The language of oppression and the language of liberation is evident in the way the women talk about the past, present, and future. The language is evident in the way the women name their stories and verbalize their experiences in the past oppressive regime, and at the same time in their perceptions of the current new democratic governance. The language of oppression and the language of liberation also emerge in the women's conversations about their hopes in the future ideal government.

From their stories and disclosures, one does not need to go far to understand the dual function of language, that is, the capacity to oppress and the capacity to liberate. Although the language of oppression versus the language of liberation is not always clearly defined in the women's voices, at one point, however, the women bring out both concepts in the same breath. Consequently, it is with great pains that I strive to distinguish these parallel concepts in the women's use of language. While the language of oppression is more evident when the women talk about apartheid policies, their quest for education and its ability to liberate them from poverty, gender and ethnic domination, the language of liberation emerges in almost all their statements. In addition, the language of liberation is almost always equated with social justice in the women's discourses.

Iron talks about the Group Area Act that deprived her of better living conditions in South Africa:

Even when we had money to purchase a better house, because of segregation and the group areas act, we were confined to the four-roomed house until we were allowed to extend it and add more rooms. (Iron)

Furthermore, as she talks about her growing up and coming of age, she reveals that after losing her mother at the age of six, her eldest sister had to go and look for a job in order to take care of her and other siblings. Her sister worked as a “domestic servant, cleaning homes and looking after other people's children.” Iron said, “ I had a very hard life, and some times food was scarce and I had to survive on crumbs.” This is evidently the language of oppression. To support this further, she reveals that poverty, hunger and starvation were the norm, and as a result, education was used to free black people from the hold of these social constraints. She comments:

As black people we didn't grow because of motivation. As black people we saw education not for it's worth, not only for enlightenment, but also as a vehicle to enable us to run away from starvation, poverty, hunger, and violence. One believes that the more one gets educated, the better one would earn more and be able to move away from the ghettos, the black townships. Education's aim is not necessarily to uplift the black communities, but to enable those who manage to escape, to move away from them, and leave the poorer of the poor as helpless as ever. Education reproduces poverty and starvation in the name of enlightenment. (Iron)

The language of oppression versus the language of liberation is evident in Brass's transformation strategies. She talks about the strides she had taken to move her school from the language of separation based on ethnicity, that is, from being a predominantly Tshivenda primary that serves the Vhavenda children only, to a “multiracial school” that serves all the children in her community. The language of liberation is evident in her act to include all children irrespective of ethnicity or mother tongue. She does this through the use of English as a medium of instruction and the Tshivenda language is taught as one of the subjects. Brass reveals that:

One great transformation so far is that we are accommodating every ethnic group without discrimination. Parents see how we work and want to bring their children here irrespective of the fact that the school is for the Vhavenda group. We have Matshangana, Basotho, AmaXhosa and amaZulu children who attend at this school. This is a multiracial school in Soweto. The other day one UmZulu parent said “ anginandaba ne Sivenda, abatwana bami bazongena khona lapha”, in English, she meant, “ I don’t care for the Tshivenda language, my children will attend here”. Fortunately our medium of instruction is English and we teach Tshivenda as a subject. We are moving away from the ethnic separation which was introduced by apartheid. (Brass)

Another comment that reveals the language of oppression is when Copper describes the lack of parental involvement in the schools. She talks about the past Bantu education in the apartheid regime that denied African parents the right to ownership and democratic governance of their schools. She maintains that:

Another major challenge is in terms of lack of parental involvement in the running of our schools. I think, again is because of where we come from. Our past knowledge and beliefs! All along our parents and community thoughts the school belongs to the government. As a result, the government should be responsible for everything and anything. They never played a role. At first, even when the school was under construction, black communities were never approached, they were never told of what was happening right under their noses. They would see the buildings coming up. Or maybe find out from the workers who were building the school as to the kind of school and so on. (Copper)

In the same light on the debate of school governance, Steel comments on black parents’ lack of basic skills required to manage schools. Her language demonstrates the tensions between the language of oppression and the language of liberation. For instance, during the past regime, African parents were not given an opportunity to manage their schools hence skills such as financial management, budgeting, communication, and resource management were lacking. From her words, she reflects the language of liberation in the government’s promise of provision of capacity building. For redress and to reduce these inefficiencies, the government white paper promised to offer basic training for capacity building of the school governing bodies.

Moreover, the training was earmarked for the formerly deprived black groups.

However, she voices a concern:

We as principals like to work with the governing bodies and believe in parental involvement but sometimes the members abuse their powers. Like in my case, there is this woman, who is a vice secretary of our governing body, she likes to accuse and insult me for no apparent reason ... But on the other hand, I think it is because of lack of knowledge and little education. Little education is very dangerous. Some people feel that they know a lot because they are politically active! And even when we conduct our meetings she always complains that the meeting is not procedural. I think the department should have trained these people before allowing them to be placed in positions of power. What is the meaning of capacity building then? These people can do better if they are trained and know their roles. (Steel)

Throughout their conversations, we hear the language of oppression used to indicate various constructs of domination. From their stories, the language of oppression versus the language of liberation also emerges when the women talk about gender and ethnic domination. The women show that while they have some power in their professional lives, the power is lost as soon as they enter their various homes, as soon as they take off the principalship hat to wear the wife hat, motherhood hat, daughter-in-law hat and so on. For example, Brass comments:

At work I'm the boss, I'm the leader of my school. But coming home, the situation changes. At home we are man and woman, husband and wife, and we should understand that. Otherwise, if I show him that I'm also a leader it will mean a divorce. As a woman, it is my role to know when my husband is angry and choose my words or rather keep quite. I cannot raise my voice to my husband, instead when I'm angry, I should come down and he can raise his voice as he wish. (Brass)

The language of oppression emerges again when Brass talks about ethnic segregation and divisions created by apartheid structures. As indicated in chapter 4, schools were separated in terms of ethnicity and language, where differentiated power and privileges were assigned differently to different ethnic groups. As a result, there were

fewer schools for the Vhavenda and Matshangana people who are African minority groups in South Africa. Brass describes her experience and says:

All the schools were for other ethnic groups and unwilling to accommodate our Vhavenda children. I worked there from 1975 up to 1977. In Pimville we started so badly because for almost two months we were compelled to teach under the trees before we got accommodation at Mdla Shongwane. We were given three classes to accommodate five standards. We had Sub A and B in one class, Std 1 in the second one, and Std 2 and Std 3 in the third classroom. Five classes among three teachers! Because the school had about 10 classrooms that were already overcrowded, we had to adopt the platoon system. Some classes will begin in the morning from 8 to 1pm, and the next group will start at 12 to 5pm. At least, we would be overcrowded for only one hour before the morning class leaves at 1pm. That was tough because it meant that the same teacher would be on duty from 8 to 5. We were happy because we could teach in a better environment than under the tree. (Brass)

From these deliberations, it is clear that there is tension between the language of oppression and the language of liberation. Although at times the women's words do not provide a clear cut distinction between the language of oppression versus the language of liberation, terms like- oppresses, dominated, discriminated, exclusion versus terms like- liberation, social justice, equality, and redress emerge to support some form of distinction.

The women talk about their role in teaching for liberation and social uplifting in the midst of oppression in South Africa. They hold the belief that education liberates people, gives people a voice to contribute, promotes equality and thus, uplifts one from oppression. Iron, Copper and Lead state that:

My teaching has been for liberating the black people. I did not believe in Liberation now, Education later slogan. For example, during the peak riots, when students were actively involved in politics, my students used to remain until my period was over. They knew that they were going to miss a lot. I did not take advantage of the situation to run my private business like most of my colleagues. I used to go and teach effectively. As a result, my students wouldn't miss my class for anything! Education should uplift the social status of our poor black nation, that's social justice for me....Social justice should lead to a school where

people are not afraid to contribute, where people are not afraid to contribute and accept others' opinions. And just school is a school not oppressive, a school where people are praise for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and it is not stagnant, people move together. (Iron)

I never supported the ideology of Liberation before Education. I believed that education was important and that oppression will never be lifted without education. (Copper)

It was especially during the era of 'Liberation now, Education later', the 'Pass one, pass all' era! Even then, we knew that Std 10 pupils would end up writing their final exams at the end of the year. My students knew that I expected them to be in class during my period. No one could just walk in or out, as it was the norm in the other classes. I used to tell them, "Boys and girls, I allow you to come in this class but just give me my time, as I have told you to come early! After that you can do what ever you like during someone else's period." I think I realized that I was a stronger fighter, because being a women during that terrible time, telling those crazy students to come to class while everybody was telling them not to... Oh well, I had to do it. I had to sacrifice my neck for the sake of education. I told myself that I'd do anything to make sure that these kids get an education. Half a loaf is better than none! May be I'm wrong, I should have just sat down and support the chalk down strategy? But, if I had to do it again, I will do exactly the same thing over and over again, for the sake of education..." (Lead)

The language of oppression versus the language of liberation emerges again in the women's voices. For instance, Lead believes that to liberate other oppressed women is to give them a voice, show them their rights, uplift them, and change their status for the best without humiliation. She says:

... being a leader especially, as a Black women we have so much to do, because we should uplift those woman who never knew their rights, who even when they are shown their rights, they are still not sure of how to take them and make them their own. They still believe that somebody will give them these rights... As an educational leader you are everything to those woman who are still down and you must try to uplift them as much you can without humiliating them. (Lead)

On the one hand, Copper use the language of liberation in that she sees the role of leadership as an ability to "transcend the boundaries of oppression" through positive thinking and high self esteem. Copper comments:

My motto is don't wait for other people to appreciate you, do it yourself. I believe that as leaders we have the ability to give others the opportunity, which could not be achieved if we had not extended beyond the call of duty. We need to "transcend the boundaries of oppression!" (Copper)

On the other hand, however, Silver's language of "the fear of the white man is vanishing and I see a white person as any other person" reflects a move from oppression thinking to liberation thinking. Liberation from racial fear is seen as a product of gaining a scholarly education. Thus, women's confidence is elevated through education. Silver says:

As I look back, higher education has given me more confidence, I gained knowledge, and I am able to deal with different issues in the different ways. For example, the fear of the white man is vanishing and I see a white person as any other person ... As leaders they should be confident, and to develop that confidence they must read. In addition, they have to work double hard as human beings, to prove to men and the world that "although you are a woman you can do it and you can succeed. (Silver)

The language of liberation that embraces respect of other people's ability, gender, and location or geography replaces the language of oppression based on lack of respect to others and unequal and unfair treatment. Iron says:

I understand social justice as fairness by one person or group to the other. To me it translates to respect for human beings, not to undermining ones' intellect not knowing what they can contribute. Respect people's gender, where they live or reside, their abilities and skills. I do not discriminate people by mere looking at them. I do not judge people by their appearance and looks, or whether they come from a shack or big house. In other words, their social background is immaterial to me. (Iron)

The language of liberation removes ethnic domination and embraces respect of others and encourages practices of other ethnic minorities' traditions and culture. Copper says:

Now that I know what I want in life, I make sure that our traditional activities, our Xitshangana dances and cultural norms are upheld. We have specific days to

practice them in this school. We invite parents and other people to come and help teach our children some of our valuable norms and cultural rites. (Copper)

In her talks about the language of oppression, Steel reveals that she was looked down upon as a result of her ethnicity and at times considered as less intelligent. In the same breath, she moves the discourse to denounce divisions based on ethnicity to embrace the liberation language where every citizen is seen as a South African. The tensions created by the duality of the language are evident in Steel's words. She says:

I know that I am Muvenda and I will remain a Muvenda and I am very proud to be a Muvenda. Because normally, as Vhavenda we are look down upon, we are regarded as inferior or rather, as less intelligent. You know this is a very sensitive issue and I don't think we should be talking about ethnicity...after all; we are all Africans. We should move beyond ethnicity, we should look at each other as Africans whether you are black or white, as long as you were born in Africa. (Steel)

From Silver's use of the language of oppression, issues of institutional discrimination and ethnicity are revealed in the backdrop of a cry for liberation.

I feel I gained more power now because in the past woman were looked down upon even salary wise, men usually got higher salaries than women for the same job and with the same qualifications. At least the government is gradually closing the gap. We are now equal because education is now the same. In the past we had different education systems that produced different knowledge for different rights. Now that the government recognizes all the 11 official languages, we just hope the ethnicity issue will disappear in time. ... I advanced myself, built a house in the former white suburbs. A hen is capable of fighting to protect her chicks from danger. During my time I had to fight to keep this position, and I had to fight for my rights. As a single, widowed black woman, I will raise my voice, someone will listen to me one day. I have learned to be more observant. I now realize that I can fight back, by proving to my oppressors that I can do what they can, even though I am woman. Even though I'm a black woman! (Silver)

What does theory say about social constructs that marginalize Black women? From the foregoing deliberations, it is evident that the theme of language of oppression versus the language of liberation brings out various constructs that function to oppress, dominate

and marginalize these Black women. In their language, their understanding and knowledge was derived from the interplay and interlocking of various constructs in their lives. Hence, issues such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, and language emerge from all angles in their revelations. Therefore, it is doubtful that one can put one's finger on a single construct that played a major role in these Black women's subjectivities. However, a critical review of these stories and others in this research shows that ethnic division and language/mother tongue were the main devices for the divide and rule strategy used by the former apartheid regime.

Ethnic identity and language were used as tools to divide and rule in South Africa, where black people have been stripped of their South African citizenship and forcibly removed to Bantustans. According to Enslin (1986), education for black children was to include the following features: it is in the mother tongue; it should not be funded at the expense of the white education; it should, by implication, not prepare blacks for equal participation in economic and social life; it should preserve the cultural identity of the black community (although it will nonetheless consist in leading the native to acceptance of Christian and National principles); it must of necessity be organized and administered by whites (Enslin, 1986, p.140).

For Molteno, Bantu education was created to reinforce the system of Bantustans. The education was designed to control the direction of thought, to delimit the boundaries of knowledge, to restrict lines of communication, and to curtail contact across language barriers. "They aimed to dwarf the minds of black children by conditioning them to servitude" (Molteno 1986, p.94). Certainly, apartheid education was a masterminded plan designed to remove black people psycho-ideologically and resettle them in their separate

place of subordination (p.93), According to the Christian National Education policy of 1949 (CNE), education for blacks should be in the mother tongue. In addition, there were mother-tongue instructions for all population registration groups. The Tshivenda-speakers were separated from the Sesotho-speakers, and the Afrikaans-speakers were also separated from the English-speakers.

While most South Africans hold a belief that mother tongue and ethnicity divides and separates, they also hold a belief that all eleven official languages should be developed and be equal. As a result, the question of ethnicity and mother tongue raises contradicting responses. For one reason, people want to embrace the multicultural image of a new South Africa while at the same time maintaining their unique cultural heritage. The realities are that South Africa is still divided in terms of ethnicity and mother tongue, given that the primary schools in Soweto are still predominantly limited to enrolling children from the specific ethnic groups they serve. Various scholars including Horowitz (1991), Maartens (1998), and Alexander (1997) assert that African minority groups are still marginalized in the present South Africa. For example, minority groups like the Matshangana, Vhavenda, AmaSwati, and AmaNdebele are not represented in the major television broadcasting service of South Africa, the South African Broadcasting Corporation Television (SABC). Neither the SABC TV channels nor or any other in the country made provision for use of these minority languages in the past government nor does it make any in the present era. In general, the use of Sesotho and IsiZulu languages continue to dominate the communication channels in the local government structures in Gauteng and in Soweto.

To sum up, Richardson (1994) states that:

Language does not reflect social reality, but produces meaning, creates social realities. Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another. Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of self, our subjectivity is constructed. Understanding language as competing discourse, competing ways of giving meaning and of organizing the world, makes language a site of exploration, struggle. Language is not the result of one's individuality; rather, language constructs the individual's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. What some thing means to individuals is dependent on the discourse available to them. Experience is thus open to contradictory interpretations governed by social interests rather than objective truth. (Richardson, 1994, p.518)

Richardson's conception of identity appears to provide a genuine area of synthesis for the language and ethnicity debate. If we are to understand the different women's perceptions of ethnic discrimination in light of Richardson's explanation above, it is not surprising that some women did not experience and perceive ethnic discrimination as one might have expected. Although apartheid discriminated and oppressed all African people, it successfully applied the divide and rule strategy to allocate differentiated powers to the nine indigenous ethnic groups. As a result, it is common knowledge that mostly in urban areas in the former Transvaal province, the now Gauteng Province, groups like the AmaZulu and Basotho were considered more important than the other groups. For instance, IsiZulu and Sesotho were used as official languages in the local municipality structures to give directions and instructions on application forms, road signs, signs on major public entrances to hospitals, civic halls and so forth. As a result, the other seven language/ethnic groups did not have specific power bases besides in terms of population composition.

However, the new trend seems to be taking a different turn since the new government was established with its stronghold of AmaXhosa leadership in power. For example, Steel and other non-Xhosas people may perceive Mandela's attention on building schools in

the predominantly AmaXhosa area of the Eastern Cape as another form of ethnic discrimination; their suspicions supported by the fact that both Mandela and Mbeki are from the AmaXhosa ethnic group. In general, there is a sense and feeling that ethnicity is a determining factor that places people in various organizations and positions of power in the current government. In conclusion, as long as schools are still divided and defined in terms of ethnicity and mother tongue languages, the issue of ethnic discrimination remains very much alive. Most important, however, is that issues of equality and liberation will remain hidden.

Theme: Power and Privileges: Tensions Within and Across the Personal, the School institution, and the Broader Society

Power and privilege: tensions within and across personal suggests that traditional obligations and cultural practices remove power and privilege from these six African women. For instance, widowed women are forced to mourn for at least a year, while men may mourn for a month or less. During the mourning period, there are some restrictions that remove and take away some privileges. At times, a widow may not be employed, attend specific functions, express herself in public, attend parties and ceremonies or even visit friends. At times, a woman in mourning clothes is isolated by the community and is regarded as a curse. For example, Copper was compelled to wear a hat as a symbol of respect for her deceased husband. Even though it was in the middle of summer in South Africa at the time of our conversations, Copper would not remove her headgear. In another example, Silver reveals that her opinions were not considered and her right to free speech was violated. Consequently, some powers and privileges were denied as result of these women's widowhood. Both Copper and Silver indicate below the power

and privileges that were taken from them as a result of being widows. In their own words they comment:

...And of course, my husband passed away in October, three months ago. At least in our Xitshangana culture the widow is not forced to wear black mourning clothes for a year or two like it is with other ethnic cultures. I just have to cover my hair or put on a hat for a year as a symbol of mourning. Of course this is also not fair because most men do not mourn at all. In a year or less men are can get married again, with no questions asked. As a woman, if you do that, you are in trouble. It means you killed your husband or you are glad that he is dead. What a culture! (Copper)

I experience double or rather, multiple oppression because of being black, woman, and widow. In general, both single and married women tend to discriminate you when you are widowed. I think they also feel threatened by your presence. Even the friends you used to have feel threatened. They are not as free and relaxed as before. They think that you are going to steal their husbands! I am now closer to single women, and I interact more with women who are not married. The discrimination is also felt in the community. For example, when there are community meetings the points you raise as a widowed woman are not taken seriously. Even in the church people say, "Whose wife is this one?". As if you have to belong to someone for you to be able to make a valid point. (Silver)

Even members of the women's extended family have more power than they.

Power is also a function of submission. For instance, Silver had to comply with her father-in-law's demands.

First, at the insistence of her father-in-law, both her husband and son were buried in the far remote Eastern Cape. Even though her husband died almost ten years ago, her father-in-law was still in control. Second, she was expected to foot the bill alone! (Silver, field note from observation)

Traditional obligations and culture define leadership in terms of gender, that is, men are born leaders. From the women's stories, both men and women share this belief. Although women do not necessarily verbalize this belief, their actions tell more stories than their words. From the six women's transcripts, men's blatant arrogance is evident while women act in silent resistance. For example, from Steel's experience with the woman who was the secretary of the governing body, it is evident that women do not

necessarily support other women because they are women. Moreover, even children grow up knowing that school principals should be men. For example whenever Lead entered various classrooms, children would say, “Good morning/afternoon Sir,” because they did not have a concept of a female school principal. Even outside visitors would come in the office and ask her to call the male school principal. It took a while for these kids to get used to the idea that she was the principal and that they should address her as “Mam”. Furthermore, Lead revealed the animosity experienced from other women who were expected to be in support of other woman as leaders. Lead says that in most cases, what was heard was, “She thinks she is better than us.” Instead of helping each other, women tend to be jealous and pull the female leader down.

. . . . I have never been lead by a woman and as you understand our culture, if you are a woman you are a woman”. And I know that, even our Basotho boys don’t take orders from their mothers. The whole thing is perpetuated at a very early age in the boy’s live. When a boy is born in a family, a man is born! Men teach their male children that women are not important. . . . And I thought women would be on my side, what a joke. It was like they were rejoicing, trying to see this woman who thinks she is “a man”! They would either be neutral and kept quite when some male teachers were defiant. Women would rather gossip about it than to defend or be on my side. (Lead)

I think the stereotype went further to the extent that these men felt that “because you are a woman, then your leadership skills were questionable”! And the English teacher, the old man, kept on saying that the school will never become right because it was under “a petticoat government.” (Steel)

Traditional obligations and cultural practices put these women’s husbands in power and in control as heads of families. These powers are also directly related to the issue of Lobola. On the one hand, Lobola is defined as a symbol of honor, a mechanism to join two unrelated families. On the other hand, Lobola is also a controlling mechanism that removes power from women. For instance, while Copper’s perception of Lobola is

negative, and she says, “Just because he paid Lobola, then I have no voice. In other words, Lobola buys out my voice.”

Silver’s story, however, reveals a different grammar. She reflects tensions in power as a result of the Lobola’s dualist nature. In short, she accepts the domination created by this so-called symbol of honor as the expected. She says:

I’m not saying everything about our culture is or was wrong. Take for instance, Lobola. It is something honorable. Lobola should be paid to the bride’s parents because if a man wants to get a wife without paying anything, he cannot have the pride of ownership. (Silver)

Domination of women by their husbands is also seen as a cultural practice that cannot be eradicated by attainment of a scholarly education. Lead and Brass make these comments:

On the other hand, achievement of higher education has no great influence on our culture. At home we are still expected to do our chores when our husbands sit and read newspapers. He expects me to put food in front of him, take care of the children, do my work, and study for my degrees. I don’t mean that we need to change our culture as we get more educated, but that we need to reconsider some of the expectation, especially those that put women down, to be trodden on and those expectations that take away our self respect. In addition to these, our spouses cause other barriers too. If only you could interview our partners! As a woman, even when you want to do something, you find out that your partner is not that approachable. Even when we have good ideas, it’s not easy to get our partners’ whole support. They feel threatened by our achievements and success! We end up doing what is best to sustain a peaceful existence and in most cases we do it at our own expense. Sometimes we find most of our time spent trying to please our partners, not spending time on what we believe to be right and or what we actually want to do. For example, I could have had the position of principalship a long time ago. But my husband kept on saying that I don’t need the problems and challenges that come with the position. I was just frustrated and I wanted to keep peace in my family, and for the benefit of my children. ... it is a problem that we educated woman have in our homes. You earn more, even if you don’t mention it, you already have a problem because your husband want to remind you that your money does not make you the “man of the house!” And once you are independent, then you are a threat and you want to become manly. Education has liberated us to a certain extent, but not yet fully. ... When I look at the whole picture, not only the issues in our families, but at the whole apartheid ideology, the oppressors created the whole thing. The western culture/ apartheid,

or rather the white man made sure that he dominated our black men, who in turn dominated their Black women! Women in turn get angry with their kids because they cannot fight back, they cannot fight their men! It is a vicious circle. (Lead)

You know, when you get married the Tshivenda culture puts you down. There are things that you cannot do as a woman. For example, when you have an argument or some misunderstandings with your husband, you cannot answer or talk back. This is so difficult for me even today. I just get angry and keep quite. I'm considered a leader in my job not everywhere. Some one once said, "it is just like when you are a rubbish collector, people don't see you as one once you leave the place of your employment and get into your house. It should be the same case with you, once you leave your office and enters your husband's house; you are no longer Brass the principal. You became Mr. Brass's wife, not Brass the principal". But, that is impossible because being a principal is a 24-hour job. You are always one, you like it or not. You will always be principal so and so. Thidzi, I'm sure people still refer to you as the principal of Tsakani primary school, right! As women, we wear these different hats all the time. (Brass)

In the past, the traditional customary laws were not written; they were flexible and yet, difficult to interpret. Thus, codifications of traditional laws were for the main purpose of oppression and discrimination against the African people in South Africa. These laws were especially for the reinforcement of migratory labor where men were given more power at the expense of women. As a result, the one place where men had power was in the family.

Power and privileges: tensions within and across school institutions suggests that because schools and communities are vehicles that carry out certain ideas and beliefs, they also serve to perpetuate gender stereotypes, biases and racism. For instance, schools reward students differently as a result of skin tone/complexion, language, and ethnicity. In general, when a student is dark in complexion, she/he is given a negative identity. The general stereotype is that "black is ugly." Often times, these students are subjected to derogative definitions and abuse and are treated as subhuman by their teachers, peers and communities.

Consequently, schools teach students to expect different treatment as a result of these constructs. For example, from the two women of the same Vhavenda ethnic group, Steel and Brass, we note very interesting dichotomies created by their skin complexion. On the one hand, because of her dark complexion, Steel was treated badly by her black teacher who was a choir trainer and who did not want to see her “black face” in the front row of the choir. As a soprano, she was supposed to stand in the front row with other sopranos in the choir. Steel, however, was commanded to conceal her face by standing behind the two light complexioned girls. Her teacher told her that she only wanted to hear her sweet voice and not her “black face”. As a result, Steel’s beautiful voice was recognized without a face to match. People would hear the sweet voice coming from somewhere behind the choir without seeing the owner’s face. Thus, power and privileges were removed from her.

On the other hand, Brass received favors and superior treatment from her teachers, especially her white female teachers as a result of her fair and lighter complexion. Moreover, however, the two women’s stories are full of contradictions to an extent that it is unbelievable that the two women have so much in common. For example, both come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, they were born in Alexander black township in Johannesburg, they went to live with their grandparents at puberty age, and they also trained at the same college. Regardless of these similarities, however, their experiences of power and privileges are two worlds apart as a result of the workings of schools and communities. One’s power was taken away while the other was empowered as a result of skin color. In their own words they say:

Because I am dark she didn’t want me to stand in front. She said I should hide myself between two girls who were lighter in complexion. She told me “I just

want to hear your sweet voice and not your face!” Myself identity, well... I have a very negative self-image, because of my color and very dark complexion I think I’m not good looking. I was told by people that I was not good looking, in fact some said that I was ugly...and I thought I wasn’t good for anybody, as a result, I developed a very negative self image. (Steel)

I really do not have outstanding memories of ethnic discrimination. Some how I feel that the color of my skin had a role to play. As you can see, I have a lighter completion than most Vhavenda people. Because we originate from the Northern parts of South Africa, most of our Vhavenda people are dark in completion. I took the lighter completion after my mother because most Batswana people have a lighter skin color. As a result, people were more receptive, and I was not treated like most of my Vhavenda friends. I remember one day when I was on a line in one of the stores in Loustrichart where a young white Afrikaner was in attendance. I was way far behind, but she summoned me to come in the front and served me before my turn! I didn’t understand why until latter at the boarding school. I think it was because of my completion and the fact that I could speak Afrikaans so well. As a result, my white teachers used to like me a lot! I never experienced ethnic rivalry or rather discrimination because I am a Muvenda woman. May be it is because I can speak all the 11 official languages in South Africa. (Brass)

Language has the ability to assign specific power and privilege to different speakers. For example, from Brass’s transcript (above), it is evident that knowledge of the Afrikaans language gave her power and certain privileges. In addition, tensions created by the command of languages are evident in Steel’s report. While she acknowledges that the other languages deprived her of the use of her native Tshivenda language, she accepts that they had given her power to have a basic command of most of the eleven official languages of South Africa. Somewhere in her transcripts, she commented that she was able to get a job at the SABC Radio station as a result of her command of various languages. Mere command of a specific language meant a sure key to other opportunities. Steel says:

Being Muvenda has helped me to know most of the languages that are spoken in South Africa. For example, in Meadowlands High we used to have Tshivenda, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiZulu, Xitsonga or Xitshangana, etc. And we could not speak our Tshivenda language in public! It was like you were a sub-human to

speaking another language other than the dominant Sesotho or IsiZulu. “And we were forced to know their languages”. Hence I can speak Sesotho, IsiZulu and I have a good command of the other African languages that are part of the 11 official languages of South Africa. (Steel)

Educational institutions and society assign specific power and privileges to women by virtue of being leaders of their various schools and communities, but at the same time, however, remove some powers from them. If we take a look around and count the women in leadership positions in relation to women in the education system, it is shocking that the statistics show that women occupy only 20%-27% of senior positions. The society does not expect women to be in positions of power. Furthermore, the educational institutions do not consider women for positions of power. To support this claim, there is the example of Brass who started a school under a tree and worked hard for a long time under very adverse conditions. She was removed to start yet another school while the school building that she had been promised was erected and a male principal was appointed. From a number of comments below it is clear that the problem of gender inequities predominate these women’s experiences. They are revealed in different angles; they interlock with a large number of other socially constructed layers that serve to dominate and oppress women. Lead, Steel and Silver provide evidence in commenting:

The first year in 1989 was hard because I was not accepted hundred percent. I had problems, both as a new principal in a primary school setting and also as a woman leading men. You know what, even the children had no concept of a female principal. Whenever I enter their various class they would say, “Good morning/afternoon Sir”. It took a while for these kids to get used to the idea that I am a woman and they should address me as Mam not Sir! (Lead)

I think the stereotype went further to the extent that these men felt that “because you are a woman, then your leadership skills were questionable”! And the English teacher, the old man, kept on saying that the school will never become right because it was under “a petticoat government.” (Steel)

I also believe that because I was a married woman, I could not get a permanent post. All married women were considered temporary teachers. First of all, I couldn't get a teaching post in Meadowlands, especially in IsiZulu schools... On top of that, gender discrimination denied me of a better salary in order to support my children and extended family. For instance, in the same position, same job, same qualifications, when it comes to the salary part of it, women earned less every month, and man always had all the benefits, housing, and some rights to other privileges. I lived through gender discrimination all my life. When you want to open an account, any account, even a bank account to save your own money you have earned every month, your husband is required to countersign, in short, you need his consent to run your financial transactions, because you are a child! Therefore, it is not a right but a privilege to own an account even if you are the account holder. We are always supposed to be subjected to our husbands. "Always treated like children." (Silver)

It is evident throughout these discourses that the women in this study are among the few holding leadership positions in Soweto schools in South Africa. Their female colleagues constantly remind them that leaders are supposed to be men. In addition, male followers, the community and the society at large try to prove that indeed leadership is defined in terms of male attributes, and as a result, these women are seen as anomalies.

Schools are parallel to the bigger body, the government. In the end, however, schools mirror the working of the bigger philosophies and ideologies that govern the mind and thinking of a nation. If women are skillful enough to cross the institutional, racial, and other social boundaries, they therefore hold great power and authority.

Power and privilege: tensions within and across broader society emerges as the interplay or relationships across various social barriers. What inhibits these women's movement as school leaders, women, and mothers is revealed in the interaction of apartheid laws, political institutions, ethnicity, religious beliefs, societal expectations, media, language, and unemployment which serves as barriers to their individual and communal power. For example, institutions like culture and society assign differentiated

powers and privileges to male and female children. Girls are seen as inferior and as a result are given less power than boys. The women in this study demonstrated that they directly and indirectly experienced discrimination as a result of traditional and cultural expectations as they were growing up. These differentiations are ingrained to the extent that the public perception of women is very low. Copper raised a very interesting issue regarding femicide in South Africa. She demonstrated that the institutions remove power from the women to the extent of silencing them forever. She comments:

When a woman dies, no one is responsible, no one killed her, and it's just God's will! Look at what's happening today, just this year three incidences occurred where a man killed his wife for one reason or the other. I mean I'm talking about 1st to 27th January 2000! That's scary! If the present government does not do anything about this, God knows what will happen to us. (Copper)

Political institutions like SADTU also played a role in assigning power and privileges. As a result, tensions were created. Since school principals in general were seen as collaborators and perpetrators of the apartheid government, it is not surprising that democratic unions such as SADTU would be suspicious of them. For instance, in most cases, school principals could not become members of a teacher's organization through either coercion from the apartheid government or choice. As a result, principals were subjected to scrutiny and surveillance. Their powers were undermined and teachers tended to be insubordinate. Iron, Copper, Steel, and Silver raised this concern and in their own words say:

Another such force was the interference from SADTU. I try by all means to divorce myself from politic in education. It is a problem when politicians want to push their agenda to suppress us through education. And especially people who don't want progress. (Iron)

Another thorny issue is the issue of unions. If I had power I would say that teachers must not belong to Unions. Things like subordination, intimidation, all emanated and are supported by teachers 'unions. In my opinion, low teachers' low

moral, lack of self-respect, absenteeism, problems of punctuality are the result of a relationship between unions and politicians. If I had powers I would say, perhaps, that the government should not align with certain unions. If the government is standing on one side, and the Union is on its own side, I think we would have had better control of/in our education. But since unions are part of the government, we will always have problems. (Steel)

In 1991 it was NEUSA, and it wasn't as radical as SADTU. We went on and it was not easy. NEUSA become SADTU came and things got tough. They said "nothing doing, principals don't interfere with teachers, teachers know their duties you must remain in the office and no class visit, nothing". It was tough, and it was worse to find that in white schools things were normal and the work was done, there were class visits and children were learning and teachers were committed and all that. With us here teachers would just go out, march out. Meetings for SADTU were held during schools hours even in the morning by 10 am. The so-called liberation now, education latter was the culture of the day. And some of the teachers took advantage of that and misused the call for their own interest. The situation got worst because principals were seen as collaborators and perpetrators of the apartheid's oppressive policies. (Silver)

There are tensions in the power and privilege experienced by some of these women because of their religious beliefs. Christianity from one angle is seen as a power base for most women. Most of the six indicated that they were raised in Christian families and followed the Christian religious rituals at early ages. For Iron, Steel and Brass, Christianity served as a pillar of strength. At another angle, however, Christianity is seen as a vehicle that removed most of African traditional powers. For instance, while Steel has been a church elder for six years, church choir member and a highly devoted Christian, she questions the role of the church in relation to initiation schools. Copper, although raised in a Christian family, does not mince words when talking about Christianity. She believes that Christianity deprived people of their origin, their identities and culture. She gives the example of her English Christian name that was forced on her. She goes on to show the relationship between religion and leadership. She sees the dichotomies created by ideologies that subject people to believe that everything can be

solve by prayer while ignoring the real facts and evidence of life. To add, it is also a known fact that children could not be enrolled in the education system if they did not have an English or Christian name. Copper comments:

As I grew up, I started questioning the Christian religion in so many ways. Right now, I have an English name and could not use my Xitshangana name at all. Otherwise, my parents were going to be labeled “hedons or non-believer” if they had tried to use our Xitshangana names. ... at least all my children do not carry English Christian names! ... I believe Christianity destroyed our roots, our origin and culture. Although I grew up being aware of the traditional rituals, I was not allowed to practice them. Those were referred to as “hedonic practices.” (Copper)

Apartheid policies also created social economic barriers to accessing a better quality of life. For instance, as a result of the group areas act that forced black people to live in specific townships like Soweto, Iron and her family were compelled to live in a cramped four-roomed house for a long time even though her husband could afford a better home in a better environment. As a result, they did not have power to make their own decision to choose where to live and raise their children. Power was assigned in terms of racial division where white people lived in better houses than black people and with all the amenities basic to human existence.

Even when we had money to purchase a better house, because of segregation and the group areas act, we were confined to the four-roomed house until we were allowed to extend it and add more rooms. As black people we didn’t grow because of motivation. As black people we saw education not for it’s worth, not only for enlightenment, but also as a vehicle to enable us to run away from starvation, poverty, hunger, and violence. One believes that the more one gets educated, the better one would earn more and be able to move away from the ghettos, the black townships. Education’s aim is not necessarily to uplift the black communities, but to enable those who manage to escape, to move away from them, and leave the poorer of the poor as helpless as ever. Education reproduces poverty and starvation in the name of enlightenment. (Iron)

Apartheid laws prohibit access to basic human freedoms. For instance, the pass laws were also used as a measure of divide, rule and control. Pass laws were used as a tool to

keep track of and monitor black people's movement. Consequently, those who did not have these documents were denied access to urban areas and related work places. More importantly, however, these laws subjected black people to living on a level of animals. From Brass's experience, it is shocking to learn that black people were subjected to raids in the wee hours of the morning, where those who were regarded as violators of the laws would be towed along as officers moved from one house to the next. In their statements, Lead and Brass reveal the inhuman nature of apartheid laws that denied them power and privileges. In their own words they state:

Moreover, apartheid laws have really messed us up. I was born here in South Africa, while my brother was born in Lesotho. But he was registered as a South African and I could not get the so-called "doompass", the identity document. And to think I had a birth certificate that proved that I was a full South African, it is just amazing how the system worked. I was very efficient! I think that strengthened me because as I told you before, I wanted to do something and I want to show this country that I can be something. I went on without an identity document for a very long time. Sometime as young lady, the white officials would even try to ask for sexual favors in return of the "doompass" I just told myself that the time will come. But at the end, after obtaining my B.A it took only two hours to get it! Amazingly, it took my young Afrikaner white female friend two hours to get me an ID that I could not get in 10 years. So, I was 25 years when I got my very first doompass. You can only imagine what that meant. Color or rather race is every thing. (Lead)

The apartheid laws were really cruel. One experience that sticks out in my memory is when I nearly got arrested in Diepkloof where I was visiting my husband. Back then, one was not allowed to spend a night in a different Township without a permit. I mean, I'm talking about Tshiawelo and Diepkloof Townships which are both in Soweto. It takes you 10 to 15 minutes to travel from Tshiawelo to Diepkloof. But I was supposed to carry a permit in case I decided to put up in different township. So, in this case, it was at around 2am or 3am when the police came searching for illegal residence. There I was, without a permit. I told them that I got lost and found my way to a friend's house. They gave me a warning and told me to go back home first thing in the morning. From then onwards I had to carry a temporary permit whenever I decide to visit my husband. Or else, I was going to end up behind bars. That was the time of influx control. The experience was so dehumanizing. People without permits were reduced to animal. For instance, these policemen would start their raid from one end of the street to the other, knocking at each and every house with their batons. Every person arrested

was to tag along in the cold until the truck was full before being taken to the police station. In most cases these people would tag along till 6am before they are taken to the cells. Can you imagine what happened in the rain? What about those ice cold winter Joburg mornings? That was very bad, very inhuman! (Brass)

In addition, apartheid laws created unemployment which is seen as a plague to the present South African society. As a result, although the black parents strive to assist the education of their children, they fail to do so as a result of lack of economic power. Consequently, black principals are denied the power to resources derived from the partnerships and linkages between schools and families, linkages between schools and communities. Silver comments:

I think unemployment is one of our worst enemies destroying our society. Our schools will forever suffer lack of resources because most parents are unemployed. Take for example, this school is situated next to one of the largest informal settlements in Soweto. As a result, our demand and plead for payment of school fees fall into deaf ears. How do you pay school fees when your kids are hungry? Where do you get the money if you are unemployed? Another supporting factor is lack of knowledge. We have a very low literate rate. Most parents cannot read or write. When we speak of parental involvement, to some that does not mean anything. We invite parents to parents meeting and explain some of these changes, but you are lucky if you get a 50% attendance rate. (Silver)

Although all the women in this study echoed this concern, Steel however, provides a clear analysis from her perceptions of the new government. She argues that the new government empowered the white communities more because it made them more aware of the need to support their own schools. In view of the fact that the white communities are an advantaged group with more economic power, it stands to reason that a black school will receive less funding or none at all from white owned business.

The topic of ethnicity is as complex as it is important, and most interpretations of experiences by women suffer from gross oversimplification of ethnic reality. At the same time, beliefs about the role of ethnicity in South Africa affect the very nature of the

problem, and must therefore be taken into account, though not accepted at face value. Ethnicity is seen as one of the major obstacles to equal access to power and privileges. Ethnicity, by its nature, functions to perpetuate the divisions created and supported by apartheid structures to distribute power and privileges differently to different ethnic groups. Throughout the stories, it is evident that most of the women were denied access to various things in their personal and professional lives as a direct result of their ethnic origins. For instance, evidence from Copper, Steel and Brass emerges that show ethnic discrimination. They say that:

In our principals' meeting, I'm seen as a Mutshangana woman first before I become a person. My being a school principal of a very successful school is secondary to my ethnicity. Our present government ignores this problem and concentrates on racial difference. You may not have thought about this, but race does not place a big role in our daily lives in our schools. I mean, we do not have white schools in Soweto, we do not interact with white people on a constant basis and I do not witness oppression in my every day existence. However, I see unequal treatment among black or rather African groups as the main challenge as compared to race. Of course, apartheid system regarded me as a Third Class Citizen, maybe not even a citizen but an "alien", but the main machinery was ethnic separation introduced and perpetuated by the apartheid system. Because the Matshangana people are few in number, apartheid encouraged other African groups to be / feel better than me as a Mutshangana. Under general, the AmaZulu and the AmaXhosa feel superior to me. Because of your ethnicity they put you down as a human being. Even when you are strong, there is a "Pull Her Down Syndrome". Even other women, they pull you down. Even when you are like a rock or builder and can't be moved, they try to move you until they are sure and convinced that you are unshakeable – they will try at their level best. There is no appreciation of your efforts. ... I believe I got the job because the then principal was a Mutshangana old man who also knew my prominent father. Otherwise, I would have suffered like most women in the cities. ... Ethnicity is still a big problem in South Africa. As a Muvenda yourself, I think you understand what I mean. Those who belong to the major ethnic groups like the Zulu and Sotho will deny that we are still treated unequally. I consider myself a highly educated person, but I will not deny such an obvious thing. For example, we do not have a Xitshangana or Tshivenda TV channel, let alone a program. We have to learn IsiZulu or Sesotho to watch TV news and at the same time we are supposed to pay the same TV license fees. (Copper)

Without even going further than racial differences, right now, Mandela is going from school to school in the Eastern Cape, the AmaXhosa areas, building primary schools! Just this year, about four or five new, well built schools were officially opened by various organizations on TV, with Mandela standing by and smiling, while preaching the “back to school, culture of learning and teaching sermon!” Have you ever heard of or seen any new school from Venda, let alone the Northern Province? Maybe that is our understanding of social justice. Justice in terms of giving one ethnic group more than the others! (Steel)

I really do not have outstanding memories of ethnic discrimination. Some how I feel that the color of my skin had a role to play. As you can see, I have a lighter completion than most Vhavenda people. Because we originate from the Northern parts of South Africa, most of our Vhavenda people are dark in completion. I took the lighter completion after my mother because most Batswana people have a lighter skin color. As a result, people were more receptive, and I was not treated like most of my Vhavenda friends. I remember one day when I was on a line in one of the stores in Loustrichard where a young white Afrikaner was in attendance. I was way far behind, but she summoned me to come in the front and served me before my turn! I didn't understand why until latter at the boarding school. I think it was because of my completion and the fact that I could speak Afrikaans so well. As a result, my white teachers used to like me a lot! I never experienced ethnic rivalry or rather discrimination because I am a Muvenda woman. May be it is because I can speak all the 11 official languages in South Africa. (Brass)

In view of all these debates, one may think that these women are powerless in all aspects of their leadership. However, the women demonstrate that even without certain powers, they do fight and get the attention that they deserve. They show that in their own way of doing things, they do achieve some element of order and power which enables them to go on with their everyday fight for socially just and equitable schools. The women in this study challenged the various dominating structures in various ways and strategies. Those who belong to the African minority groups learned the language in power to defeat the ethnic and language domination. In addition, the women devised means that were meaningful to themselves to create peaceful existence in their families. In order to create peace, the women went to the extent of encouraging their low-esteem husbands to study to attain a scholarly

education. These women fought and tried to stay afloat despite these challenges. In most cases, these women created their own unique ways of handling challenges. Lead and Silver make the following comments:

For instance, I planned a trip to a civic theater and art center in order to expose my children to the other side of education, since we do not have that part in our curriculum. I sent the forms and everything. When we were due to go, I was told that the inspector had not been in the office or was too busy to sign the forms, or whatever, but he had not signed the forms yet. And the forms were sent a months or so ago. There was no way that I was going to stop the whole thing to please or lift someone's ego, people who do not do their jobs properly do not have my sympathy. I refused and went on with the arranged trip. I had to write a report after that. And I think even with my so-called soft nature, I have written a few too many report challenging the system or the order of the day so far! You have to show me what negative impact will make to the student, convince be, but don't order me around. I refuse to be ordered around especially when I know that what I'm doing is right. (Lead)

As a leader, I see myself like a fowl, like a hen, because a hen protects her chicks. So, I protect my staff against everything. You know, so much that at times I feel scared when I realize that I am putting my job at risk. Because at times I overlook some of the regulations that I see as oppressive to the staff and just pretend as if I don't see some of the things. For example, teachers are supposed to sign a logbook when they are late for school. I just call the person concern and talk to him or her. I don't see why should we be confined to using all these rules and regulation if they can't help change the climate in the school. As a leader, one has to create an environment of trust. People can be late for many various reasons beyond their control. (Silver)

What does theory say about what school leaders must know? In short, they must recognize that current social systems (to include schools) endow varying degrees of power and privilege (social and political capital) to different groups of people. In light of Collins' work (and others to include hooks, Henry, Benham, and Delpit), the work for social justice becomes complicated and messy given that the barriers, which prevent access and equity, are defined by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and language differences.

Indeed the differences in power and privilege constrain the ability of Black women school leaders to connect with and engage in dialogue and action across differences.

Racism is still a very powerful phenomenon in our contemporary times. From these stories, racism is so obvious and yet so invisible. For instance from Copper's comment:

I'm seen as a Matshangana woman first before I become a person. My being a school principal of a very successful school is secondary to my ethnicity. Our present government ignores this problem and concentrates on racial difference. You may not have thought about this, but race does not place a big role in our daily lives in our schools. I mean, we do not have white schools in Soweto, we do not interact with white people on a constant basis and I do not witness oppression in my every day existence. (Copper)

It is clear from this comment that Copper is looking at ethnicity as an independent variable from racism. Copper is looking at the effects without looking at its causes. From her transcripts, she reveals that she was expected to take a lower status teaching career and by acknowledging that she grew up in Gazankulu, a homeland or rather Bantustans assigned for the Matshangana people, is to acknowledge racism since the Homeland Act was one product of the racist apartheid government. By acknowledging that she was compelled to further her scholarly education while being a mother, wife and teacher is to acknowledge that Bantu education, which was designed to perpetuate the racist government, was based on race. Copper's present school was built in an area assigned for the Matshangana group and moreover, the school's buildings looks exactly the same as most schools in Soweto. The dilapidated building lacks basic facilities like sport fields, laboratories, administration building and so forth. These and other inequalities were created and founded on racial differences. So, what is Copper's understanding of race and ethnicity?

Most of these women do not want to verbalize their oppression, segregation and domination in terms of race. They choose to look at it in lighter tone. For instance, Silver sees the lack of support and involvement of her parent community as a result of unemployment. She comments, "I think unemployment is one of our worst enemies destroying our society. Our schools will forever suffer lack of resources because most parents are unemployed." This unemployment in the real sense boils down to the effects of the former racist government where people were given limited education to produce semi-skilled labor in order to serve the white racist government.

From their conversations, racism is reflected, portrayed and revealed in different forms which are too subtle to see or understand. With the exception of Lead, who grew up with the awareness of racial inequalities as a result of her socialization and, taking into account that her father was a political activist, all the other women fail to see the bigger part of the iceberg that is submerged deep down in the bottom of the sea, the bigger part of the race dialogue. Lead seems to be the only one who really perceives the lack of power and privileges as a direct product and outcome of the socially contracted racial phenomenon. She comments:

I was born here in South Africa, while my brother was born in Lesotho. But he was registered as a South African and I was not. As a result, I could not get the so-called doompas, the identity document.... Sometime as young lady, the white officials would even try to ask for sexual favors in return of the doompas. I just told myself that the time would come... Amazingly, it took my young Afrikaner white female friend two hours to get me an ID that I could not get in 10 years. So, I was 25 years when I got my very first doompas. You can only imagine what that meant. Color or rather race is every thing." (Lead)

Steel's comment echoes the race dialogue over and over again, but like the other women she misses the point that race is still a big problem in our society. Steel reports, "Without even going further than racial differences, right now, Mandela is going from

school to school in the Eastern Cape, the AmaXhosa areas, building primary schools.” These women talk about apartheid laws, apartheid education and apartheid this and that without making connections between apartheid and race, without conceiving the constructs as interlocking systems created by the racial apartheid laws.

After these deliberations what comes to mind are the questions: “What is the definition of ethnicity? And what is our understanding of race? Why is racism so obvious and yet so invisible? Horowitz (1991) sees ethnicity as a purely divisive and negative phenomenon, which needs to be balanced by recognition of the positive dimension in the intellectual, political and academic levels that will transcend to education. Horowitz (1991) maintains that South African society is not difficult to classify because:

It is characterized, above all by what is appropriately called *ascriptive ranking*. There are superordinates and subordinates, largely defined by birth criteria. To be sure, within the ranks of each stratum, there are also cleavages that divide, in some variables measure, Afrikaans speakers from English speakers, Zulu from Xhosa and Tswana, and so on. But the overall design of the society is predicated on racial hierarchy, and the significance of those alternative cleavages is, at least temporarily, suppressed. (p.35)

Lopez (1994) provides a simple and yet comprehensive definition of race. He offers that,

Races are categories of difference which exist only in society: they are produced by myriad conflicting social forces; they overlap and inform other social categories; they are fluid rather than static and fixed; and they make sense only in relationship to other racial categories, having no meaningful independent existence. Races are thus not biological groupings, but social constructions. (Lopez, 1994, p.200)

These women are discriminated in terms of race, class, gender, language, and ethnicity, are subjected to cultural obligations, and so on. Yet, even as the most oppressed, they fail to see the connections between race and the other social constructs when functioning independently. There is overwhelming evidence of inequalities

indicated by these women as a result of language, culture, traditional obligations, and also as a result of the position and role African women play in the South African cultures.

It is rather difficult to define the term culture in such a way that it embraces every meaning derived from different life experiences. Culture is a social construct and should be perceived as such. Therefore, different people will derive different meanings as a result of their different historical life experiences. We tend to look at culture as if it was cemented through time. Culture, as a tradition, impacted on who these women are as school principals today. It may be that African traditional norms are misunderstood; in their essence, they are not meant to discriminate against nor oppress women. As is obvious from the stories provided in this study; it is clear that women have mixed feelings about their roles and positions in the customary stratification. While they believe that men dominate and oppress them in various forms, they also agree that men have the right to do so.

In general, these women see gender discrimination as a direct result of organizational behaviors. Moreover, these women perceive gender discrimination in terms of institutional oppression created by the workings of apartheid. For example, concerns such as salary, benefits, and access to employment for married women were purposefully separated from mainstream gender discrimination and were seen as the product of apartheid rather than as a social construct created by and supported by men. From these stories, men's role in the domination of women was considered as customary obligation and was not necessarily seen as a role created with the approval of African men themselves.

While composition of traditional customary laws remains a contentious issue in South Africa, the claim that colonialist rules perpetuated the domination of African women seems to provide more impetus to this debate. To be more precise, in light of the apartheid rules of separate development that created Bantustans while destroying leadership of African chiefs, the end result were that women suffered more at the end of the rope. After destroying the real traditional laws, the colonialists recreated new 'customary laws' with other specifications, to support the legislated separate development. For example, if we look at the definition of customary law as defined in the Law of Evidence Act of 1988, "the Black law or customs as applied by the Black tribes in the Republic or territories which were formerly part of the Republic" (Hoffman & Zeffertt, 1988 cite in Wing and Carvalho, 1994, p. 389). This law defines women as perpetual minors and lifelong wards of their fathers, husbands, brothers or sons.

Under the customary law, women cannot engage in contractual agreements, acquire property, inherit or marry without the permission of a guardian, who is usually a male relative. Under this law, a woman's assets became the sole property of her husband after marriage. For instance, Copper indicated that whilst she was the sole breadwinner, providing food, education, and everything for her children and sick husband, the society was still giving credit to her husband who was not contributing an thing at all. "When I buy a new car, people tend to say her husband bought her a nice car" (Copper). Women are denied ownership and do not have rights to property. Also, women needed their husbands' permission to work. To support this statement, from the women's stories, it is evident that the women's husbands expected to have an upper hand and control. Lead revealed that she had to waive many opportunities of leadership before accepting her

current position. In other words, she needed her husband's permission to become a school principal.

Apartheid laws denied women basic power and privileges in various ways. First, Wing and Carvalho (1998) state that women were not allowed to enter the cities and urban areas without permits. Pass laws legally kept Black women out of urban areas and denied them access to the skills and opportunities that they needed to become participants in an organized labor force. Jobs traditionally held by Black women during apartheid were not protected by fair labor standards in terms of minimum wages, maximum hours, maternity benefits, paid sick leave, disability insurance and any kind of job security. From the women's transcripts, overwhelming evidence emerges about their professional experience which included subjection to unequal treatment by the educational institutions where women were paid less than men and did not enjoy benefits like housing subsidies, medical schemes, maternity leave and others.

I highlight these considerations, not because I think that they need to be interpreted exhaustively, but to provide some insight into the multiple grounding from which our fragile identity as Black women emerged. Moreover, I provide these debates to show how the grand apartheid plan made provisions for the machinery to perpetuate and support itself in a vicious continuing cycle. They are also to show how these women navigated through the interlocking systems of oppression, how they tried to untie the gourdian knot. Like the cutting edges of the knives, these women are holding on and fighting back with all their might to create better environments for their children.

Theme: Challenges to School Transformation Due to Tensions Across Leadership Styles

There is overwhelming evidence that shows that the women in this study embrace the ideals of collaborative and participative leadership in their work for socially just and equitable schools. Throughout the conversations and dialogues, the women demonstrate that their work to transform schools is enhanced by the contributions of other role players in the education system. They embrace the ethos of democratic governance where parents are placed at the center of leadership. And as a result, the women's transformative leadership provides for liberation, effective teaching, and quality education. For instance, on democratic governance that is characterized by teamwork, collaboration and active participation, Iron says:

Being a good leader means you are able to create democratic school governance where there is peace, harmony, and responsibility from everybody who is in the community. ...As a transformative leader, I change the approach of teaching and learning. To me, the three elements are important, that is, pupil, teacher and parent. They can never work without each other. They make a triangle that is equidistant apart. (Iron)

Iron goes on to indicate that she cannot run the school without the contributions of both the parents and teachers. From my observations and dialogues with her staff member, it was demonstrated beyond doubt that Iron's core of leadership lies in others. For example, during my observation of a new parent welcome party, I was amazed to see parents running the whole program with the help of the teachers while Iron sat down like a mere guest. She maintains that as leaders, we are responsible to show the parents of our children that education is a team effort. Similarly, Iron conceives social justice as an act that leads to a school where people are not afraid to contribute and accept others' opinions. Thus, transformative leadership is based on the removal of oppressive measures

that deny people power and privileges. Social justice promotes progress and is not stagnant, but creates a situation where people move together. In addition, Iron holds the belief that parents work as the brain in the education system, and as a result, school principals do what the parents wish. She comments, “As a transformative leader, to me, the governing body is like the main brain that coordinates all the functions of the body. We work as a team” (Iron).

Similarly, Copper states that she involves parents in the running of the school. Although she is frustrated by the low rate of attendance, she perceives this failure as a direct result of the apartheid structures that denied parents power and a voice in the running of their schools in the past. As a result, a number of parents do not come to meetings, because they are still afraid and they do not understand the concept of ownership. Copper believes that parents still show some historically framed patterns of knowledge based on lack of ownership. In her efforts to bring her parents on board, her leadership style is characterized by involvement, openness, and approachability, where people are able to come to you as a leader even when they have done something wrong. It can be seen that people need to know that the leader is there to listen without passing judgment. She says:

I think leadership is something that you learn through time, the experiences you learn through education and guidance from others. You just don't take things for granted. There is planning, organizing and control in leadership. As a school leader I work well with my teachers. I involve them in every thing that happens in this school and I try to be as transparent as possible. We work in team and committees. For instance, in the meeting you just observed, I do not control the funds, especially those from fundraising campaigns. There is a chairperson and treasurer in every committee. They do everything and they just give me feedback on their activities. Of course I play a major role as an advisor, they also get ideas from me and implement if they feel the idea is viable. (Copper)

In addition, Copper defines leadership as the ability to guide others, to have vision in life, to have goals and know where you are going, to have a positive attitude, and to have empathy. She comments:

A transformative leader is a person who is able to move, to realize that the past is not written off but should take the old and combine with new. People are not longer so bitter about change and the new. Transformative leadership is about making people take back ownership, to understand that these schools belong to them not the government. ... I don't believe in destroying what we had, but I prefer to put more layers than to start again. That is how I perceive the transition from apartheid education to the new order. We cannot denounce everything created by apartheid as bad and evil because there are things that worked then. What we need is to remove the worst and build on the good. We still have to hold on to those we consider good ethics, like punctuality, teacher ethics, respect and discipline. Don't take me wrong, corporal punishment was a devil, but education without discipline is a worst devil! (Copper)

Just like Iron and Copper, Steel asserts that she does not do things on her own without taking account of the contributions of teachers. In addition, Steel believes that one of her functions is to bring back the culture of learning and teaching in the classrooms in Soweto. She also believes that as leaders we may not achieve the educational goals and objectives of quality teaching and learning without the direct involvement of parents and other members of the community. She says:

I think by now I understand that as a leader you are not a boss, you have to make things happen, and lead the people. We cannot have that culture of learning without having parental involvement. In addition, the school, the community, business people, and all stakeholders must come together, and work hand in hand... I always tell my colleagues that I am a driver and that they are the engine. And when the engine is not in a right order the driver cannot do anything. A leader is always the one who initiates things, somebody who does things, a person comes up with the good ideas and sell them to the people she is leading, in such a way that the teachers believe that such ideas come from them. A leader is a person who when she has a dream, she lets others realize it for her. (Steel)

Steel says that when she delegates duties, she also gives teachers the responsibility with the equal accountability. She believes that her "communication is

transparent,” and as a result, the working spirit is enhanced. Her belief is that to create and maintain healthy relationships is to allow people to participate and to get involved in what you are doing. “Like the small three-legged pot, if one leg breaks, the pot will lose its balance” (Steel). Leaders cannot stand alone without the support of others. Therefore, Steel sees the relationship among the teachers as educators, students and parents as a team effort, where all have to work together to maintain the equilibrium. She says, “As leaders, we are in the business of schooling, the business of transforming people, providing a better future for people, to change a person to becoming knowledgeable. It is my job to remove people from darkness, so that they begin to understand things better, and to widen their world. Learning gives that kind of power!” (Steel)

Like Iron, Copper and Steel, Silver defines leadership in terms such as “commitment, dedication, and teamwork.” Silver maintains that leadership is when every body has an opportunity to make decisions, and everybody’s ideas are taken into consideration. In her view “There is no one man show.” She states that:

And one other thing is that when people are allowed to make decision and are given responsibilities, those responsibilities need to be stated out clearly to them because some of them don’t participate because they are not aware of what is expected of them. When you give people responsibilities you need to give them accountability and authority or rather informed responsibility. It is not enough just to say you are part of everything that is going on in the school, teachers and everyone need to know their duties. (Silver)

Brass adds by bringing forth an interesting observation. She asserts that the key to success is in getting to know all your parents on an individual basis. Like the rest of the women, Brass believes that leaders cannot run their schools without the cooperation of all the parents. She adds that listening to what parents want for the education of their children is to let them make choices for their children. She adds that the basic

management tasks are significant—to plan, organize, lead, and control, to push forward the work of social justice and transformation. In her opinion, the work of the school leaders is based on the basic tasks of planning in advance and gathering valuable information before the beginning of a new year. In her own words she says:

My dear, you don't just do your own thing! In addition, you must have the priorities. Although you won't be able to do everything at the same time, you must prioritize and plan. Planning, organizing and feedback is essential for the smooth running of the school. Social justice practices come out through our deeds as leaders. How we lead, how we extend ourselves to others, what we bring to make their lives better. For example, the community around here knows that it can use the school's resources; the classrooms for church services, meetings and all the civic activities. I invite the youth to use the school ground for sporting activities. And in return these people take care of the school and look after it. (Brass)

What does theory suggest about leadership in shifting environments? Leadership theories suggest that in the world of schools, leadership is basically managing messes in ambiguous situations with unclear problems and conflicting solution possibilities. Also, the new assumption or paradigm of leadership is the concept of “power with” rather than “power over” (see Sergiovanni 1991; Starhawk, 1991; Benham, 1997). Power with is the power to suggest not to command and the source of power is sharing and listening to the ideas of others. Power with is not authority to command, but to act as a channel to focus and direct the will of the group.

From the women's stories, it is clear that they perceive and define leadership in terms like democratic governance, teamwork, collaboration and active participation, liberation through transformative leadership, effective teaching and quality education. In addition, it is apparent from their stories that they are able to lead their schools the way they do in a fair and just manner as a result of some of the guidance suggested by various scholars cited in this study.

While the new language of leadership that includes teamwork, team spirit, and delegation dominates the women's conversations, communication and transparency, we still hear faint whispers of the language that is based on the traditional leadership styles. For example, Copper maintains that, "At times one has to be autocratic to see that things are done on time." Steel states that, "As much as we are caring, sometimes we should be very strict and not allow things that are not acceptable." Especially from the dialogue interviews, other stakeholders indicated that they still see these women as symbols of authority. In addition, as much as there is a sense of admiration and respect, there is still a sense of fear and an inclination to subordination. These dichotomous perceptions, that is, the women's perceptions versus others, raise some doubts as to whether these women think about leadership as reflected in their actions. These women have moved a long way from the top-down leadership styles that demand control, command and compliance to the democratic, collaborative styles that advocate participation, involvement, teamwork and sharing of decisions by all concerned.

Participative leadership implies a high degree of involvement and commitment to unlearning historically framed patterns of knowledge and power relations, and that is no easy task. It is about sharing power and decision-making. Sarason (1995) maintains that "unless the culture of schooling is better understood, efforts to change schools will be ineffective" (p.124) We need to understand how things are done in our schools, how they differ from other schools, what are important traditions, ceremonies, rituals and stories. In view of these suggestions, schools in the past South African regime, like schools in other parts of the world, mirrored the working of the government. Schools mirrored dominating ideologies of the then apartheid that were based on Taylorism's attributes of top-down

and autocratic leadership styles which advocate domination, control, compliance, and command. Although less clear in the women's revelations, it is possible that these women are faced by challenges of the duality of their leadership styles that are still based on the old form that advocates command, compliance and control on the one hand, while on the other hand, trying to embrace the new language of collaborative and participative leadership.

All things being considered, however, these women seem to have managed to transform their leadership style to the extent of creating socially just schools. For most of them, "Social justice should lead to a school where people are not afraid to contribute and accept others' opinions. A just school is a school not oppressive, a school where people are praised for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and it is not stagnant, people move together" (Iron). These statements are echoed over and over again by these women. For example, Copper comments that "Being a good leader means you are able to create democratic school governance where there is peace, harmony, and responsibility from everybody who is in the community."

Furthermore, the community is part of the education system because people bring different experiences from which to contribute to the education system. To avoid resistance to change, schools should recognize this larger society and involve it in the decision-making process, consult it, and acknowledge its contributions. The community at large should also be informed of innovations in order to adopt them. The women in this study show a greater level of including their various communities in the running of their schools. Throughout their deliberations, it is evident that these women do what they do

by involving the communities. They clearly demonstrated that they build everlasting bridges that remain open between their schools and the communities they serve.

Summary Statement

Social science argues that every society prepares its youth to take part in the political, economic, social and cultural responsibilities of adult society through formal and informal processes of socialization which is its “educational system” (Keto, 1990, p.25). Given this, the Bantu education system, as a product of the racial apartheid ideology in South Africa, can be seen to have served to perpetuate the ideals of separate development by providing inferior education in order to develop specific and appropriate behavior patterns to limit knowledge and produce semi-skilled workforce at the level of “hewers of wood and drawers of water.”

Indeed, the women in this study proved beyond doubt that theirs was a struggle from oppression, domination and isolation as a result of the interlocking of the various socially constructed layers that served to silence them. Throughout the women’s personal and professional reflections, we see how they uplift and liberate themselves - and others, through the attainment of a scholarly education. Their histories demonstrate that “the oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves” (Freire, 1997, p. 33).

Chapter 7

PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, I begin by answering the research questions of this study through the philosophical discussion of the four topics derived from themes that emerged from the stories presented by the six Black women elementary school leaders from Soweto. Second, I indicate the leadership of the six Black women that reflects practice of social justice. Third, I highlight the implications of these findings to future research. I end this chapter with concluding thoughts on Black women's identities.

Addressing Research Questions:

The research questions posed in Chapter 1 guided me to inductively study and probe the constructs (institutional, political, cultural, language, social/historical, and economic) that involve Black women in the work of social change in an effort to expand both the literature and the practice of school leadership. Addressing these questions builds a profound comprehension of how Black women's transformative leadership might develop and create socially just learning environments. In review, the questions are as follows:

1. How does/has each woman address/ed obstacles both personal and professional? How does/has each woman confront/ed political, cultural, economic and social arenas?
2. How does each women address tensions between leadership for transformation vs. organizational structures, human relations differences, language/text difference, political stress, and symbolic/cultural difference?
3. How does each woman define the meaning of working for social justice? How has she worked for social justice in both the apartheid South Africa and the new South Africa? What appears to be different or the same?

4. How does their work inform and challenge the landscape of the social responsibility of leadership practices?

In answering the research questions, the discussion is organized around the four topics/themes that are also grounded in the literature:

- Education is a vehicle for social mobility and liberation.
- Marginality of Black women is created by apartheid.
- Change creates tensions between the old and the possible.
- Black women find hope in hopelessness.

To frame the first question regarding how these women address/ed obstacles both personal and professional and at the same time confront/ed political, cultural, economic and social arenas, I present the theme that education is a vehicle to social mobility and liberation. To respond to the second and third questions regarding transformational leadership and social justice, I discuss how these women are marginalized by apartheid laws and other forms of domination like gender inequalities, educational institutions and customary laws. To address the fourth question on how their work informs and challenges the landscape of the social responsibility of leadership practices, I situate my findings within the current bodies of literature on change and implications for school leaders. The last theme, Black women finding hope in hopelessness, addresses the main research question of this study, that is, “how do Black women elementary school principals in South Africa navigate across institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas to create socially just and equitable schools for children and youth?”

Theme: Education as a Vehicle for Social Mobility and Liberation:

This theme addresses the question: How does/has each woman address/ed obstacles both personal and professional? How does/has each woman confront/ed political, cultural, economic and social arenas?

The six black female principals are the women who have been oppressed for a long time while at the same time working to uplift the social status of their communities. These are women who see education increasing individual liberty and at the same time decreasing the inequities of the apartheid system. With these considerations in mind, a bigger picture of the theory of social justice can be derived from the women's understanding that education is deeply rooted in the transformation of the society at large, continuously and consistently. Education is charged with racial uplifting, increasing respect and self-esteem and over time leads to elimination of racism. It is clear that education has the capacity to change people, to raise people's self esteem and make them see themselves in a different light. Gaining a scholarly education raised their self-esteem and a sense of who they are. Education as a human basic right, is charged with the fundamental task of creating equality regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender. In their stories, education shaped and created a new sense of identity where black and white were seen as variants of skin tone. For these women, as holders of the sharp edges of knives, education has a dual function, both as a shield to protect these women from being cut, and also as a sharp knife to cut through the layers of apartheid education, the layers of racial and ethnic segregation, the layers of domination created by the workings of culture and traditional obligations.

Moreover, the women in this study have a strong belief that education is essential and important in our lives and the lives of the people we are destined to serve. They see education as a private good designed to prepare individuals for successful social competition for more desirable market roles. Given the significant role that education played in the women's lives, the focus of their thinking is about education as an important tool for the whole nation, education as a tool for liberation. Education is not only important to them as individuals, but to a large extent, they look at education in a holistic way. For instance, even though it was a life risk to teach students when there was a call for tactics such as chalk-down, go slow, or total absence from classrooms by the ANC and SADTU, these women found courage in their beliefs that education was significant beyond the liberation call. Their commitment to the value of education was demonstrated over and over again from their conversations. If we examine the present South Africa, the main theme in education is the call to bring back the culture of learning and teaching, which was corrupted by the call for Liberation before Education in the 1980s.

Theme: Marginality of Black Women Created by Apartheid

This topic addresses the second and third questions.

How does each women address tensions between leadership for transformation vs. organizational structures, human relations differences, language/text difference, political stress, and symbolic/cultural difference?

African women are the holders of the sharpest edges of knives. As the most oppressed group in the society, they face interlocking systems of oppression created by apartheid policies and a long-rooted culture of traditional obligations. To define African

women is to embrace the and/both view of race, gender, ethnicity, traditional obligations, and language/mother tongue. Judging by the issues raised, articulated, elaborated and visualized, it is evident that emerging from life under apartheid where citizens could hardly express their opinion, be treated fairly or given opportunities or access to basic human rights, they could hardly be expected to have in mind a full set of social justice attributes. These are women who strive and navigate under the multilayers and multiplied burdens of oppression, at the same time creating schools and environments that are socially just and equitable for children and youth. And they do so at their own expense.

The women in this study address tensions between leadership for transformation and organizational structures by risking their own safety. As a marginalized group, women fight back through their silent resistance, while transforming their schools and building bridges between schools and communities. They do so by defying and resisting laws they perceive as unjust, while protecting their teachers and other staff members. They do so by allowing communities to share the schools' resources while providing fundamental support. Women address tensions between transformation and human relations differences through their caring nature, fair and just treatment and their open communication channels where others' opinions are valued. Women demonstrate that they work double hard to overcome differences created by language, ethnicity, and political stress. And at times, they become silent in order to overcome the challenges created by traditional and cultural expectations where women are obligated to be their husbands' wards.

Language is a social construct. By virtue of being born to a certain ethnic group, the women were bound to experience language discrimination in various forms and at various levels. Even though the women in this study were not selected for ethnicity, ethnicity came out as one of the most powerful and yet undisclosed discrimination measures. People know about it, but yet are afraid to talk about it openly in public arenas. The six women in this study show that it is important to learn the language in power in order to navigate across segregation and discrimination. Throughout this study, women were forced to embrace other people's language in order to move on; at times, they were compelled to steer away from talking about language and ethnicity. As disclosed by educators, the discourses of ethnicity in South Africa can be seen as part of the discourse of language that does not reflect social reality, but that produces meaning and creates social realities (Richardson, 1994, p. 518).

How has she worked for social justice in both the apartheid South Africa and the new South Africa? What appears to be different or the same?

Regarding social justice, Black women expect to see the new socially just South Africa defined by equal resources and equal job opportunities. The women envision a new socially just South Africa defined in terms of structural change where race is eliminated. Through their efforts that invite other stakeholders into the cause of education, the women see their work as transforming schools and environments for the better. These women strive to create jobs for the poorest of the poor in their communities. Furthermore, these women succeed in navigating across tensions created by human relations differences by adopting new leadership styles based on fair and just treatment of others.

Although there are small incremental changes, what came as a surprise was the fact that the women hold the belief that there is no social justice in the present new South Africa. In their opinion, apartheid is still the same. While the women do acknowledge great strides taken by the new democratic government to address imbalances, they maintain that there still remain grave inequalities in the provision of education for black and white children. Their own efforts to bring equity and social justice include extensive fundraising campaigns, creation of jobs through funds raised by parents, allocating portions of land for vegetable gardens, and other efforts.

The women's definition of social justice includes: fairness by one person or group to the other, equal distribution of resources in terms of materials and human ability, respect for human beings, not undermining one's intellect, respecting people's gender and where they live or reside, respecting their abilities and skills, and acceptance of others irrespective of their physical appearance. In brief, social justice is about equality and treating everybody the same way.

In support of these considerations, Iron asserts that a socially just school leads to a situation where people are not afraid to contribute and accept others' opinions; a just school is a school that is not oppressive, a school where people are praised for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and is not stagnant; people move together. When there is social justice, everybody is treated fairly and has equal access to things like schools, health care services, jobs, housing, and freedom of speech. In short, there is equal treatment.

The women navigate across barriers through education. Education is seen as a vehicle to uplift the social status of the poor black nation. The women hold the belief that

leaders and educators are charged as servants of the nation, to serve other people and enhance justice and equity and that a socially just environment is an environment where there is no crime and everybody is free and has a right to live. What emerges from their stories is that social justice practices are reflected by our deeds as leaders: how we lead, how we extend ourselves to others, what we bring to make their lives better. Social justice is when everybody is satisfied by what has been done.

Theme: Change Creates Tensions Between the Old and the Possible

This theme addresses the fourth question: How does the women's work inform and challenge the landscape of the social responsibility of leadership practices?

Leadership practices have changed through time in South Africa and in a new democratic government, it is expected that the women's beliefs and leadership practices have changed as well. Such change cannot just happen over night; these are practices that cannot be enforced by politicians of the new South African government. To unlearn the historically framed patterns of knowing based on domination and subordination is not an easy process. It involves unlearning the old and learning the new.

Change theorists hold the belief that change gives meaning to us when the new ideas or innovations draw from what is familiar to us, from our past experiences. Change is a process in life that cannot be escaped. The process may be slow, yet it results in incremental growth. People create new meaning in their day to day lives through change by adapting to new knowledge which retains bearing and relation to their previous experiences. The process of change is like using building blocks; we need a foundation where we can lay the first brick; when our model or building fails to meet our expectations, we do not need to destroy it altogether, but can use the remaining

foundation to build a new one. We also need to have a foresight about where we are getting to, and whether we will be able to reach there - the predictability of the consequences of our actions.

The women in this research are caught between two worlds, the world of knowledge and practices created by apartheid's bureaucratic top down leadership styles, governed by commands, compliance, control, coercion and fear; and the world in the present democratic South Africa with its challenges to embrace the ethos of an equal society, leadership that forges collaboration, active participation, and shared decision making. From the women's stories, it is evident that people cannot adopt the new without letting go of the old. As transformative leaders, we should understand that letting go of the old is not automatic; it involves placing one foot on the old side and the second foot on the new side. Until we are comfortable with the new, we may not let go of the old altogether. However, we also find ourselves going back and forth, revisiting the old when we find the new unpredictable. These women are changing and to a certain degree have changed. We do not expect them to start walking until they learn how to crawl. As Copper indicates, like toddlers, when they start walking, no one will be able to stop them.

Theme: Black Women Find Hope in Hopelessness.

This theme addresses the main arching research question. How do Black women elementary school principals in South Africa navigate across institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical arenas to create socially just and equitable schools for children and youth? This theme, suggests that Black women school leaders find hope in the midst of their marginality created by the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture, language/mother tongue, traditional obligations, and

customary laws. Leadership as held in the lives of Black women can be likened to being the holders of sharp edges of knives, where women are cut without mercy. As a result, women have to learn strategies to hold these sharp edges while keeping themselves from being cut.

One of the lessons to be learned from the holders of the sharp blades is that there is hope in this hopelessness. From the stories shared by the six Black women, it can be seen that people are able to start with nothing and fight their way through life's trials and tribulations and that education provides hope, vision, and the courage to go on an extra mile. In the midst of dilapidated schools, schools without basic resources for provision of education, teaching under trees, subjection to the era of political uprisings threatening their very own lives, the women present possibilities to change the culture of learning and teaching.

From the meanings attached to different artifacts, from analysis of documents, and from the very discourse of the language use, we see hope and new beginnings. From a picture of a blossoming pink flower in a golden vase and from a picture of a small star shining in the dark we find hope and we see possibilities. From a picture of Mandela and De Klerk shaking hands, we see a hope filled future beyond an ordinary individual's imagination. It is a future of reconciliation and forgiveness of the cruel past. The legendary portrait of the deceased twelve year old Hector Peterson being carried by another student is a picture that appeals to inexpressible emotions. To deny such feelings is to deny reality; nevertheless, we perceives the picture as a symbol of hope, a symbol of new beginnings and forgiveness.

Just like the roots of a tree that penetrate deep into the soil in search of water, women carry the hope that their struggle will prevail and transform others people's world and that their quest and search of knowledge will produce a better future for the children and youth of a new South Africa. Theirs are stories that echo in reminding us that without education we are nothing. As the calabash is used to bring water from the far remote wells and fountains, the quest for bringing access to education is an ongoing struggle. Education as a cutting knife slices through the layers of apartheid education that produce ignorance and the low quality of education that produces unskilled workers and low quality of life. At the same time, however, education is a weapon to uplift women and others, a weapon to free them from oppression, poverty, and starvation.

In our quests to transform others and ourselves, as educators, we change people's negative attitudes; we encourage and build others' self respect and esteem. In our struggle to climb the steep hills and mountains, we are like fresh breeze blowing the old and unwanted away and creating the new. Moreover, as leaders, we are like the sunshine of hope; we are like rain after a long period of drought and we are like water in the desert (Lead). Through hope, women navigate and cut across/through and defeat various forms of layers of oppression that serve to discriminate against and isolate them. As holders of the sharp edges of knives, they cut through the gourdian knots with their "granite like determination" (Lead). Holding leadership roles in the lives of these Black women can be likened to holding the sharp edges of knives, where women are cut without mercy. As a result, women have to learn strategies to hold these sharp edges, while keeping themselves from being cut and mutilated.

Practice that Creates Socially Just Learning Environments

The purpose of this study was to explore how race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, and class affect the practices of Black women elementary school leaders in creating socially just and equitable elementary schools in South Africa. It was also to explore how these practices have both changed and remained the same after the ending of apartheid and the subsequent ushering in of a new era in South Africa.

Women in this study participated in creating socially just schools by creating opportunities for their children and communities. They navigated across tensions to address obstacles both personal and professional, at the same time working double hard to bring in resource to the impoverished communities. Evidence from these stories ranges from fundraising campaigns, bringing outsiders like European communities in for the causes of justice, creating opportunities like vegetable gardens where destitute families could get basic nutrients just to survive one more day. These women envision a state where education would bring equality and provide equal opportunities for black children. In their practice of creating socially just learning environments, the women put children first! While education is primary for the liberation of individuals and community, it is also significant as a means to ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship. These women see education as a vehicle to eradicate the ravages of the past and the inequalities of apartheid.

Furthermore, in their practice of creating socially just learning environments, the women in this study invite parents and communities to become the co-owners of schools. Apartheid education and the former Department of Education and Training (DET)

created authoritarian, hierarchical, and top-down structures where school principals see themselves as the final word, excluding all other stakeholders in decision making processes, but these women however, are in the process of shifting the paradigm, to include others in the running of schools. The primary objective of the old apartheid structure was to set a mind-frame of control and a belief that education was owned by people other than the parents and communities it was supposed to serve. The system turned out to be a "private good" of the mainstream apartheid ideology, not a "public good" of the black people. Hence these women strive to link schools, families and communities for the good of education. Schools leaders face many challenges, including finding ways to involve parents and communities more deeply in the governance of schools where power is shared equally, where decisions are made by all stakeholders. In recognition of these challenges, Epstein (1993) asserts that the solution will be in reorganizing human service agencies to address school ills, linking communities with school and making them a one-stop-shopping center! (p.35).

Looking Forward: Implications for Further Research

This study provokes several other questions for the areas of future research. One implication for further research is an investigation of ethnicity as a continuous measure of segregation and division. Other related research questions or themes that should be explored in the future are as follows:

1. Include views contributed by women in the curriculum. Engage in research that is cognizant of the efforts of Black South African women, their experiences, and keen understanding about how they enacted leadership in the numerous ethnic communities that they represent.

2. Further work to include policy on gender, culture, and education.

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, what is it, then, to redefine the Black South African woman's identity? Without doubt, the women in this study had to address a legion of problems to redefine their identity. They had to/ and are still cutting through race, class, culture, ethnicity, and language. In terms of how I look at these women and their personal/ professional life stories, certain factors are more prominent than others. For example, as we look at their roles as black principals, race and gender are prominent. However, as we look at them as black elementary school principals in black schools, institutional oppression and gender constructs come up. Furthermore, as we look at them as black Muvenda or Mosotho or UmXhosa principal, ethnicity and language as tools of oppression emerge. Drawing across a racial, gender, ethnicity, language, culture, traditional obligations and institutional oppression spectrum, the debate becomes-are you black, first or are you a woman, first? Moreover, are you a Mutshangana married woman, first or are you a Motswana widowed woman, first? What is it to be a black woman? From the particular stories shared in this work, new articulations about leadership are focused on how Black women become Black women school leaders who work for social justice.

When we try to redefine what it means for women to write, tell, discuss, and analyze their life experiences against the backdrop of the prevailing discourse that seeks to silence them, we tend to pigeonhole their identities. We tend to think that identities are fixed and do not change over time. However, what we learn as educators from these stories is that drawing across racial, gendered, culture and ethnicity spectrums, there are

always possibilities for new identities to emerge. These possibilities, in essence, are demonstrated by the women's personal and professional experiences in the past apartheid era and the new current South Africa.

In terms of understanding the individual, race and ethnicity are more important than class. Even within the black groups, these women had slightly different class issues. Race and socio-economic class in this research are narrow frames. From the women's stories and articulations, it is surprising that they were not outspoken about race and class. From their quotes, race is clear and visible, but not from their voices. Racism is so ordinary to the extent that we need to pull it apart to reveal its ordinariness; we need to pull out the invisible components that are so minute yet so powerful as to divide and rule societies in our contemporary existence. In my opinion, the term apartheid was used collectively as a blanket definition for all oppressive measures including those of race and class. Race is supposed to be the first level of one's given identity. Especially in the past South Africa, being black was a direct definition of racial discrimination and poverty. In their reflections and also in my opinion, the women seemed to think that I understood how racial laws defined them. They took it for granted that since I am a fellow South African, I have lived through similar experiences of race and class.

The issue of class played a different role in that the women were disadvantaged because of oppression, not because they were from a working class. We should understand that class had no prominent role in defining black people; on the contrary, the major role was played by apartheid laws that oppressed and discriminated against all black people and also denied them access to political and economic rights in South Africa. Apartheid with its hegemonic policy of separate development, played an

important role in determining black people's identity, fate and existence. It is important to note, however, that the women in this study pushed the idea that education/higher education can bring relative equality.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UCRHIS FORM ; APPROVAL AND CONSENT FORMS

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROJECT
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
INITIAL REVIEW (and 5 yr. renewal)**

UCRIHS

University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

David E. Wright, Ph.D., Chair

246 Administration Building, Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824-1046

PHONE (517) 355-2180 FAX (517) 353-2976

E-Mail - UCRIHS@pilot.msu.edu

WEB SITE - <http://www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/ucrihs/>

Office Hours: M-F (8:00 A.M.-Noon & 1:00-5:00 P.M.)

DIRECTIONS: Please complete the questions on this application using the instructions and definitions found on the attached sheets. (revised 4/99)

1. Responsible Project Investigator:
(Faculty or staff supervisor)

Name: Dr. Maenette Benham

Social Security Number: 575-74-2235

Additional Investigator(s):

Name: Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

SS# or Student ID#: A26539887

Department: Educational Administration

College: Education

Name: _____

SS# or Student ID#: _____

I accept responsibility for conducting the proposed research in accordance with the protections of human subjects as specified by UCRIHS, including the supervision of faculty and student co-investigators.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

SS# or Student ID#: _____

Name: _____

SS# or Student ID#: _____

2. Address: If there are more than two investigators, please indicate who should receive correspondence, and provide further addresses on a separate page.

Responsible Project Investigator

Dr. Maenette Benham

425 Erickson Hall

Department of Educational Administration

Phone #: (517) 355-6613

Fax #: (517) 353-6383

Email: mbenham@msu.edu

Additional Investigator(s)

Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

1533 Spartan Village Apt. G

East Lansing, 48823

Phone #: (517) 355-2914

Fax #: (517) 353-6383

Email: phendlas@msu.edu

3. Title of Project: Musadzi u fara lufhanga nga hu fhiraho: Black women Elementary School Leaders Creating Socially Just and Equitable Environments in South Africa
4. Have you ever received Preliminary Approval for this project?
 No ☒ Yes ☐
 If yes, what IRB # was assigned to it? 99-767
5. Funding (if any) None
 MSU Contracts and Grants app. # _____ if applicable
6. Has this protocol been submitted to the FDA or are there plans to submit it to the FDA? No ☒ Yes ☐
 If yes, is there an IND #? No ☐ Yes ☐ IND # _____
7. Does this project involve the use of Materials of Human Origin (e.g., human blood or tissue)?
 No ☒ Yes ☐
8. When would you prefer to begin data collection? January 2000
 Please remember you may not begin data collection without UCRIHS approval.
9. Category (Circle a, b, or c below and specify category for a and b. See instructions pp. 4-7)
- (a). This proposal is submitted as EXEMPT from full review.
 Specify category or categories: 1-C
 - (b). This proposal is submitted for EXPEDITED review.
 Specify category or categories: 2G
 - (c). This proposal is submitted for FULL sub-committee review.
10. Is this a Public Health Service funded, full review, multi-site project?
 No ☒ Yes ☐
 If yes, do the other sites have a Multiple Project Assurance IRB that will also review this project?
☐ No. Please contact the UCRIHS office for further information about meeting the PHS/NIH/OPRR regulations.
☐ Yes. Please supply a copy of that approval letter when obtained.

11. Project Description (Abstract): Please limit your response to 200 words.

COPY ATTACHED

12. Procedures: Please describe all project activities to be used in collecting data from human subjects. This also includes procedures for collecting materials of human origin and analysis of existing data originally collected from human subjects

- A series of three interviews of 1-2 hours recorded on a cassette tape
- Shadowing/Observation: I will shadow the leader a day or two in order to understand her relationship to her colleagues, the culture of the school/environment, symbols which depict socially just environment, etc.
- Groups dialogue: use of recorder to hear what other members of the community (teachers in this case) see as acts of social justice from these women.
- Document analysis: ask these women to bring artifacts, documents and other symbolical objects that represent leadership which relates to creation of a socially just school and community.

13. Subject Population: Describe your subject population. (e.g., high school athletes, women over 50 w/breast cancer, small business owners)

- 6-8 Black African women elementary school leaders in Soweto, Johannesburg who are identified by their communities as leaders working for social justice.

- a. The study population may include (check each category where subjects **may be included by design or incidentally**):

Minors	[]
Pregnant Women	[X]
Women of Childbearing Age	[X]
Institutionalized Persons	[]
Students	[]
Low Income Persons	[X]
Minorities	[X]
Incompetent Persons (or those with diminished capacity)	[]

- b. Number of subjects (including controls) 6-8

- c. How will the subjects be recruited? (Attach appropriate number of copies of recruiting advertisement, if any. See p. 13 of UCRIHS instructions)
- The study participants will be selected through personal contacts and suggestions from colleagues, members of the communities and district officials. I will send participants a letter of invitation, then call to get their consent to participant.
- d. If you are associated with the subjects (e.g., they are your students, employees, patients), please explain the nature of the association.
- Not associated with the subjects
- e. If someone will receive payment for recruiting the subjects please explain the amount of payment, who pays it and who receives it.
- No payment
- f. Will the research subjects be compensated? ☒ No ☐ Yes.
If yes, details concerning payment, including the amount and schedule of payments, must be explained in the informed consent.
- g. Will the subjects incur additional financial costs as a result of their participation in this study? ☒ No ☐ Yes. If yes, please include an explanation in the informed consent.
- h. Will this research be conducted with subjects who reside in another country or live in a cultural context different from mainstream US society?
☐ No ☒ Yes.
- (1) If yes, will there be any corresponding complications in your ability to minimize risks to subjects, maintain their confidentiality and/or assure their right to voluntary informed consent as individuals?
☒ No ☐ Yes.
 - (2) If your answer to h-1 is yes, what are these complications and how will you resolve them?

14. How will the subjects' privacy be protected? (See Instructions p. 8.)

- Use of code name for anonymity
 - Keep the data under lock and key in private home and not at the subject's site.
 - Confidential data is not going to be shared with any other person except the Dissertation director/adviser and dissertation committee.
 - During the transcription process I will do all of the above.
15. Risks and Benefits for subjects: (See Instructions p. 9.)
- No risk foreseen.
 - The subjects will benefit from knowledge and information gained and shared out of the findings of this study.
 - The educational community will benefit from knowledge and information gained
16. Consent Procedures (See Instructions pp. 9-13.)
- Copies of Letters of Introduction to the Study and Consent Forms Attached.

CHECKLIST: Check off that you have included each of these items. If not applicable, state N/A:

- ☒ Completed application
- ☒ The correct number of copies of the application and instruments, according to the category of review (See instructions p. 14.)
- ☒ Consent form (or script for verbal consent), if applicable
- ☐ Advertisement, if applicable
- ☒ One complete copy of the methods chapter of the research proposal

Letter of Introduction (Principal)

Thidziambi S. Phendla

3605 Hillsvue

1754

(011) 410-3647

phendlas@msu.edu

thidziambi@africana.com

(date)

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to hear more about my current research interest. My study examines the professional/ personal lives of Black women elementary school leaders at the intersection of institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments. I will ask you to reflect on your formal (e.g., institutional schooling) and informal (e.g., family, culture and ethnicity, socio-economic background) educational experiences in an effort to discover how life passages have influenced your work for social justice. You have been selected to participate in this study because you meet the requirements of being an African woman elementary school leaders working to create social justice for your children and community.

The information provided through this process will be used as part of my completion for my Ph.D. in educational administration at Michigan State University. Your cooperation through a biographical questionnaire, three (3) interviews, an observation of your “daily activities” and sharing of materials will be confidential; no individual nor school system will be identified with your responses.

I am including the consent form that briefly summarizes the intention of this research project, the voluntary participant status, the intention to retain your anonymity and confidentiality of all data, and your time commitment to this project. Please sign and return the form to me in the attached self-addressed envelope. I will contact you in the next two weeks to discuss this further and answer any question you may have. If you wish to speak to me before that time, please do so. I will be happy to respond to any questions. In case you need to know more about the research process, feel free to contact Professor Benham or Dr. David Wright at the address below. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Prof. Maenette Benham
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Email: ucrihs@msu.edu

Educationally yours,

Thidziambi Sylvia Phendla

Consent Form (Principal)

You are invited to participate in the research project: "Musadzi u fara lufhanga nga hu fhiraho: Black women Elementary School Leaders Creating Socially Just and Equitable Environments in South Africa" conducted by Thidziambi S. Phendla, Ph.D. Candidate Educational Administration Department, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

You received and read the letter from Thidziambi Phendla dated _____, which briefly describes the purpose and procedure of the research. The letter includes her name, address and methods of telecommunication in case you have any questions or concerns about the study. The study examines the professional/ personal lives of Black women elementary school leaders at the intersection of institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed at least three times, and one to two hours each time, over a brief period of time. The study will ask you to reflect on both your formal and informal educational experiences, to critically think about how you think about educational leadership, and how you have addressed pressing issues of racism, gender, class, segregation, and oppression in your practice as an educational leader in the past and the current context. The interviews will be tape-recorded and you have the right not to answer any particular questions and to ask that the tape recorder be turned off at any time. All written or artifactual items that you share will be returned to you. One group dialogue of at least five of your staff members on the subject of leadership and social justice will be conducted and tape-recorded.

Your identity will be protected to the best of the investigator's ability. All data and tape recordings will be kept confidential, and your identity will not be disclosed in the final report. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and the information recorded during this study will be kept in a locked file. You may choose to withdraw and not to participate at any time without penalty. For more information about the research process, feel free to contact Professor Benham or Dr. David Wright at the address below.

Prof. Maenette Benham
425 Erickson Hall
Department of Educational Administration
East Lansing, MI 48824-
Phone#: (517) 355-6613
Fax#: (517) 353-6383
Email: mbenham@msu.edu

Dr. David Wright
246 Administration Building
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1046
Phone#: (517) 355-2180
Fax#: (517) 353-2976
Email: ucrihs@msu.edu

I have read the consent form and volunteer to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Letter of Introduction (Staff Member)

Thidziambi S. Phendla

3605 Hillsvieview 1754

(011) 410-3647

phendlas@msu.edu

thidziambi@africana.com

(date)

Dear Staff Member:

I am Thidziambi Phendla, a Ph.D. Candidate at Michigan State University in K-12 Educational Administration. I am writing because your principal has agreed to participate in a study I am conducting on “Musadzi u fara lufhanga nga hu fhiraho: Black women Elementary School Leaders Creating Socially Just and Equitable Environments in South Africa”. My study examines the professional/ personal lives of Black women elementary school leaders at the intersection of institutional and political; cultural and language; economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments. An important part of this study is contingent on your and participation. I would like to invite you and a few other staff members to participate in a group dialogue to talk about the perceptions you have about your principal in her efforts to create an environment of social justice.

The information provided through this process will be recorded and be used as part of my completion for my Ph.D. in educational administration at Michigan State University. Your cooperation through the focus group participation and sharing of information will be confidential.

I plan to facilitate the group dialogue in a one hour-long session. The focus group will be scheduled after school sometime during the next month and will be held at your school at a time convenient to you and fellow staff members. I will contact you in the next two weeks to discuss this further and answer any question(s) you may have. If you wish to speak to me before that time, please do so. I will be happy to respond to any questions. In case you need to know more about the research process, feel free to contact Professor Benham or Dr. David Wright at the address below. I look forward to talking with you soon.

I am including the consent form that briefly summarizes the intention of this research project, the voluntary participant status, the intention to retain your anonymity and confidentiality of all data, and your time commitment to this project. Please sign and return the form to me at our meeting.

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Educationally yours,

Thidziambi Phendla

Consent Form (Staff Member)

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You received and read the letter from Thidziambi Phendla dated _____, which briefly describes the purpose and procedure of the research. The letter includes her name, address and methods of telecommunication in case you have any questions or concerns about the study. The study examines the professional/ personal lives of Black women elementary school leaders at the intersection of institutional and political, cultural and language, economic and social/historical venues as they work to actualize socially just and equitable learning environments.

If you agree to participate in this study, a group dialogue will be conducted, which will last about an hour, and will consist of about four other staff members in your school, and Thidziambi Phendla.

Your identity will be protected to the best of the investigator's ability. All information will be held in the strict confidence and your identity will not be disclosed in any form during the preparations or completion of the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and the information recorded during this group dialogue will be kept in a locked file. The interviews will be tape-recorded and you have the right not to answer any particular questions and to ask that the tape recorder be turned off at any time. And you may withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty. For more information about the research process, feel free to contact Professor Benham or Dr. David Wright at the address below.

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I have read the consent form and volunteer to participate in this study.

Signature: _____

Date _____

Print Name: _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS, GROUP DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

Journal Starting Points

I will also ask you at another point, to respond to six open-ended statements about your life, work, as an educational leader, as a leader creating a socially just and equitable environment for children and youth, and your involvement in this research experience. Therefore, you might want to record thoughts or comments as we go through this process during the next couple of weeks.

Interview Protocol

There will be three one to two hours interviews with each participant, following her completion of a biographical questionnaire that will serve as a starting point for the first interview. The purpose of the interviews is to establish life history, experience and learnings as an educator and leader, and meaning of the connections between that work and life.

PROTOCOLS

- a. Biographical Interviews Protocol (three interviews)
- b. Group Dialogue
 - Group Dialogue Consent and Confirmation Letter
 - Group Dialogue Protocol
- c. Observation Protocol
 - School Environment
 - Office Environment
 - Interactions (Children/Youth, Parents, Teachers/Staff, Community)
- d. Documents/Artifacts
 - Metaphor for leadership
 - Items that represent work

I will use the interview protocols developed by Benham (1995) and Colflesh (1995) for each of the interviews and adapt them for use with Black African women. A variety of probes will be used to expand each participant's responses to the questions in the interview protocol: probing to better understand what the participants is saying; probing for definitions and clarification of the meaning of her response; probing to elicit concrete examples and stories that illuminate her original responses; probing to explore the impact of previous lived experiences on what she is saying about educational leadership, especially her own leadership which enable her to fight oppression and segregation to create socially just environments; probing to understand how she defines social justice; probing to extract how the characteristics most commonly associated with women leaders appear in their talk about educational leadership; and probing to make linkages between and among the interviews.

Participants will be asked to provide and explain three artifacts that depict their own leadership. Last, they will respond to six open-ended statements in a journal format, using metaphorical comparisons to their lives, transformative leadership practice, how they have learned to create strategies and established network of support, fight oppression, repression, segregation and isolation, and their research experience.

First Interview: Focused Life History

Purpose of the Interview:

To put each participant's experience in context by asking her to tell as much as possible about herself and her life up until the present.

Role:

To pose open-ended questions and to issue invitations for each participant to share her life experiences and educational experiences; to follow up, seek clarification, ask for concrete details, and request stories to illuminate her life events and lessons; to move the interview forward by building on what the participant has begun to share.

Introduction for the Participant:

Because I am interested in the biographies of African women educational leaders creating social justice for their children and youth, we will begin with your life story. During the conversation, we will build on the biographical questionnaire and the critical life moments identified by the initial lifeline sketch that you completed. You will also be asked to expand on your life and educational experiences prior to becoming a leader. The focus of my study is on the relationship of women's lived experiences and tensions created by the interlocking of race, gender, ethnicity, language and class, their thinking and practice as educational leaders which create social justice in their organization. So your life experiences will serve as a starting point for our continued exploration during the rest of the interviews.

Questions

Biographical Background

- What is your full name?
- Date of birth and place of birth
- Type of community in which you spent most of your growing-up years (rural, urban, township, squatter camps, etc.)
- Place of parents' birth. Highest level of education attained by parents
- Father's occupation; mother's occupation

- Did you attend public, community, farm, or mine or schools? Provide a brief description of your formal school experiences.
- Information about educational attainment (or attach résumé)
- Do you have any special talents outside the area of education? (e.g., singing, ethnic dance, painting, art, etc.)
- Spiritual orientation/religious preference (past and current)
- Marital/partner status
- Children (male, female, adopted or biological, ages)
- Significant adults in your life other than parents. Explain why these adults have been or are important to you.

Cultural Background

- Tell me about your immediate and your extended family.
- How did you experience (learn) culture—societal values and beliefs—in your family? In your extended family? In your community?
- What formal cultural education were you introduced to (i.e. language classes in school)?
- What informal cultural education were you introduced to?
- What are the key cultural norms, values, or beliefs (i.e., duty, family roles) that you perceive to be important to you as a person, as a professional, and as an educational leader?
- What are some of the ways that you incorporate these key cultural norms, values, and beliefs into your life today?
- How have you been affected by social forces (i.e., race/ethnicity, mother-tongue/language, gender, class) and political forces?
- How has your mother-tongue/language positively or negatively impacted/influenced your social, educational and professional experiences?
- How have some of the major political movements, resistance to apartheid policies, and legislated apartheid acts influenced your growing up years? (i.e. Bantu Education Act of 1954, 1961 Sharpeville Massacre, 1976 Students

Boycotts, 1979 DET Act, 1985- 1994 Teacher's Union demonstrations like chalk down, go-slow etc)

Family Background:

- I am interested in learning more about your background. I will use the biographical questionnaire to pose questions. I would like you to expand and clarify the information with personal situations and stories about your life experiences.
- What was that growing-up experience like for you?
- How did your position in the family affect your sense of who you were during your growing-up years?
- How was that for you?
- How does your family fit into this picture of your life?

Formal School Experience:

- Tell me about your institutional experiences, i.e. elementary, middle (junior high) school, secondary school, and postsecondary school years. (Talk about language, culture, ethnicity, peer groups, about talents/skills, about extracurricular programs, political struggles/apartheid resistance movements etc.)
- Who were the adults who had the most impact on your education? How did they impact you?
- What valuable lessons did you learn about who you were, about your relationship to learning, about your relationship to the educational profession?
- Were there any aspects of your educational experiences that might have conflicted with the cultural norms you were growing up with?
- How did those conflicts work out, and what impact do you think they might have had on how you frame your educational practices today?

Growing Up and Coming of Age:

- How did you feel about your self-identity at different stages of your life (i.e. preteen, teenager, young adult, etc.)?
- What political movements (anti-apartheid campaigns, anti-pass campaigns, school boycotts, teachers' union movements, etc.) affected your life? How so? What personal meaning did it hold for you?
- What were your perceptions of the roles of African men and women? How did these rituals affect you? What myths and stereotypes affected you? What myths and stereotypes did you hold? How are you resolving these conflict, if any at all? Discuss these.

Professional Practice:

- What factors played a part in your entering the education profession?
- What did you learn about yourself during your first years in the profession?
- How is it that you became an educational leader? Did you have a mentor?
- How is it that you came to your current position?
- Were there any stories of other individuals who moved you toward seeking a leadership role? What were they, and how did they affect you?
- How do you define leadership? Do you see yourself as a transformative leader?
- What role does the school governing body play in your school? Talk me on how are decisions made? Tell me more about who make which decisions and why.
- What role does the other stakeholders play in your school? How successful/or not, were you able to develop partnership with stakeholders (local businesses, community organizations, political organizations, etc)? How did you do that?
- What do you understand by the term "social justice"? What does the concept mean to you?
- What is involved in accomplishing social justice, and how do you go about mobilizing others to action?
- How has the political landscape shaped your family background/growing up? How has it impacted on your formal education?
- Share with me your reflections on these issues: traditional norms and beliefs about women; and customary laws.
- How did they impact on you personally (e.g., marriage, guardianship, succession, relations with your own children, contractual powers and property rights)?
- How did they impact on you professionally (e.g., professional development; interrelations with colleagues, teachers, parents, students; career growth/promotions; salary scale; benefit structures; maternity leaves; etc.)? What role do they play in your professional and practices as a school leader?
- How have your race, gender, and ethnicity impacted on your educational experiences (formal and informal) and professional practices?
- What is your understand of the term "power"? Tell me more about the meaning you derive from your understanding of the term. Who has it, who does not, how is power attained, maintained?
- How has power or the lack thereof played out in your experiences and professional practices?

Lifeline Probes:

- Continue to discuss those moments not touched upon by the above themes.
- Are there any moments that impeded your progress in your efforts towards creating a socially just and equitable school and environment? What were they, and how did they become obstacles? What did you do?

- What lessons have you learned that you can clearly say have impacted how you think and how you behave as an educational leader? Are there specific lessons learned as a result of you being a woman? A Black woman?
- What does learning mean to you? What makes it important?

Second Interview: Life History Continued

Purpose of the Interview:

To concentrate on the concrete details of each participant's experience as an educational leader, with special emphasis on a selected group of gender-related, culture-related, and social justice characteristics from the literature.

My Role:

Similar to my role in the first interview: to encourage each participant to relate incidents, tell stories, and provide concrete details of her experience as an educational leader and to further explore what the participant is saying. To ask the participant to reconstruct those situations and experiences. To peel away the layers of oppression, discrimination, deeper values, beliefs, and approaches to leadership of justice.

Introduction for Participant:

I am interested in exploring your experiences as an educational leader who is creating an environment of social justice and learning more about you as an Black African woman educational leader.

Questions

- Talk more about any of the stories/situations that you mentioned in interview 1 that you feel are important.
- Are there any other stories about your growing up and coming of age that you feel are important to understanding who you are, particularly as a leader?
- What personal and professional experiences helped shaped you in becoming a transformative leader?
- How did you learn to be an educational leader?
- Can you give me an example of an experience (i.e., in professional development) that has had a visible impact on how you see and carry out your role as an educational leader?
- What made that experience stand out above the rest?
- What opportunities for learning to lead, in your life and work, enhanced your learning as an educational leader?
- What opportunities for learning to lead hindered your learning as an educational leader?
- Tell me more about your relationship with your teachers, with your parent body and with your governing structures.

- I want to hear more about your role in the community at large, your failures and successes, your frustrations and joys in your endeavor to create a socially just and equitable environment.

Current work context:

- Ask the leader to provide contextual information, demographic information, language and ethnic constructs, and a description of the political and financial environment of her current work place. How resources are distributed and what criteria are used. How were these distributed, and what criteria were used in the apartheid era.
- Ask the leader to reflect critically on issues of concern that she is currently addressing and how she makes sense of these problems. Ask the leader how these issues are different than in the past regime and how these issues may or may not be addressed by the current post-apartheid policies and activities.
- Encourage the leader to explore, discuss, and analyze her unique role in advancing education and to define her role.
- From your understanding of the term "social justice", how have you created a socially just organization? Give examples to demonstrate this.
- What are some of the factors that have enhanced this process? Talk more about these factors.
- What are some of the factors that have hindered/impeded the process? Elaborate more on these factors.
- Please describe a current initiative that involves you creating a socially just and equitable environment (for your school or /and your community).

Last Interview: Reflection on the Meaning

Purpose of the Interview:

To encourage each participant to reflect on the meaning of her experience as an educational leader creating social justice and equitable schools and communities for the children and youth.

My Role:

To continue to pose open-ended questions and to issue invitations for each participant to make connections between her work and her life. To explore meaning, details and clarification, encourage further explanation, interpretation, and sense making, and to follow up when additional information is needed. To keep the participant focused on making meaning from her experience and learning. To accept silence.

Introduction for Participant:

During this last formal interview, we will explore the meaning that you have made of your work as an educational leader, learning to create strategies and establishing network of support, and fight oppression, repression, segregation, isolation and injustices through silence and passive resistance while working to uplift and support your school and community. We will continue to link characteristics related to women leaders and life experiences with your current work, with emphasis on how it makes sense for you. In addition, we will use some of the time to “tie up loose ends” from the previous interviews.

Questions

Schooling and Education:

- What do you believe the purpose of schooling and the purpose of education is?
- How did achieving a higher education impact your leadership development? How has achieving higher education impact you as a black person; as a woman; and as a Black woman?
- How has achieving higher education impact your ethnic identity, your mother tongue/language, and traditional norms/customary laws? Talk more about these in relation to your personal and professional experiences.

Educational Leadership:

- How did you learn to be an educational leader?
- What does educational leadership mean to you?
- What factors in your life (personal and professional) have enhanced and hindered your work as an educational leader?
- How do you see yourself as a leader? How do you think your professional colleagues see you? How would you like to be seen?
- What are some of the factors that have hindered/impeded the process of making effective linkages with your school, parents and the community at large? Elaborate more on these factors.
- What is your understanding of democratic school governance? Whose voice is heard and why? Who makes decisions and how?
- How would you define social justice?
- Give examples of how you have dealt with issues of social justice
- What does a socially just organization look like? In your understanding, what are the elements/component of a socially just system?
- What skills and strategies have you found to be most effective in your efforts to create social justice?
- Define the culture of your school and community. What implications does this have on how you view leadership and how you practice leadership?
- What lessons have you learned about educational leadership that are worthwhile to share?

Reflections:

- Given what you have said about your life and your work, how have you come to understand leadership?
- Given what you have said about your life and your work, how have you come to understand transformative leadership?
- Comment on these characteristics of leadership most commonly associated with women in general/ and more specifically, with Black African women and their cultural values.
- What are the challenges that you and African women educational leaders face? Talk a bit about these demands and satisfactions? What do you do to deal with these challenges?
- What unique contribution to the education of children and youths do you think you have made? Would like to make?
- As you look back, what have you liked the most about your work and what have you liked the least? What is an area of your leadership practice that is strong, and what is not strong?
- As you look forward, how might you want to train the next generation of Black women leaders?
- What would you share with an aspiring woman interested in educational leadership? Would these be different for a Black woman? How?

Open-Ended Statements for Journal Responses/Final Reflections

Purpose of Journal Entries:

To use metaphors to describe the leaders' life experiences, leadership practice, and the meaning that they have made of their life and work, as well as their experience in this study.

My Role:

To provide open-ended statements to which the participants can respond.

Introduction for Participant:

Using metaphors, please respond to the following open-ended statements. We will explore these responses during our final meeting or in a follow-up call after the interview transcripts are reviewed.

Invitations: using metaphorical comparisons to my life....

- As I look back, my life has been
- My practice as a transformative educational leader has been...
- Making sense of my life and work as a Black African woman has been...
- My experience as a participant in this study has been...
- Additional comments/reactions...

Group Dialogue: Reflections of the school leader

Purpose of the Interview:

To encourage participant to define leadership and to reflections of their school leader.

My Role:

To continue to pose open-ended questions and to issue invitations for each participant to make connections between her reflections of the school leader and her work of social justice. To explore details and clarification, encourage further explanation, interpretation, and sense making, and to follow up when additional information is needed.

Introduction for Participant:

During this focus group interview, we will explore the perceptions that you have made of the work of your school leader. We will continue to link characteristics related to women leaders and characteristics of socially just schools and environments.

Questions

Leadership:

- How do you define leadership? In what ways do you see your school principal as a transformative leader?
- In what ways has your school leader displayed passion for equity and social justice (within the school setting and the community at large) illustrate with examples or stories
- What are some of the dilemmas you perceive she's had to face?
- How has she been successful or not?
- What activities are you currently involved in that reveal a school-wide effort for social justice.

APPENDIX C

MATRICES OF THEMES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES TO TRAIN OTHER WOMEN

1. Personal and Public Struggle to Gain a Scholarly Education

Woman IRON

Personal

I'm from a working class family, my father was a laborer (garden-boy) all his life. After losing my mother at the age of six, and as the last of the three daughters, my eldest sister had to go and look for a job in order to take care of me and my other siblings. She worked as a domestic servant, cleaning homes and looking after other people's children. I had a very hard life, some times food was scarce and I had to survive on crumbs.

Even though I was always top in my class, after completing Std 8, I had nobody to take me further on. Since education for black people was neither free nor compulsory, I took pen and paper and applied for a loan. By the way, there were no free bursaries or scholarship for black people in those years.

I had an opportunity to go to UK for 3 months to take a course in "Learner Centered Methods" at Leeds University in 1985. That is why I find Outbased Education- OBE very relevant. I completed my Higher Education Diploma-HED and honors in Setswana with UNISA in 1986.

COPPER

I did my Matric when most people would end at Std 8 and go on for their teacher's training. I trained as a secondary teacher rather than a primary one, what was called JSOK in Afrikaans or JSTC in English. So, in other words I was considered highly educated taking into account that most teachers at the high schools were men and with PTC qualifications. It was rare that a woman could be allowed to teach at a high school. After working for a few years, I decided to go to the university for a BA degree on a full time basis. My two young children lived with my parents in Gazankulu. I did not have to pay for their well being, neither did my husband. In fact, my parents used to send me money for fees and allowance for my university education.

After my BA degree I corresponded my Honors degree in African languages with UNISA. I got a promotion to this position in 1990 and in 1996 I completed my B.Ed.

Public

After completing my BA, I was not allowed to teach in the primary school any more, "I think I was too qualified to teacher at the not so important level, you know what I mean!"

About the Bantu Education Act of 1954 I was aware of it. It created a lot of inferiority complex. To get rid of it, one had to have a high self esteem. BEA didn't stop me from anything.

Besides the fact that my father had some influence, for most Black women, teaching is a non-option. The choice of careers for Black women was limited.

with RAU University. Right now I'm busy with a computer-training course offered for the first time for black people by the government.

STEEL

I started teaching with an Std 8 qualification and a PTC in 1972 here at Livhuwani primary school. And in 1982 I was also taught in a night school, teaching adults basic literacy until 1999. In 1975 I started to correspond for my Matric and I completed it in 1978. I continued studying and did my B.A. in 1981-1984 with UNISA. My major subjects were Venda and Afrikaans. In 1998 I completed my B.Ed in Educational Management with UNISA. I still have two incomplete courses with UNISA because I had started to study for an honors degree in Applied Linguistics in 1988 because, then, I was a subject adviser for African languages. And on top of it all, I was working a fulltime job, being a mother, wife, and community leader, and still, expected to succeed. If I had taken the opportunity to do Matric, maybe I would have become a teacher, but with better qualifications. I won't have had to waste so many precious years, time and money trying to upgrade my qualification.

Yet my secondary school principal encouraged me to go ahead and do Matric, but I refused. I was a brilliant student and I could have made it!

Matric was this so-called "gorilla" which could be passed by a handful of special chosen students! I told myself that I was going to study. I read a lot of English books, and a lot of newspapers. Language had played a discriminatory role in different ways in my life. But I had to succeed and work harder to know the language in "power".

Now that we are allowed to go to the former white schools we can now see the difference, and that we have been exploited for so long. Look at this school for example, like most African schools, there is a general lack of basic resources. They should have started with schools, to give us better classrooms. And, at least give us buildings and administration blocks. And we are still using this block, as dilapidated as it was 10 years ago! And according to me "there is no difference between the old regime and this new one".

And they are trying to redress and have equity, and as far I am concerned... let me talk about buildings, for example we don't have administration, and if you go to white schools there is no compromise at all. And coming to resources such as basic things that schools must have, things like photocopier, computers, black schools have to raise fund and get their own. The department is not giving us any of those things and I feel that equity is not yet here. Maybe it is still on its way! We'll live to see that in another 10 years. To have anything in most Soweto schools, parents have to bleed, give the little they already do not have.

LEAD

That time education in South Africa was not compulsory for Blacks. And by the way, in Lesotho there was no Afrikaans. Coming to

Although, however, I met the required number of points for admission to either a medical or B.SC Degree, my application

South Africa and living in the rural areas of Pietersburg with my maternal grandparents posed several problems in terms of language. First, I had to learn Afrikaans in Std7. In addition, I had to learn Sepedi, which is far more difficult and complicated than Sesotho, with its many dialects. And then, as a result of the two languages problems I was demoted to a lower standard. My maternal grandfather bought me an Afrikaans dictionary so that I could translate from English to Afrikaans. I was surprised when I got position 2 in my class at the end of the year. Then I realized that I was something better, and that I could do it. Nevertheless, the two languages did not hinder my progress at all, I passed my Matric with an exemption.

I passed my ordinary BA degree in 1978, and then did my UED. I was 25 years old when I started teaching at a high school in Potgietersrus, not only the youngest in the staff, but the only one with a degree! I have my senior degree, a B.Ed from UNISA. And it was difficult. I started reading for it during 1986, and also being a mother of two young ones. I remember I was expecting my son when I went to my Graduations in 1988. My younger daughter was one year.

SILVER

My parents used to work in Johannesburg, my mother as a domestic worker cleaning white people's homes, and my father as a laborer at a firm in Johannesburg. My mother soon left Johannesburg and stayed with us in the Eastern Cape. We grew up as our mother's kids. My mother used to do great things. Although she was not educated, she wanted all of her girls to get an education. My father used to pay us a visit once a year for a month and then he would disappear back to Johannesburg. Our only means of communication for the rest of the year was through letters, and he would send money and clothes when ever possible. It was a tough life!

By the way, after Junior Certificate we used to get a certificate and it was like a degree for most people because you could train as a teacher, police or nurse. Only those who could afford would go on and do Matric. After PTC, I corresponded my Matric, and I passed. After that, I registered with VISTA

was not approved because I was a black woman. It was rare for a Black woman to qualify!

I went on through until I passed my Std 6. In the primary school the medium of instruction was IsiXhosa. So, when we got to the secondary school, things changed and everything was in English, no longer in IsiXhosa any more! In the primary school I was one of the best students in class, to an extent that I easily obtained first positions. You know, when you get a first class pass in Std 6, it was something great. When I got to the high school, I was "nice and frustrated". You know, I could look at a teacher and not understand a word. I passed my JC, with a second-class pass.

to do SEC, and then I continued to do SED, there after I enrolled with UNISA to do my junior degree. All these studies after PTC were completed while I was already married with children and a family. I'm still struggling with my last course now, the Sociology 1. I wrote my supplementary paper last week before meeting with you.

By the way, in July 1972 when I in my finally year at the teacher's college, my mother passed away. Therefore, the first born in the family had to leave school and home and come to Johannesburg to work as a domestic servant.

BRASS

I grew up doing all the expected chores. Like carrying water from the river or fountain, collecting wood from the forest and so forth. My father is my role model. He sacrificed to give me an education. He would spend all the money on me to make sure that I don't lack anything. He really did! Because the day I left for the boarding school I would take all the money and leave them with nothing.

Bantu education really affected us because after passing Std 8, we wouldn't go anywhere except for teaching or nursing. We were not encouraged to go for Matric because it was very difficult. As a girl, you were told that Matric and Math were for boys. At first, Matric was difficult because it was controlled by the Joint Matric Board - JMB and was based on the white education standards. How do you expect to write and pass an examination based on other forms of knowledge other than the Bantu education you were fed? Nonetheless, few black people did pass these exams and made it to the universities. I was interested in nursing, but because of the disturbing thought of people dying I choose teaching.

I attended public schools in Tshiawelo Township were I started Sub A until I passed my Std 6 before going to Venda. By the way, I had to go to the homeland since there were no high schools for black children, especially in the area where I lived, which was predominantly for the Vhavenda and Matshangana groups.

But higher education can also be a barrier, for, when you are more educated than your husband, it is always a challenge. With us, my husband and I, we study together. Like this year, we enrolled with UNISA together. Because I don't want to leave him behind, and I don't want him to feel that I'm superior to him. Because of our traditional norm, we have to accommodate our husband's fears.

2. Language of oppression versus language of liberation

Woman
IRON

Oppression

Even when we had money to purchase a better house, because of segregation and the group areas act, we were

Liberation

Social justice should lead to a school where people are not afraid to contribute, where people are not afraid to contribute and accept

confined to the four-roomed house until we were allowed to extend it and add more rooms. As black people we didn't grow because of motivation. As black people we saw education not for it's worth, not only for enlightenment, but also as a vehicle to enable us to run away from starvation, poverty, hunger, and violence. One believes that the more one gets educated, the better one would earn more and be able to move away from the ghettos, the black townships.

Education's aim is not necessarily to uplift the black communities, but to enable those who manage to escape, to move away from them, and leave the poorer of the poor as helpless as ever. Education reproduces poverty and starvation in the name of enlightenment.

COPPER

Another major challenge is in terms of lack of parental involvement in the running of our schools. I think, again is because of where we come from. Our past knowledge and beliefs! All along our parents and community thoughts the school belongs to the government. As a result, the government should be responsible for everything and

others' opinions. And just school is a school not oppressive, a school where people are praise for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and it is not stagnant, people move together.

My teaching has been for liberating the black people. I did not believe in "Liberation now, Education later" slogan. For example, during the peak riots, when students were actively involved in politics, my students used to remain until my period was over. They knew that they were going to miss a lot. I did not take advantage of the situation to run my private business like most of my colleagues. I used to go and teach effectively. As a result, my students wouldn't miss my class for anything! I'm very discipline and I believe in discipline.

I had a vision of mobilizing community into positive thinking. Before my time as a principal, people used to think that if you are a principal you are a 'know all, do all'. It was my challenge to change their thinking, the approach from "killer to life". We have to work together. We grow because we learn; we copy and implement what we have learned.

Being a good leader means you are able to create democratic school governance where there is peace, harmony, and responsibility from everybody who is in the community. And everybody, every member should be actively involved.

I understand social justice as fairness by one person or group to the other. To me it translates to respect for human beings, not to undermining ones' intellect not knowing what they can contribute. Respect people's gender, where they live or reside, their abilities and skills. I do not discriminate people by mere looking at them. I do not judge people by their appearance and looks, or whether they come from a shack or big house. In other words, their social background is immaterial to me. Education should uplift the social status of our poor black nation, that's social justice for me. At least in our Xitshangana culture the widow is not forced to wear black mourning clothes for a year or two like it is with other ethnic groups. I just have to cover my hair or put on a hat for a year as a symbol of mourning. Of course this is also not fair because most men do not mourn at all. In a year or less men are can get married again, with no questions asked. As a woman, if you do that, you are in

anything. They never played a role. At first, even when the school was under construction, black communities were never approached, they were never told of what was happening right under their noses. They would see the buildings coming up. Or maybe find out from the workers who were building the school as to the kind of school and so on.

trouble. It means you killed your husband or you are glad that he is dead. What a culture. At least the boys were allowed to go to a traditional circumcision school because these were not yet done in the hospitals like they do nowadays. You see, girls were discriminated even then!

Now that I know what I want in life, I make sure that our traditional activities, our Xitshangana dances and cultural norms are upheld. We have specific days to practice them in this school. We invite parents and other people to come and help teach our children some of our valuable norms and cultural rites.

I believe women can change most of these beliefs and stereotypes if they so wish. If we refuse to wear those black clothes no one can force us. People will talk, and why don't we let them! The community around us is very proud of this school. We let them use the facilities for community purposes. We tell them when they are functions at this school. Parents from as far as Meadowlands and Tshiawelo bring their children to this school because we are trying to produce the best result, even in these conditions. Most parents removed their kids from the former Model C schools because they believe that what we are offering is as good as what those white schools offer. Why should our poor black parents have to pay all those high fees and transport costs when we can deliver the same goods?

I never supported the ideology of "Liberation before Education". I believed that education was important and that oppression will never be lifted without education.

I define leadership as the ability to guide others, to have vision in life, to have goals and know where you are going, to have a positive attitude, to have empathy. A transformative leader is able to move, to realize that the past is not written off but should take the old and combine with new. People are not longer so bitter about change and the new.

Transformative leadership is about making people take back ownership, to understand that these schools belong to them not the government. Leadership is involvement, and openness. If you consult you became open and you ultimately share. And when you are an approachable person, people are able to come

STEEL

to you even when they have done something wrong. They know you are there to listen without passing judgment. I think leadership is something that you learn through time, the experiences you learn through education and guidance from others. You just don't take things for granted. There is planning, organizing and control in leadership. My motto is don't wait for other people to appreciate you, do it yourself. I believe that as leaders we have the ability to give others the opportunity, which could not be achieved if we had not extended beyond the call of duty.

We need to "transcend the boundaries of oppression!" "I create opportunities", and I think positively on a long term while building on what I have. I don't believe in destroying what we had, but I prefer to put more layers than to start again. That is how I perceive the transition from apartheid education to the new order. We cannot denounce everything created by apartheid as bad and evil because there are things that worked then. What we need is to remove the worst and build on the good. We still have to hold on to those we consider good ethics, like punctuality, teacher ethics, respect and discipline. Don't take me wrong, corporal punishment was a devil, but education without discipline is a worst devil!

Today, some of my adult students are graduates. I become so proud when they come and show me their achievement. It is always a pleasure to hear them say, "Mrs. Steel, you made us what we are today".

I know that I am Muvenda and I will remain a Muvenda and I am very proud to be a Muvenda. Because normally, as Vhavenda we are look down upon, we are regarded as inferior or rather, as less intelligent. You know this is a very sensitive issue and I don't think we should be talking about ethnicity...after all; we are all Africans. We should move beyond ethnicity, we should look at each other as Africans whether you are black or white, as long as you were born in Africa. I think the department should have trained these people before allowing them to be placed in positions of power. What is the meaning of capacity building then? These people can do better if they are trained and know their roles.

As leaders, we are in the business of

LEAD

And my mother could not even come to Lesotho to see us because the South African regime was very difficult. I passed my ordinary BA degree in 1978, and then did my UED. I was 25 years old when I started teaching at a high school in Potgittersrus, not only the youngest in the staff, but the only one with a degree!

Sometimes as a woman, you are treated like a donkey! You are not expected to get tired, everybody just kick you, teachers, students, without warning, even your own kids. And still you have to produce results.

schooling, the business of transforming people, providing a better future for people, to change a person to becoming knowledgeable. It is my job to remove people from darkness, so that they begin to understand things better, and to widen their world. Learning gives that kind of power! I think by now I understand that as a leader "you are not a boss, you have to make things happen, and lead the people" But sometimes you become a boss if you want to!

I am bringing the culture of teaching and learning back into our school with the support of parents. We cannot have that culture of learning without having parental involvement. In addition, the school, the community, business people, and all stakeholders must come together, and work hand in hand. So I realize that if I have to make this kids pass at the end of the year, I must create time. I was still a mother with very young kids who needed 100% of my time and attention. But I also had to give 100% of my time to the other kids. I remember I sat down and said to them "students, I am going to create time and you are also required to help me to create it. So, you are going to have extra lessons in the morning and afternoon in order to cover the syllabus". I'm one person who doesn't become very happy if students don't finish the work. I rather do it and cover everything, even if it means that I could not do it thoroughly. The fact is that they must know at least something. In 1988, as the principal of Veritus high school, we produced the best results of its time! You can imagine, during that time, teachers were really into the slowdown and chalkdown syndrome. They would not honor their periods, they would come late to school, and the moral was very low.

Nevertheless, under my leadership, the school produced the best results ever. For instance, I planned a trip to a civic theater and art center in order to expose my children to the other side of education, since we do not have that part in our curriculum. I sent the forms and everything. When we were due to go, I was told that the inspector had not been in the office or was too busy to sign the forms, or whatever, but he had not signed the forms yet. And the forms were sent a month or so ago. There was no way that I was going to stop the whole thing to please or lift someone's ego, people who do not do their jobs properly do

not have my sympathy. I refused and went on with the arranged trip. I had to write a report after that. And I think even with my so-called soft nature, I have written a few too many report challenging the system or the order of the day so far! You have to show me what negative impact will make to the student, convince be, but don't order me around. I refuse to be ordered around especially when I know that what I'm doing is right.

Leadership is based on fairness, caring, warmth, sympathy and firmness. I like to be seen as a good leader, as somebody who is trying to change the status of others for the best. I want to be seen as somebody who helps people as much as I could and to be remembered for a long time. I don't want my children to fear me, I want to be trusted, I want them to be able to confide and rely on me without being afraid that I will disappoint them. I want to help them socially, and as much as I could.

She should seek advice but must be her own judge. She must know that being a leader especially, as a Black women we have so much to do, because we should uplifting those woman who never knew their rights, who even when they are shown their rights, they are still not sure of how to take them and make them their own. They still believe that somebody will give them these rights.

But, as a black woman leader you must know that you have got multi jobs, your job does not end in the classroom or office of your school. As an educational leader you are everything to those woman who are still down and you must try to uplift them as much you can without humiliating them.

I see my life as fresh breeze blowing the old and unwanted away and creating the new. As a leader I am like sunshine, and as sunshine, you feel that you have to love, and create a happy environment. I'm like sunshine and fresh air! As I look back my life has been like swimming in the dark, always with a glimmer of light from knowing that I will reach my destination no matter what it takes. It has been like rain after a long drought where one does not even mind about getting wet. In this case doing things for the institution that one might not do under normal circumstance. For example, after the new toilets were built, I cleaned them myself with the help of some

SILVER

pupils when teachers refused to supervise the cleaning chores. Like water in the desert, having to come out of my cultural cover and be in the forefront of fragile things like education, which is life itself, has been challenging indeed.

Social justice is when everybody is satisfied by what has been done. For example, I have many parents who cannot afford to pay school fees for their children. To earn a little extra, I invite them to come and do some work in the school. I also give portions of the schoolyard to be used as vegetable gardens to families especially from the squatter camps/informal settlement areas. I really try to extend a hand and be of service to the needy and poor. As I look back, higher education has given me more confident, I gained knowledge, and I am able to deal with different issues in the different ways. For example, the fear of the white man is vanishing and I see a white person as any other person. I feel I gained more power now because in the past women were looked down upon even salary wise, men usually got higher salaries than women for the same job and with the same qualifications.

At least the government is gradually closing the gap. We are now equal because education is now the same. In the past we had different education systems that produced different knowledge for different rights. Now that the government recognizes all the 11 official languages, we just hope the ethnicity issue will disappear in time.

As leaders they should be confident, and to develop that confidence they must read. In addition, they have to work double hard as human beings, to prove to men and the world that "although you are a woman you can do it and you can succeed".

As a leader, I see myself like a fowl, like a hen, because a hen protects her chicks. So, I protect my staff against everything. You know, so much that at times I feel scared when I realize that I am putting my job at risk. Because at times I overlook some of the regulations that I see as oppressive to the staff and just pretend as if I don't see some of the things. For example, teachers are supposed to sign a logbook when they are late for school. I just call the person concern and talk to him or her. I don't see why should we be confined to

BRASS

At work I'm the boss, I'm the leader of my school. But coming home, the situation changes. At home we are man and woman, husband and wife, and we should understand that. Otherwise, if I show him that I'm also a leader it will mean a divorce. As a woman, it is my role to know when my husband is angry and choose my words or rather keep quite. I cannot raise my voice to my husband, instead when I'm angry, I should come down and he can raise his voice as he wish.

All the schools were for other ethnic groups and unwilling to accommodate our Vhavenda children. I worked there from 1975 up to 1977. In Pimville we started so badly because for almost two months we were compelled to teach under the trees before we got accommodation at Mdla Shongwane. We were given three classes to accommodate five standards. We had Sub A and B in one class, Std 1 in the second one, and Std 2&3 in the third classroom. Five classes among three teachers! Because the school had about 10 classrooms that were already overcrowded, we had to adopt the platoon system. Some classes will begin in the morning from 8 to 1pm, and the next group will start at 12 to 5pm. At least, we would be overcrowded for only one hour before the morning class leaves at 1pm. That was tough because it meant that the

using all these rules and regulation if they can't help change the climate in the school. As a leader, one has to create an environment of trust. People can be late for many various reasons beyond their control.

I advanced myself, built a house in the former white suburbs. A hen is capable of fighting to protect her chicks from danger. During my time I had to fight to keep this position, and I had to fight for my rights. As a single, widowed black woman, "I will raise my voice, someone will listen to me one day". I have learned to be more observant. "I now realize that I can fight back, by proving to my oppressors that I can do what they can, even though I am woman. "Even though I'm a black woman!"

One great transformation so far is that we are accommodating every ethnic group without discrimination. Parents see how we work and want to bring their children here irrespective of the fact that the school is for the Vhavenda group. We have Matshangana Basotho, AmaXhosa and amaZulu groups. This is a multiracial school in Soweto. The other day one UmZulu parent said " anginandaba ne Sivenda, abatwana bami bazongena khona lapha", in English, she meant " I don't care for the Tshivenda language, my children will attend here". Fortunately our medium of instruction is English and we teach Tshivenda as a subject. We are moving away from the ethnic separation which was introduced by apartheid.

Until 1954 when the Separate Development Act and the grand apartheid policies came into effect, black and white communities lived together. As leaders we need to move away from this killer plan. We still have to celebrate our cultures, our identities, celebrate who we are. My advice for the upcoming young Black women leaders is that as Black women we are no longer inferior, in fact we were never inferior. We were made to feel inferior. Right now, we are the same with the white women. But today we have the right to say something. Black women, go out there and be counted. You can do it, you did it when you were down and below everyone, now with all these rights, and you can still do it and better!

Social justice practices come out through our deeds as leaders. How we lead, how we extend

same teacher would be on duty from 8 to 5. We were happy because we could teach in a better environment than under the tree. For example, I was summoned to a house in the neighborhood to help a young woman who was on labor. What do I do? I'm not a midwife but I can't say no. I had to call an ambulance, leave my work and go and help. I ended up helping with the delivery of the baby because the ambulance arrived an hour or two later! That is how our systems work around here. You call the police or ambulance for an emergency and they take their time. One reason that is given frequently is that they do not have enough cars to serve Soweto, but you see the police cars in Shebeens and other places, and you wonder what they are doing there.

Our government did not understand the concept of an equal society. Thus, our leaders, our principals did not understand the concept too. There is a lot of discrimination in terms of who gets what from the government. Even now, although it is not as rife and clear defined as before, there is still a lot of discrimination in terms of ethnicity and gender.

ourselves to others, what we bring to make their lives better. For example, the community around here knows that it can use the school's resources; the classrooms for church services, meetings and all the civic activities. I invite the youth to use the school ground for sporting activities. And in return these people take care of the school and look after it.

3. Power and Privileges: Tensions Within and Across the Personal; School/Community; and Educational Institutions/Society

Woman	Personal	School/Community	Educational institutions/Society
IRON		I started a preschool class so that the black poor parents do not have to pay exorbitant fees in the private white schools. As you know, the government does not provide preschool education in our country. I think I really try to uplift my communities in different ways. We also have a system of referring	But as a leader, my challengers were not only from the outsiders nor were they from the racist government, but they were from the insiders, my very own people. The more you advance, the more they pull you down. People don't want us to progress, especially as Black women we are seen as threats. We are suffering from

the poorer of the poor to social services for extra help.

the so-called PHDs, not your Ph.D. You know! The "Pull Her Down syndrome"!

Another such force was the interference from SADTU. I try by all means to divorce myself from politic in education. It is a problem when politicians want to push their agenda to suppress us through education. And especially people who don't want progress.

COPPER

And of course, my husband passed away in October, three months ago. At least in our Xitshangana culture the widow is not forced to wear black mourning clothes for a year or two like it is with other ethnic groups. I just have to cover my hair or put on a hat for a year as a symbol of mourning. Of course this is also not fair because most men do not mourn at all. In a year or less men can get married again, with no questions asked. As a woman, if you do that, you are in trouble. It means you killed your husband or you are glad that he is dead. What a culture!

Ethnicity is still a big problem in South Africa. As a Muvenda yourself, I think you understand what I mean. Those who belong to the major ethnic groups like the Zulu and Sotho will deny that we are still treated unequally. I consider myself a highly educated person, but I will not deny such an obvious thing. For example, we do not have a

As I grew up, I started questioning the Christian religion in so many ways. Right now, I have an English name and could not use my Xitshangana name at all. Otherwise, my parents were going to be labeled "hedons or non-believer" if they had tried to use our Xitshangana names. I believe Christianity destroyed our roots, our origin and culture. Although I grew up being aware of the traditional rituals, I was not allowed to practice them. Those were referred to as "hedonic practices". We were not allowed to practice Xitshangana activities like "Tikhomba" or girls' initiations. We had to do the Christian one in the church. At least the boys were allowed to go to a traditional circumcision school because these were not yet done in the hospitals like they do nowadays. You see, girls were discriminated even then!

When a woman dies, no one is responsible, no one killed her, and it's just God's will! Look at what's happening today, just this year three incidences occurred where a man killed his wife for one reason or the other. I mean I'm taking about 1st to 27th January 2000! That's scary! If

Xitshangana or Tshivenda TV channel, let alone a program. We have to learn IsiZulu or Sesotho to watch TV news and at the same time we are supposed to pay the same TV license fees.

In our principals' meeting, I'm seen as a Mutshangana woman first before I become a person. My being a school principal of a very successful school is secondary to my ethnicity. Our present government ignores this problem and concentrates on racial difference. You may not have thought about this, but race does not place a big role in our daily lives in our schools. I mean, we do not have white schools in Soweto, we do not interact with white people on a constant basis and I do not witness oppression in my every day existence. However, I see unequal treatment among black or rather African groups as the main challenge as compared to race.

Of course, apartheid system regarded me as a Third Class Citizen, maybe not even a citizen but an "alien", but the main machinery was ethnic separation introduced and perpetuated by the apartheid system. Because the Matshangana people are few in number, apartheid encouraged other African groups to be / feel better than me as a

the present government does not do anything about this, God knows what will happen to us.

I believe I got the job because the then principal was a Mutshangana old man who also knew my prominent father. Otherwise, I would have suffered like most women in the cities.

Mutshangana. Under general, the AmaZulu and the AmaXhosa feel superior to me. Because of your ethnicity they put you down as a human being. Even when you are strong, there is a "Pull Her Down Syndrome". Even other women, they pull you down. Even when you are like a rock or builder and can't be moved, they try to move you until they are sure and convinced that you are unshakeable – they will try at their level best. There is no appreciation of your efforts.

STEEL

In my leadership as a Black African woman, if it were not for my strong character, I could have crumbled under the pressures created by gender, ethnicity and cultural/traditional expectations - that women cannot lead a community.

Because I am dark she didn't want me to stand in front. She said I should hide myself between two girls who were lighter in complexion. She told me "I just want to hear your sweet voice and not your face!" (At this point, we both cried). Myself identity, well... I have a very negative self-image, because of my color and very dark complexion I think I'm not good looking. I was told by people that I was not good looking, in fact some said that I was ugly...and I thought I wasn't good for anybody, as a result, I developed a very negative self image.

Being Muvenda has helped me to know most of the languages that are spoken in South Africa. For example, in Meadowlands High we used to have Tshivenda, Sesotho, Setswana, IsiZulu, Xitsonga or Xitshangana, etc. And we could not speak our Tshivenda language in public! It was

I think the stereotype went further to the extent that these men felt that "because you are a woman, then your leadership skills were questionable"! And the English teacher, the old man, kept on saying that the school will never become right because it was under "a petticoat government". Another thorny issue is the issue of unions. If I had power I would say that teachers must not belong to Unions. Things like subordination, intimidation, all emanated and are supported by teachers 'unions. In my opinion, low teachers' low moral, lack of self-respect, absenteeism, problems of punctuality are the result of a relationship between unions and politicians. If I had powers I would say, perhaps, that the government should not align with certain unions. If the government is standing on one side, and the Union is on its own side, I think we would have had better control of/in our education. But since the

like you were a sub-human to speak another language other than the dominant Sesotho or IsiZulu. "And we were forced to know their languages". Hence I can speak Sesotho, IsiZulu and I have a good command of the other African languages that are part of the 11 official languages of South Africa.

We as principals like to work with the governing bodies and believe in parental involvement but, sometimes the members abuse their powers. Like in my case, there is this woman, who is a vice secretary of our governing body, she likes to accuse and insult me for no apparent reason.. Last week she went to an extent of physically assaulting me, I mean, literally hitting me with fists in public and in front of the whole school! She says things like "You are not running the school the way it should be"; "the school must be run by the governing body"!

I remember when we had a meeting one of the governing body members ask her "Mrs. A, in your opinion, who is supposed to manage the school?" And she said that it was the responsibility of the governing body. And the man asked her again "Then, what is the role of the principal, why is she supposed to be here?" And to that question she answered 'the principal is a robot'! And because of that and other such things, I feel my progress as a principal is being hampered. Somehow somebody is

union is part of the government, we will always have problems.

Without even going further than racial differences, right now, Mandela is going from school to school in the Eastern Cape, the AmaXhosa areas, building primary schools! Just this year, about four or five new, well built schools were officially opened by various organizations on TV, with Mandela standing by and smiling, while preaching the "back to school, culture of learning and teaching sermon!" Have you ever heard of or seen any new school from Venda, let alone the Northern Province? Maybe that is our understanding of social justice. Justice in terms of giving one ethnic group more than the others!

LEAD

The first year in 1989 was hard because I was not accepted hundred percent. I had problems, both as a new principal in a primary school setting and also as a woman leading men. You know what, even the children had no concept of a female principal. Whenever I enter their various class they would say, "Good morning/afternoon Sir". It took a while for these kids to get used to the idea that I am a woman and they should address me as Mam . Besides, I thought women would be on my side, what a joke. It was like they were rejoicing, trying to see this woman who thinks she is "a man"! They would either be neutral and kept quite when some male teachers were defiant. Women would rather gossip about it than to defend or be on my side. Politely, I talked to the teacher and I was surprised by his reaction. He said "I was expecting a confrontation and I was ready all these three months, waiting for you to approach me. Your approach surprised me! I have never been lead by a woman and as you understand our culture, if you are a woman you are a woman". And I know that, even our Basotho

trying to apply her Phds on me! And just when you really want to work and make things happen in your school, and here comes a person who is trying to break all your efforts!

Oh well, we still have what is called PHDs, the pull her down mentality? I sometimes become very frustrated because I have this vision, which I want to share with my staff. But, they just keep quite during our meetings. But when they go outside they say too much. And sometimes they will say it to parents and parents feel confused about the whole thing. And at times I find that some parents become negative because of some of what these teachers tell them or say. And most of it is against me. And sometimes I just read it from the way they talk to me.

At the age of 15 years, my mother kidnapped us, I don't know if I should use this term, but she took us in pretense of a visit to Johannesburg. We had left all our clothe in Lesotho. Because of cultural beliefs she knew our grandfather would not let us stay and live with her in Johannesburg.

Moreover, apartheid laws have really messed us up. I was born here in South Africa, while my brother was born in Lesotho. But he was registered as a South African and I could not get the so-called 'doompass", the identity document. And to think I had a birth certificate that proved that I was a full South African, it is just amazing how the system worked. I was very efficient! I think that strengthened me because as I told you before, I wanted to do something and I want to show this country that I can be something. I went on without an identity document for a very long time.

Sometime as young lady, the white officials would even trying to ask for sexual favors in return of the "doompass" I just told myself that the time will come. But at the end, after obtaining my B.A it took only two hours to get it! Amazingly, it took my young Afrikaner white female friend two hours to get me an ID that I could not get in 10 years. So, I was 25 years when I got my very first

boys don't take orders from their mothers. The whole thing is perpetuated at a very early age in the boy's life. When a boy is born in a family, a man is born! Men teach their male children that women are not important.

On the other hand, achievement of higher education has no great influence on our culture. At home we are still expected to do our chores when our husbands sit and read newspapers. He expects me to put food in front of him, take care of the children, do my work, and study for my degrees. I don't mean that we need to change our culture as we get more educated, but that we need to reconsider some of the expectation, especially those that put women down, to be trodden on and those expectations that take away our self respect.

Another great impediment in my life experiences is the ethnicity issue. I remember the teacher I was telling you about used to sing a Xitshangana song whenever I appeared. And he would sing it in a derogative way mixing words and in a real demeaning way. I remember some old man coming here demanding that I admit his child right in the middle of the school year without any proof of previous school

doompass. You can only imagine what that meant. Color or rather race is every thing.

For instance, I planned a trip to a civic theater and art center in order to expose my children to the other side of education, since we do not have that part in our curriculum. I sent the forms and everything. When we were due to go, I was told that the inspector had not been in the office or was too busy to sign the forms, or whatever, but he had not signed the forms yet. And the forms were sent a months or so ago. There was no way that I was going to stop the whole thing to please or lift someone's ego, people who do not do their jobs properly do not have my sympathy. I refused and went on with the arranged trip. I had to write a report after that. And I think even with my so-called soft nature, I have written a few too many report challenging the system or the order of the day so far! You have to show me what negative impact will make to the student, convince be, but don't order me around. I refuse to be ordered around especially when I know that what I'm doing is right

records. He came in and said, "I am a Mosotho and I am the founder of this school, and you as a 'Shangaan' you can't tell me any thing!" That somehow, made my work very difficult. People saw a Mutshangana first before seeing a human being. Even a night watchman used to defy me as a result of ethnicity. I came here and that language followed me too. And by the way, I am a Mosotho! This is all the result of apartheid. It was impressed on us by apartheid, and all its support systems.

Furthermore, language played various roles in my life. With a Mosotho father, a Mopedi mother and a Mutshangana husband has proved to be quite a challenge. I can never belong to one ethnic group in the full sense. My Sesotho has a dialect of Sepedi that betrays me at all times. And through my Xitshangana last name, I witnessed the real ethnic discrimination. Just because my last name is Xitshangana, teachers started spreading the gossip that the Basotho people and their school were going to be led by a 'Shangaan' woman. On the other hand, the Matshangana people do not accept me as one of them. There is a feeling of isolation. I speak a little bit of Xitshangana, but I will never become one of them. How do you get to win such a

powerful battle?

In addition to these, our spouses cause other barriers too. If only you could interview our partners! As a woman, even when you want to do something, you find out that your partner is not that approachable. Even when we have good ideas, it's not easy to get our partners' whole support. They feel threatened by our achievements and success! We end up doing what is best to sustain a peaceful existence and in most cases we do it at our own expense. Sometimes we find most of our time spent trying to please our partners, not spending time on what we believe to be right and or what we actually want to do. For example, I could have had the position of principalship a long time ago. But my husband kept on saying that I don't need the problems and challenges that come with the position. I was just frustrated and I wanted to keep peace in my family, and for the benefit of my children. For instance, sometimes even if the suggestion is good because it is from you, then it's not good enough. It is a problem that we educated woman have in our homes. You earn more, even if you don't mention it, you already have a problem because your husband want to remind you that your money does not make you the "man of the house!" And once

you are independent,
then you are a threat and
you want to become
manly. For me, if I want
whatever I want I buy it
and I tell you latter.
"Education has liberated
us to a certain extent, but
not yet fully".

And also, our cultural
background taught us to
want to satisfy our
partner at the expense of
our happiness. Even in
our communities, most
women are frustrated
because their men do not
support their successes
and achievements. When
I look at the whole
picture, not only the
issues in our families,
but at the whole
apartheid ideology, the
oppressors created the
whole thing. The western
culture/ apartheid, or
rather the white man
made sure that he
dominated our black
men, who in turn
dominated their Black
women! Women in turn
get angry with their kids
because they cannot fight
back, they cannot fight
their men! It is a vicious
circle.

In most cases what we
hear is, "She thinks she
is better than us". Instead
of helping the sister,
other sisters pull her
down! We are having
that problem as leaders,
because once you are
educated like I am,
people don't appreciate
your success. Even when
you get married to a nice
man, or a man who cares
enough to help you with
house chores, people
tend to say to one
another "this one is

going to pull him by his noise". And as a mother you are already a family leader even if we are not recognized as leaders in our families. But in our families we convinced these men to be exactly what we want them to be. We just let them think that they are the ones that came with the ideas, while the ideas originated from us all this time.

SILVER

First, at the insistence of her father-in-law, both her husband and son were buried in the far remote Eastern Cape. Even though her husband died almost ten years ago, her father-in-law was still in control. Second, she was expected to foot the bill alone!

I also believe that because I was a married woman, I could not get a permanent post. All married women were considered temporary teachers. First of all, I couldn't get a teaching post in Meadowlands, especially in IsiZulu schools. The main experience of ethnic discrimination happened here in this area. When became a principal, we were under a North Sotho or Mopedi Inspector. The SSA teacher resigned and left the class without a teacher. I asked for an additional teaching post to replace the vacant one, but the inspector refused completely. And to my surprise, he gave two posts to a North Sotho

In January 1976 I gave birth to my baby girl. I struggled searching for a teaching post, because I was a married women, the chances were very slim for getting a permanent post. I moved from one temporary post to another for almost two years until I got one from this school. I was appointed to a permanent post for the first time in Joburg in January 1977.

In 1991 it was NEUSA, and it wasn't as radical as SADTU. We went on and it was not easy. NEASA become SADTU came and things got tough. They said "nothing doing, principals don't interfere with teachers, teachers know their duties you must remain in the office and no class visit, nothing". It was tough, and it was worse to find that in white schools things were normal and the work was done, there were class visits and children were learning and teachers were committed and all that. With us here teachers would just go out, march out. Meetings for SADTU where held during schools hours even in the morning by 10 am. The so-called "liberation now, education latter" was the culture of the day. And some

school next to ours. There was a crises, I was made to go on without a post, nor sufficient teachers because of being an UmXhosa. As a result, the two SSA classes had to be combined and the second teacher was faced with 110 six years old pupils in one class! It was a disaster!

of the teachers took advantage of that and misused the call for their own interest. The situation got worst because principals were seen as collaborators and perpetrators of the apartheid's oppressive policies.

Apartheid took my husband from me when I needed him most. And mind you, I was only 39 years old! On top of that, gender discrimination denied me of a better salary in order to support my children and extended family. For instance, in the same position, same job, same qualifications, when it comes to the salary part of it, women earned less every month, and man always had all the benefits, housing, and some rights to other privileges. I lived through gender discrimination all my life. When you want to open an account, any account, even a bank account to save your own money you have earned every month, your husband is required to countersign, in short, you need his consent to run your financial transactions, because you are a child! Therefore, it is not a right but a privilege to own an account even if you are the accountholder. We are always supposed to be subjected to our husbands. "Always treated like children".

I think unemployment is one of our worst enemies destroying our society. Our schools will forever suffer lack of resources because most parents are unemployed. Take for example, this school is situated next to one of the largest informal settlements in Soweto. As a result, our demand and plead for payment of school fees fall into deaf ears. How do you

pay school fees when your kids are hungry? Where do you get the money if you are unemployed? Another supporting factor is lack of knowledge. We have a very low literate rate. Most parents cannot read or write. When we speak of parental involvement, to some that does not mean anything. We invite parents to parents meeting and explain some of these changes, but you are lucky if you get a 50% attendance rate.

Making sense of my life and work as a Black African woman has been like a "steep hill" because of oppression. I experience double or rather, multiple oppression because of being Black, woman, and widow. In general, both single and married women tend to discriminate you when you are widowed. I think they also feel threatened by your presence. Even the friends you used to have feel threatened. They are not as free and relaxed as before. They think that you are going to steal their husbands! I am now closer to single women, and I interact more with women who are not married. The discrimination is also felt in the community. For example, when there are community meetings the points you raise as a widowed woman are not taken seriously. Even in the church people say, "Whose wife is this one?". As if you have to belong to someone for you to be able to make a valid point!

BRASS

After more than 10 years, I continued and wrote my Matric before studying with UNISA. I completed my further diplomas, the SEC and

Because my parents are now older, I take care of them, and it is expected of the first born to take such responsibilities. I make sure they get their medical check

I really do not have outstanding memories of ethnic discrimination. Some how I feel that the color of my skin had a role to play. As you can see, I have a lighter

SED. I also have a further diploma in Educational Management with RAU. I'm currently taking a course in Computer training offered by the Gauteng Department of Education – GDE. The GDE is trying its best to redress some of the past inequalities.

I grew up doing all the expected chores. Like carrying water from the river or fountain, collecting wood from the forest and so forth. My father is my role model. He sacrificed to give me an education. He would spend all the money on me to make sure that I don't lack anything. He really did! Because the day I left for the boarding school I would take all the money and leave them with nothing.

Bantu education really affected us because after passing Std 8, we wouldn't go anywhere except for teaching or nursing. We were not encouraged to go for Matric because it was very difficult. As a girl, you were told that Matric and Math were for boys. At first, Matric was difficult because it was controlled by the Joint Matric Board - JMB and was based on the white education standards. How do you expect to write and pass an examination based on other forms of knowledge other than the Bantu education you were fed? Nonetheless, few black people did

up every time. I feel very fortunate to have both parents at my age.

completion than most Vhavenda people. Because we originate from the Northern parts of South Africa, most of our Vhavenda people are dark in completion. I took the lighter completion after my mother because most Batswana people have a lighter skin color. As a result, people were more receptive, and I was not treated like most of my Vhavenda friends. I remember one day when I was on a line in one of the stores in Loustrichart where a young white Afrikaner was in attendance. I was way far behind, but she summoned me to come in the front and served me before my turn! I didn't understand why until latter at the boarding school. I think it was because of my completion and the fact that I could speak Afrikaans so well. As a result, my white teachers used to like me a lot! I never experienced ethnic rivalry or rather discrimination because I am a Muvenda woman. May be it is because I can speak all the 11 official languages in South Africa.

The apartheid laws were really cruel. One experience that sticks out in my memory is when I nearly got arrested in Diepkloof where I was visiting my husband. Back then, one was not allowed to spend a night in a different Township without a permit. I mean, I'm talking about Tshiawelo and Diepkloof Townships which are both in Soweto. It takes you 10 to 15 minutes to travel from Tshiawelo to Diepkloof. But I was supposed to carry a permit in case I decided to put up in different township. So, in this case, it was at around

pass these exams and made it to the universities. I was interested in nursing, but because of the disturbing thought of people dying I choose teaching.

I had many challenges, but the main one that will follow me everywhere is my Tshivenda culture. You know, when you get married the Tshivenda culture puts you down. There are things that you cannot do as a woman. For example, when you have an argument or some misunderstandings with your husband, you cannot answer or talk back. This is so difficult for me even today. I just get angry and keep quite. I'm considered a leader in my job not everywhere. Some one once said, "it is just like when you are a rubbish collector, people don't see you as one once you leave the place of your employment and get into your house. It should be the same case with you, once you leave your office and enters your husband's house, you are no longer Brass the principal. You became Mr. Brass's wife, not Brass the principal". But, that is impossible because being a principal is a 24-hour job. You are always one, you like it or not. You will always be principal so and so. Thidzi, I'm sure people still refer to you as the principal of Tsakani primary school, right! As women, we wear these different hats all the

2am or 3am when the police came searching for illegal residence. There I was, without a permit. I told them that I got lost and found my way to a friend's house. They gave me a warning and told me to go back home first thing in the morning. From then onwards I had to carry a temporary permit whenever I decide to visit my husband. Or else, I was going to end up behind bars. That was the time of influx control. The experience was so dehumanizing. People without permits were reduced to animal. For instance, these policemen would start their raid from one end of the street to the other, knocking at each and every house with their batons. Every person arrested was to tag along in the cold until the truck was full before being taken to the police station. In most cases these people would tag along till 6am before they are taken to the cells. Can you imagine what happened in the rain? What about those ice cold winter Joburg mornings? That was very bad, very inhuman!

In 1978 I was taken to start yet another school for the Vhavenda people in Meadowlands. Now, when I look back and reflect on all of it, I have mixed feelings about the whole thing. I was removed from the school and a new male principal was appointed. After some few months the buildings for that school were erected. I was told that I did a good job at starting that school and that my services were required to start yet another one in Meadowlands. We were promised that this new school would be built in less than a year. It was almost 18 years

time.

latter when the new government came into power that our dream school was built. I don't know whether the school was given to a new principal because I'm a woman. Of course, I was the first woman principal of a Tshivenda school in Soweto.

4. Challenges to School Transformation due to Tensions Across Leadership Styles

**Woman
IRON**

Traditional

Collaborative

As a transformative leader, I change the approach of teaching and learning. To me, the three elements are important, that is, pupil, teacher and parent. They can never work without each other. They make a triangle that is equidistant apart. I can never run the school without parents and teacher. You should bridge the gap between you and the parents. Parents think we, as educators know all. We should show them that education is a team effort.

Social justice should lead to a school where people are not afraid to contribute, where people are not afraid to contribute and accept others' opinions. And just school is a school not oppressive, a school where people are praise for the good they do. Social justice promotes progress and it is not stagnant, people move together.

I'm like a magnet, I attract others to come and join me. I invite them to come and see what is happening in these classrooms, and let them see what these children are doing. After getting a donation from a company, I make some follow up, I give them feedback, I make them responsible for their generosity. Right now, we receive donations to build three of the classrooms we need. We are not going to wait for the government to do it. My parents are very supportive. It took me many years to make them understand that the school belongs to them, not to the teachers or me. And that it does not belong to the government. Hence I'm just an organ and the parents are the brain, I do what they want. I believe in visions, as long as you know there is a vision, there is hope. As a transformative leader, to me, the governing body is like the main brain that coordinates all the functions of the body. We work as a team.

COPPER

At times one has to be autocratic to see that things are done on time.

As a school leader I work well with my teachers. I involve them in every thing that happens in this school and I try to be as transparent as possible. We work in team and committees. For instance, in the meeting you just observed, I do not control the funds, especially those from fundraising campaigns. There is a chairperson and treasurer in every committee. They do everything and they just give me feedback on their activities. Of course I play a major role as an advisor, they also get ideas from me and implement if they feel the idea is viable.

We offer German as a subject, thus, giving these children an opportunity to go on after they leave this school.

		<p>I define leadership as the ability to guide others, to have vision in life, to have goals and know where you are going, to have a positive attitude, to have empathy. A transformative leader is able to move, to realize that the past is not written off but should take the old and combine with new. People are not longer so bitter about change and the new.</p> <p>Transformative leadership is about making people take back ownership, to understand that these schools belong to them not the government. Leadership is involvement, and openness. If you consult you became open and you ultimately share. And when you are an approachable person, people are able to come to you even when they have done something wrong. They know you are there to listen without passing judgment. I think leadership is something that you learn through time, the experiences you learn through education and guidance from others. You just don't take things for granted. There is planning, organizing and control in leadership</p>
STEEL	As much as we are caring, sometimes we should be very strict not allow things that are not acceptable.	<p>"I don't do things on my own and I always tell my colleagues that I am a driver and that they are the engine. And when the engine is not in a right order the driver cannot do anything. A leader is always the one who initiates things, somebody who do things, a person comes up with the good ideas and sell them to the people she is leading, in such a way that the teachers believe that such ideas come from them. A leader is "a person who when she has a dream, she lets others realize it for her" . When I delegate duties, I give them the responsibility with the equal accountability.</p> <p>My "communication is transparency", and our working spirit is quite good To create and to maintain healthy relationship, you have to allow people to participate and to get involved in what you are doing, and a healthy relationship is important and once a relationship is not healthy, then as a leader you will never achieve what ever you want to achieve. ! I have learnt through time that it is significant to create and to maintain healthy relationships, and to allow people to participate, to get them involved even in what you are doing. As I said before, I don't work alone. I invite others to work with me. "I'm not the engine of this car, but just a mere driver!"</p> <p>One of my artifacts is this small three-legged pot I'm holding on my hands. For example, if one leg breaks, the pot will loses its balance. It will not be able to stand on its own. Therefore, I see the relationship among the teachers as educators, students and parents as a team effort. We have to work together to maintain the equilibrium.</p>
LEAD		<p>I see my life as fresh breeze blowing the old and unwanted away and creating the new. As a leader I am like sunshine, and as sunshine, you feel that you have to love, and create a happy environment. I'm like sunshine and fresh air! As I look back my life has been like swimming in the dark, always with a glimmer of light from knowing that I will reach my destination no matter what it takes. It has been like rain after a long drought where one does not even mind about getting wet. In this case doing things for the institution that one might not do under normal circumstance. For example, after the new toilets were built, I cleaned them myself with the help of some pupils when teachers refused to supervise the cleaning chores. Like water in the desert, having to come out of my cultural cover and be in the forefront of fragile things like education, which is life itself, has been challenging indeed.</p>
SILVER		<p>I define leadership as commitment and dedication, teamwork and making a commitment to teachers. Leadership is when every body has an opportunity to make decision, everybody's ideas are taken into consideration. "There is no</p>

BRASS	<p>one man show". And one other thing is that when people are allowed to make decision and are given responsibilities, those responsibilities need to be stated out clearly to them because some of them don't participate because they are not aware of what is expected of them. When you give people responsibilities you need to give them accountability and authority or rather informed responsibility. It is not enough just to say you are part of everything that is going on in the school, teachers and everyone need to know their duties</p> <p>Of course, this big-framed picture of 10 black girls with joined hands forming a circle, singing and dancing with the 11th girl in the center means teamwork. We have to work together and at the same time enjoy doing it. I remember as a child, my mother used to sing songs as she was going about her work. Music and songs make the work light!</p> <p>At the beginning of the year I call all the parents, if possible, you must know the parents individually. You cannot run the school without the cooperation of all the parents. And you must listening to what they want for the education of their children, let them make choices for their children, the subjects they want they children to take, these are the points you need to gather and plan before the beginning of a new year. My dear, you don't just do your own thing! In addition, you must have the priorities. Although you wont be able to do everything at the same time, you must prioritize and plan. Planning, organizing and feedback is essential for the smooth running of the school.</p>
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Recommendations and Strategies to train other women

Women in this study contributed the following recommendation and strategies to train other women and the new generation of black leaders:

1. Higher Education: A Black woman must be educated and strive to get the highest qualifications.
2. Self-esteem: A Black women must learn to appreciate herself, to look at herself as a human being, not necessarily as a woman. She must believe in herself and follow her dreams. She must not allow anybody to discourage her. She can seek advice but she must also be a judge of what to take from the advice.
3. Competitive spirit: A black woman must compare herself with achievers and not with failures. She has to appreciate other women's achievements and be prepared

to learn from them. Her competition must be from inside. She has to compete with herself first before she competes with the world.

4. Vision and hope: A black woman must believe that where there is vision, there is solution. She must have goals in whatever she intends to do. For a black woman, hard work is the mother of success. As a Black woman she cannot lose hope. She must believe that everything is possible when one is determined to reach out and extend oneself beyond the call of duty.
5. Teamwork and collaboration: The Black woman must not carry the load alone. While it is expected that she should be creative, she also needs to involve other people. She must know that being a leader, especially as a black woman, she has much to do, because she is expected to uplift those woman who never knew their rights, the women who even if they know their rights, are afraid of making those rights their own, women who still believe that somebody will give them their rights.
6. Multiple roles: As a Black woman, she must know that she is faced with heavy loads and burdens. As a school leader, a transformative leader, she is a mother to other children, she is a mother to hers, she is somebody's wife, she is a community leader, at times she is counselor, psychologist, police officer, fundraiser. The list goes on. As an educational leader she is everything to everybody.
7. Efficiency: A Black woman must believe in hard work, dedication, set goals, and work double as a human being.

8. **Prepared to accept change:** She must be prepared to accept change and manage change. For example, a Black woman must educate boys and girls to regard each other as equal. Women need to understand the oppression first, before they are expected to challenge it. And since most educators are women, it means they are the tools used to perpetuate their own oppression. Therefore, as a black woman, she needs to change her way of speaking to these children, addressing girls and the expectations she has for girl children. If she treats these children equally; even the boys will realize that what their fathers are doing to their mothers is wrong.
9. **Sympathetic:** Being a leader, a Black woman should be sympathetic.
10. **Educate our black men:** Black women must work hard to fight oppression and at the same time try to educate their partners without being arrogant. At first, these poor men will feel at a loss and threatened that the women are taking some of their rights. At the same time Black women must educate, and educate and educate again and again!

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