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Perceptions on the form of school decentralisation in South Africa and its implications on the decolonisation debate in education: a case study of SGBs in two township primary schools

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ABSTRACT

The South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) was intended to construct a new democratic school governance founded on a state, parents, learner, school staff and community participation and partnership (Naidoo, 2005). SASA gives parents the opportunity to enhance the quality of education in the school their child attends. It is within this context that we will be investigating the perceptions and experiences of township SGBs in relationship to the decolonisation and decoloniality debate in education. A form of SGBs became a norm in previously advantaged (white) schools by virtue of having parent and teacher associations (PTAs) that were comprised of capacitated and equipped individuals to show some leadership in the school as an organisation. The big question remains, are the current SGBs hoping to transform existing patterns of inequality or merely reproduce them (Taylor and Yu, 2009)? This research seeks to clarify whether the introduction of SGBs worked truly against the notion of delinking from the colonial matrix of power, which was the overarching agenda of school decentralisation (Christie and McKinney, 2017). We compare and contrast the perceptions and experiences of SGB members in two township schools through a qualitive case study approach and found new power dynamics in schools as well as serious challenges regarding the parental involvement. We then explore alternative governance methods that could be more in line with South African realities and capabilities of the majority of schools. Given the need for decoloniality and new forms of governance, the BOG is proposed as a potential alternative to the current SGBs in poor black communities (provincially-based circuits) to ensure that the colonial matrix system is broken, and will result in education having more of an Afro-centric objective for the majority of learners in our black communities.

KEY WORDS: *School Decentralisation, School Governing Body, Parent and Teacher Association, Board of Governors, Decolonisation, Colonial Matrix of Power.*