Democratic Education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems in South African Schools: Convergence or Divergence

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ABSTRACT

The denotation of the word 'democracy' remains widely disputed. Undoubtedly, democracy has sometimes been conceived as a system of governance whereby citizens have political power and can influence decisions either directly (i.e. direct participation) or indirectly (i.e. representation). The notion of what should constitute a democratic society has been a subject of contestation for decades. Nonetheless, many of the debates on the subject of democracy have been concerned with the nature in which such power should be vested in the hands of the people. It is evident in almost all different conceptions of democracy that a citizen is thought to be an 'autonomous being'. It is in light of this view that democratic education seeks to cultivate 'conscious social reproduction' in order to produce independent citizens who ought to shape and sustain democratic societies. In this thesis, I investigate the nature of the knowledge necessary to cultivate an 'autonomous being'. Moreover, I explore the debates on the nature of indigenous knowledge systems to find out if such notions of multiple factually 'true' knowledge systems converge with the knowledge required to cultivate 'conscious social reproduction' as envisaged by Gutmann's theory of democratic education. In so doing, I use epistemological realism as a meta-theoretical framework in order to establish the meaning and nature of that which is considered 'factual or propositional' knowledge. In this study, I further examine specific examples of indigenous knowledge systems in three of the post-apartheid curriculum statements; namely, the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS), National Curriculum Statements (NCS) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). As a point of exit, I propose a new realist rejoinder which is a meta-evaluative framework or criteria which advocates for the inclusion or teaching of a universally true factual knowledge that is rooted in 'true identities' of indigenous people or societies.

KEYWORDS:

Curriculum, democracy, democratic education, epistemological realism, epistemological relativism, fact-constructivism, fact-objectivism, indigenous knowledge systems, knowledge, scepticism, schools.

DECLARATION

I **Gift Siphosethu Sonkqayi** hereby declare that this thesis, **Democratic Education and Indigenous Knowledge Systems in South African Schools: Convergence or Divergence** is my own unaided work except where reference has been made to existing and published literature. Further, I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for degree conferment to any university except the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Student : Gift Siphosethu Sonkqayi

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who do not see the light at the end of the tunnel: to the sons and daughters whose dreams continue to be swallowed by the realities of the dusty streets of Orange Farm. I dedicate this thesis to the youth that seems to have fallen from the audacious train of 'conscious social reproduction'. This is the youth whose role in shaping the future of this country remains equivocal.

In memory of Paul Padman my neighbour in Orange Farm who was intrigued by my pursuit of education. His kindness and encouragement were the epitome of the most notable African proverb which proclaims that "it takes a village to raise a child". May his soul rest in eternal peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey to completing this thesis was filled with challenges and I found myself thinking about the purpose of my existence and that of humanity at large. Some of these challenges made me wonder if Arthur Schopenhauer was correct in his view that: "as long as our consciousness is filled by our will, as long as we are given over to the pressure of desires with their constant hopes and fears, as long as we are the subject of willing, we will never have lasting happiness or peace" (2010, p. 220). But then I remembered that Ugog'uNancy Sagela introduced me to the word of God. When I was at the centre of such worldly suffering brought about by the virtues of existence, I looked up to God in despair and prayed for hope in the middle of disorder, and strength in the face of anguish and resilience amid discouragement.

I also found encouragement in Jack Dixon's proclamation which reads: "If you focus on results, you will never change. If you focus on change, you will get results". This is the quote that struck me every time I visited my supervisor in his office. This quote helped me understand that all that I do every day is part of a bigger picture. It is in light of this backdrop that I would like to thank my supervisor and mentor, Dr Thokozani Mathebula, for his unwavering support throughout my studies. His constructive feedback helped me grow and I am mindful that there is still a long way to go. I have also learnt from such a great mentor that hard work is a non-negotiable pivotal part of success.

Many people played a role in making this dream a reality. Consequently, I would like to thank Dr. Mbuso Nkosi, Ms. Lynne Slonimsky, and Mr. David Bensusan for taking some time out of their busy schedule to read my work. It is without a doubt that their valuable insights have significantly shaped my approach to this dissertation. I would also like to thank the said intellectuals and as well as Prof. Kai Horsthemke for always being available to answer my ambiguous questions. Furthermore, Prof. Kai Horsthemke was instrumental in terms of shaping my intellectual prowess.

Also, the intellectually stimulating conversations with Drs. Louis Botha and Dominic Griffiths are hereby acknowledged. Furthermore, the financial support from the

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIKS	African Indigenous Knowledge Systems
ANC	African National Congress
BCE	Before the Common Era
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
HCI	Human-Computer Interaction
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NSC	National Senior Certificate
RCL	Learner Representative Council
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SA	South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Bodies
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Democratic Education: refers to the view that all people independent of their socioeconomic status must be provided with an opportunity to acquire knowledge, civic values, and skills that are considered necessary to maintain and shape democratic societies.

Conscious Social Reproduction: refers to the methods in which democracies should empower citizens so that they are able to shape the education that in turn natures the attitudes, political values, and ways of conduct of future citizens (Gutmann, 1987).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems: is taken to generally refer to different forms of informal knowledge which includes ethnomathematics, ethnomusicology and indigenous science. Furthermore, indigenous science is often inclusive of indigenous physics, ethnozoology, ethnopsychiatry, ethnomedicine, ethnobotany (Horsthemke, 2004a).

Indigenous: originating or belonging to a particular place; the concept can also refer to being native to that particular social space or place**.**

Western Scientific Knowledge: refers to the science or knowledge that is taught and perceived as being universal and normal in schooling systems.

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

> Educational philosophy is the application of the meaning and methods of philosophy in order to clarify issues and problems in education. Educational philosophers are interested in the individual human being that comes to the learning situation … the study of philosophy of education aims at helping current and future educators bring to the fore the question of the meaning and purpose of education in society (Nyirenda & Ishumi, 2002, p. 17).

The thought here is that philosophy of education seeks to understand the nature and aims of education. Thus, it is concerned with the kind of individual that ought to be produced by educational institutions and is assumed to be desired by society at large. In the context of this thesis, education is defined as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, as well as any outcomes of that effort" (Cremin, 1977, p. 134). Furthermore, I mainly focus on the kind of knowledge that is necessary to cultivate the individual desired by society (not that other aspects such as morality, attitudes and values are not important). According to Bailey (2010), a philosophical thesis is most likely to have the following characteristics:

- A philosophical thesis is not empirically researchable.
- It is most likely to grapple with the notions of meaning, values, conceptual matters and the question of whether ideas are coherent or not (the notion of justification is at the centre of deciding whether ideas make sense or not).
- Sometimes there is a clear aim of answering a particular question but at times the researcher often engages in a path with an unclear destination.
- Sometimes the researcher of the thesis takes a particular stance at the beginning of the thesis and goes on to defend the position. At other times, the philosopher would deliberately choose to not take a position from the onset. Instead, they would build up the argument and show how certain views are logically superior to others.

- At times, there is a concise argument that is presented with precision (i.e. refuting a certain idea or view through logic).

This thesis will, as a consequence, be rooted in most of the aforementioned features (and in particular the third feature) of a philosophical study due to the underpinning overarching research question which focusses on the knowledge envisaged by Gutmann (1987) in order to cultivate 'conscious social reproduction'. Further, the rationale behind this study arises from the 2015 #*Rhodesmustfall* protests which were followed by the #*Feesmustfall* movement which called for decolonisation and free education in South African higher education. Speaking in the Basic Education lekgotla, the Minister of Basic Education at the time resuscitated the call for decolonisation, arguing that South Africa's system of education was still colonial and that learners needed to be afforded an opportunity to diversify their curriculum (Nyathi, 2019). Additionally, Le Grange (2018) is of the view that to decolonise is to undo colonialism. This implies the valuing of indigenous ways of knowing. The rationale for this dissertation was also triggered by scholarly debates which seemed to draw a sharp distinction between issues of social justice and epistemological concerns which are sometimes blindly conflated. Furthermore, these debates include scholarly debates between Green (2008) and Horsthemke (2004b; 2010) arguing for and against the existence of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as factually 'true' knowledge. Therefore, this study aims to explore the kind of knowledge that is envisaged by Gutmann's (1987) theory of democratic education and if it is in line with IKS as it is conceptualised by epistemological relativists, constructivists and epistemological realists. Before I proceed to establish the research problem, in this dissertation, I chose to use both indigenous knowledge (IK) and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) interchangeably while acknowledging the complexities embedded in such terms. I use IK to refer to local knowledge that belongs to indigenous people or communities while I also use IKS to show recognition of the diversity of indigenous people and the knowledges they possess.

In terms of the research problem which dictates the nature of this thesis, it is imperative for the researcher to provide the context of the problem statement partly

because the problem is multi-layered. In 1994, South Africa experienced the advent of democracy which did not only pave a way for political change but also saw the development of deliberations on the nature of knowledge that is taught in schools. Expectedly, such epistemic debates are and were not only palpable in the South African context. Consequently, Green (2012) notes that internationally, despite rigorous contentions on whether IK exists or not, some scholars continue to support the need to acknowledge various knowledge systems. In South Africa, researchers such as Makgoba (1997), Khupe (2014), and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) have explicitly and implicitly called for the recognition of IKS while Horsthemke (2004b, 2010, 2013) expressed some doubts about the existence of IKS as a theoretical or propositional knowledge. Nonetheless, Horsthemke (2004b) did acknowledge the existence of IKS as practical knowledge or *knowledge-how* (i.e. knowledge of how to do certain things). It is clear from this discussion that IK does exist. What then is at the centre of these debates is how it exists.

The problem emanating from this enticing discussion so far is the question of whether 'conscious social reproduction' (which is arguably the pillar of democratic education) converges or diverges from IK as conceptualised by epistemological relativists, constructivists and epistemological realists. Despite Gutmann (1987) being in favour (implicitly, explicitly and by ideological obligation i.e. deliberative democracy or the quest for citizens who can deliberate) of factual knowledge which tilts towards the notion of 'conscious social reproduction', she acknowledges that factual knowledge is not unproblematic. Critical responses to Gutmann's theory of education have primarily focused on whether the theory is practically viable or not (e.g. Sherry, 1988; Strossen, 1990; Waghid, 2014; DeCesare, 2016; Merry, 2020). On this disposition, the epistemological posture necessitated by Gutmann's theory of democratic education remains unattended. As a result, it is in light of this unclear nature of factual knowledge (which is arguably favoured by Gutmann) that this thesis will be premised and the debates on IKS. Bluntly put, in this thesis, the researcher seeks to establish whether factual knowledge in a relativist or constructivist sense as argued for by the

likes of Green (2008) can indeed cultivate 'conscious social reproduction' as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) in her theory of democratic education[1].

This study will be underpinned by epistemological realism which contends that factually true knowledge can only exist in the context of universal truth. I also intend to cast some doubts on the assumption that the inclusion of IK in the school curriculum will benefit or be to the detriment of certain groups. This is because school knowledge is an 'object of thought' and not that of 'experience'. School knowledge being an object of thought simply refers to the fact that reality is objectified in order for learners to question it and reconstruct it and, according to Charlot (2009), schools do not exist to teach learners about their reality as it is experienced. Instead, schools exist to cultivate learners' intellectual capacity. It is noteworthy that I do not simply imply that IK is synonymous with everyday knowledge and it should not be assumed that it is the same as school knowledge.

As an alternative, I acknowledge that everyday knowledge and IK mostly (not totally) emerge from the same context. By implication, IK also needs to be made an 'object of thought' if it is to be included in the school curriculum. Unfortunately, when IKS is made an 'object of thought' it becomes universal or theoretical knowledge since reality can only be objectified through language as I will later expand on this point and the difference between everyday, school, and IK. Hence, the argument pursued in this thesis should not be assumed to be conflating IKS with everyday knowledge. Instead, I argue that even though some (if not most) features of IKS are evident in the learner's everyday context, such would not give the learner an advantage at school. Further, the overarching aim of this study is to explore the kind of knowledge that is envisaged by Gutmann in cultivating 'conscious social reproduction' within democratic

[1] In this thesis, I do not by any means argue for democratic power or any power for that matter to be distributed amongst citizens who possess a particular kind of knowledge as evident in Plato's *Republic* (1994). Instead, I argue that only a specific kind of that which is considered factual knowledge can cultivate 'conscious social reproduction' as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) in her theory of democratic education. Furthermore, the purpose of this dissertation is not to contend that only knowledge is necessary in cultivating 'conscious social reproduction'. The researcher is cognisant of other factors that influence 'conscious social reproduction' such as a particular kind of moral character (i.e. through moral education) and values (see Gutmann, 1987).

education and whether it is in line with IKS as conceptualised by epistemological relativists, constructivists, and epistemological realists.

Further objectives include:

- To show clearly that democratic education is not neutral when it comes to the knowledge that ought to be taught in public schools.
- To understand whether democratic education rejects the idea of multiple, factually true knowledge systems, thus rejecting IKS as propositional knowledge.
- To explore whether the inclusion of IKS as practical or African traditional knowledge will be to the benefit or disadvantage of anyone.

The purpose of this study is to explore converging and diverging points between the ideals of the knowledge desired by democratic education as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) and IKS as conceptualised by epistemological relativists, constructivists, and epistemological realists such as Green (2008) and Horsthemke (2010). The research intentions underpinning this dissertation are threefold: (a) to investigate the kind of knowledge that is envisaged by democratic education. The impetus for this is to show that democratic education (as conceptualised by Gutmann, 1987) is not neutral when it comes to the knowledge that should be taught in public schools; (b) to explore possible converging and or diverging points of such an ideal of the knowledge desired by (i.e. by means of 'conscious social reproduction') democratic education and IKS. The motive behind this is also to find out to what extent IK as conceptualised by epistemological relativists and constructivists such as Green (2012) and Le Grange (2016) converges with the ideal of the knowledge desired by democratic education, and (c) the purpose of this study is to interrogate possible implications of such an ideal of the knowledge desired by democratic education and IKS for the curriculum in South African schools. In doing this, the study will explore whether Charlot's (2009) notion of school knowledge as an 'object of thought' could include African traditional knowledge or IK (as practical knowledge) in the school curriculum. I will explore three different post-apartheid National Senior Certificate (NSC) curriculum statements, namely the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) of 2002, the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) of 2008, and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Statement (CAPS) of 2011. The novelty of this study lies in its pursuit of issues in democratic education (political philosophy) and epistemological concerns in a form of deliberations in IKS. In addition, I will also propose a new realist rejoinder that seeks to argue for factual knowledge that is universally true and rooted in the true identities of indigenous people or communities. This thesis seeks to address the following research questions:

The overall question for this study is:

What are the points of divergence and convergence between democratic education and indigenous knowledge systems in South African schools?

Below are the ancillary questions that follow the main research question:

- What kind of knowledge is envisaged by democratic education?
- Are the ideals of the knowledge desired by democratic education and IKS compatible or incompatible?
- What are the implications of compatibility or incompatibility of IKS and democratic education for the South African school curriculum?

In this philosophical thesis, the researcher is of the view that all research must (or should) place empirical research within a germane theoretical framework or theory. It is upon this basis that this conceptual study will be theoretically grounded (even when it touches on other empirical works or research). Thus, the study engages mainly with literature as opposed to conducting an empirical study. Furthermore, in this research, I will make use of Frankena's (1973) three methods of inquiry: a) descriptive empirical enquiry which refers to the recitation or explaining of a particular philosophical phenomenon; b) normative enquiry which may be understood as a "form of debating with oneself or with someone else about what is good or right in a particular case or as a general principle, and then forming some such normative judgment as a conclusion " (p. 4). To be precise, a normative enquiry is concerned with the question of what is good, right and or obligatory and seeks to provide reasons for such judgement; and c) analytical enquiry "asks and tries to answer logical, epistemological or semantical questions" (p.5).

In line with this view, the researcher first offers a descriptive and analytical account of democracy in Chapter 2 which will be followed by another descriptive and normative account of democratic education and IKS in Chapter 3 as main concepts. Chapter 4 will be analytical since it aims to look at the converging and diverging points between democratic education and IKS through the lens of epistemological realism. Chapter 5 will be normative since it seeks to provide a new realist approach. In brief, this thesis which is a consequence of conceptual investigation offers a critical account of the complexities of the ideal of the knowledge desired by democratic education and IKS. In addition to Frankena's forms of enquiry, this thesis will be grounded on the main features of conceptual research. According to Aven (2018), characteristics of conceptual research include identification, summarisation, revision, delineation, differentiation, integration, advocating and refutation of some aspects of the theory, concept or argument. These features of conceptual research will be applied in the following chapters (not in any specific order):

In Chapter 2, I first explore the notion of 'democracy' in its original setting (delineation). In simple terms, I trace the genealogy of 'democracy' to the times of Athenian 'democracy'. In so doing, I provide an explication of the 'democratic' processes which were evident during the time of the early Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. Subsequently, I also explore instrumental arguments which are for and against the notion of democracy (summarisation). The reason for such is to show that democracy does, unfortunately, have defects just like any other ideology. This chapter further discusses different theories of democracy and their shortcomings while it also shows how the notion of democracy has been adjusted to meet different societal needs since it was coined by the Athenians (revision). In addition, I also highlight some of the major debates on the nature of South African post-apartheid democracy and discuss the relationship between democracy and democratic education.

In Chapter 3, I provide an explication of the notion of democratic education, in particular, the idea of 'conscious social reproduction' as evident in Gutmann's (1987) theory of education. In this chapter, I first define the concept of 'consciousness'. The

impetus for doing this is to show the reader that 'conscious social reproduction' reflects societal desires. In other words, even such societal desires require one to have some sense of consciousness in order to take them into cognisance or at least be aware of them. Furthermore, this chapter explores the knowledge envisaged by Gutmann's theory of democratic education (1987) (identification) and concludes that unfortunately, Gutmann is not clear on how factual knowledge (i.e. the teaching of science and mathematics) is problematic. Simply put, although Gutmann (1987) does acknowledge that knowledge imparted by subjects such as mathematics and science is not unproblematic, she does not show how such knowledge is problematic, let alone mention debates on IK or knowledge systems which, by the way, predate Gutmann's book. Hence, I then use the debates on IKS to show that the notion of factual knowledge remains a contested matter.

In Chapter 4, I chose to mainly focus on a meta-theoretical framework. The motive behind this is that the debates on IKS do not exist in isolation from the traditional debates in epistemology (integration). Consequently, I found it necessary to delineate the nature of such debates and how they underpin the debates on IKS. In this chapter, the researcher deliberates on the notion of scepticism, relativism, constructivism and realism (differentiation). This is done with the intention to illustrate as to why a sceptic, constructivist and relativist view of factual knowledge is problematic and to justify why only universally valid factual knowledge can cultivate 'conscious social reproduction' (i.e. advocating and refuting some aspects of an argument or theory). The researcher also explored the implications of epistemological realism on the debates on IKS and further strengthens the view that only universally valid factual knowledge can cultivate 'conscious social reproduction'.

In Chapter 5, I first look at the specifics of that which is thought to be IK in the context of the post-apartheid South African curriculum statements. In doing this, I start from the RNCS because much of what is considered IKS is most evident in the RNCS onwards. In addition, the researcher also looks at the examples of IKS within the NCS and also within the CAPS. The analysis of the so-called IK within various curriculum statements and subjects showed that there is no such a thing as factual IK (refuting).

In order to correct the myth of propositional IKS which has severe educational implications, I offer a new realist approach or meta-evaluative framework that seeks to frame the inclusion and teaching of factual knowledge about indigenous people or communities by imparting true identities of indigenous people (i.e. advocating).

In Chapter 6, I conclude the thesis by looking at the possible future research topics which are in line with the arguments perused in this dissertation. Also, the researcher postulates that future research should investigate other ways in which indigenous communities have contributed to the so-called universal factual knowledge. In addition, in this chapter, I also revive the view that epistemic ambiguity can lead to a false sense of self which does not help cultivate 'conscious social reproduction'. As a point of exit, I offer a minor philosophical dialogue that seeks to deliberate on issues not only in line with the focus of the dissertation at hand but the philosophy of education at large.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENESIS OF DEMOCRACY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

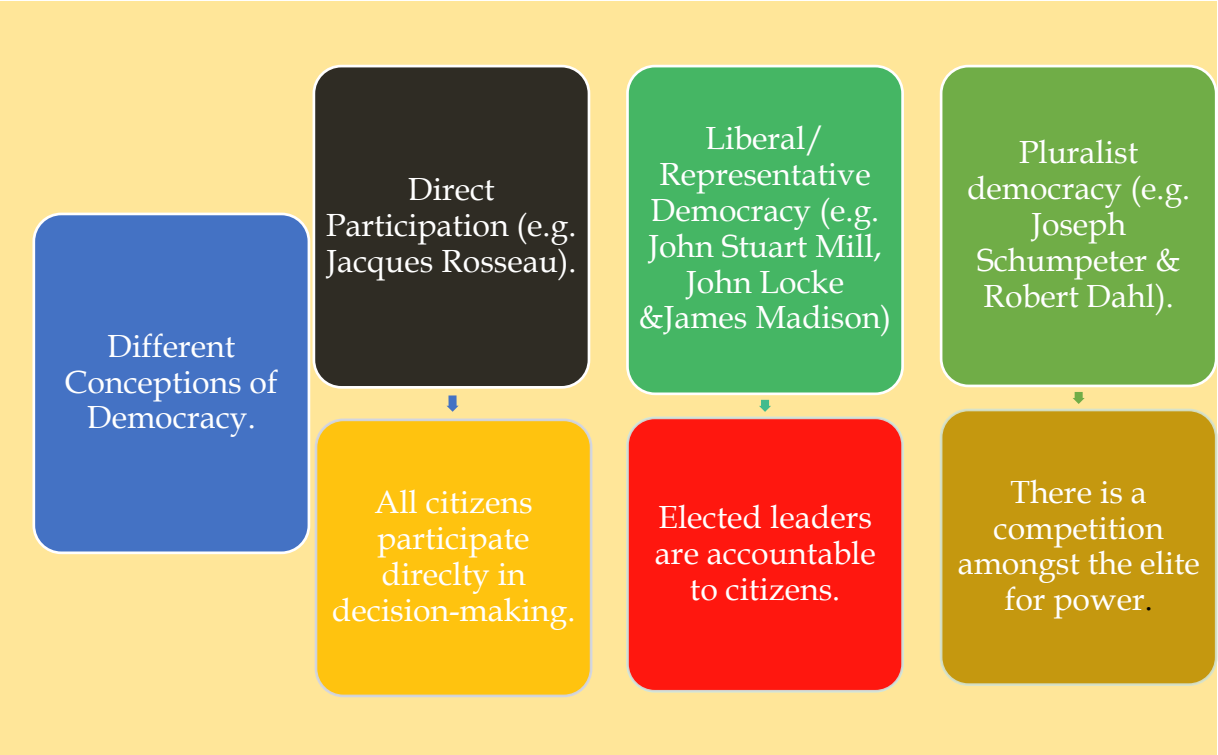

Figure 2.1: *Defining democracy: Concepts and measures*

Adapted from Norris (s.a.)

Figure 2.1 shows that 'democracy' in itself has been reconceptualised and modified since it was coined by the Greeks during ancient times. In other words, there are numerous forms of what is now understood as 'democracy' as this section will later show. At this juncture, I choose to first illustrate the challenges of devising a widely acceptable definition of democracy. De Regt (2013) posits that giving a clear and widely acceptable definition of democracy has proven to be a nigh-impossible task since scholars differ significantly on what should constitute the idea of democracy. It is in light of this view that there is no universally unproblematic delineation of how power can or needs to be distributed in different societies. The evidence of the toil to

define 'democracy'' can be easily extrapolated from Figure 2.1 which highlights different types of 'democracy'. Furthermore, Schmitter and Karl (1991) postulated that

> scholars, conversely, hesitated to use it [the word democracy']-without adding qualifying adjectives-because of the ambiguity that surrounds it. The distinguished American theorist Robert Dahl even tried to introduce a new term, "polyarchy", in its stead in the (vain) hope of gaining a greater measure of conceptual precision (p. 114)

In addition, they articulated that:

> democracy does not constitute of a single unique set of institutions. There are many types of democracy, and their diverse practices produce a similarly varied set of effects. The specific is contingent upon a country's socioeconomic conditions as well as its entrenched state structures and policy practices. (Schmitter & Karl 1991 p. 114)

It is without a doubt that the notion of 'democracy' is underpinned by varying factors (some of which are evident in the quote i.e. socio-economic, state structures and policy practices; it is worth stating that such features should not be taken to mean that democracy is relative in its entirety) that dictate not only its nature but also how we come to define or conceptualise it. Subsequently, the political, material or socio-economic circumstances somehow influence the manner in which democracy emerges in any given context. In modern societies, "political democracy is a system of governance[2] in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives" (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 114). This view submits that there is an element of competition amongst the leaders for political power. Simply put, those who ought to take charge of the system of governance in which power is heavily vested must demonstrate to the public realm that they are more than capable of governing. The people are also given an opportunity to choose whomever they want to exercise power over them through the election process.

[2] Schmitter and Karl (1991, p. 114) are of the view that a system or regime of governance can be understood as "an ensemble of patterns that determines the methods of access to the principal public offices; the characteristics of the actors admitted to or excluded from such access". Furthermore, it is noteworthy that such system encapsulate "the strategies actors may use to gain access and the rules that are [to be] followed in the making of public binding decisions" (Schmitter & Karl 1991, p. 114).

As mentioned hitherto, the problem of providing a widely acceptable and applicable exposition of the notion of democracy does not imply a relativistic conception of democracy. Bluntly put, democracy does not exist or become what it is simply because a certain group of people believes that it is the case. Hence, there are certain conditions that must be met which are somehow independent of contextual variables (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). In line with the necessary democratic conditions, Schmitter and Karl (1991) advanced that

> modern democracy, in other words, offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values – associational as well as partisan, functional as well as territorial, collective as well as individual. All are integral to its practice. (p. 116)

It is perceptible from this quote that democracy becomes a myth when there are no processes through which people can express their views and interests. This suggests that these processes seek to take into cognisance the differing interests and views of citizens which constitutes what Schmitter and Karl (1991) call majority rule[3] and is also a necessary precondition for any regime to be considered democratic. To add to these prerequisites, cooperation as a condition refers to the actors who voluntarily participate in decisions that are binding on the political entity as a whole (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). Additionally, representatives are also a condition and, in this case, such would be the people who are elected by the citizens to represent their interests and contingent needs (Schmitter & Karl, 1991). As things stand, the researcher has only provided the reader with the challenges of formulating a globally acceptable definition of the concept of democracy. I have also offered some of the necessary conditions which can be thought of as being universal despite the varying nature of how democracy is conceptualised and applied throughout the world. It is upon this background that this chapter will be structured as follow:

[3] Schmitter and Karl (1991) argue that the combination of more than half of the votes of those who are eligible and present when making decisions can then lead to such government being considered democratic. Moreover, they further postulated that such majority can come from any of the given multitude of platforms such as the electorate, parliament, city council, party caucus and or committee. In short, majority rule can only be in existence when people have the power to make decisions or be actively involved in decision-making processes either directly or through their representatives.

- I will critically engage with the notion of classical democracy as coined and practised by the Athenians in ancient Greece. This chapter will also highlight some of the major criticisms of classical democracy and the instrumental approach to democracy.
- This chapter will then explore Schumpeter's conception of democracy. In addition, I will put forward the reproaches of such a conception of democracy. The same will be done with Robert Dahl's proposition of 'polyarchy'.
- I will also engage with the debates on the nature of the post-apartheid South African democracy.
- Lastly, I will argue in support of the view that the notion of democracy can only be sustained through democratic education.

2.2 HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY

The idea of democracy can be traced to as far as in the epoch of the Athenians in ancient Greece. "The Greeks had a word for it and the word *demokratia,* a compound of *demos* ('the people') and the *Kratos* ('power', or 'rule')" (Stockton, 1990, p. 1). It is observable from this delineation of what makes democracy that in democratic societies power is vested in the hands of the people or at least they (citizens) have the opportunity to govern themselves. In essence, true democracy can only exist when power is entirely driven by the interests of the people or citizens for that matter. It is upon this background that Stockton (1990) is of the view that "the Athenian system of government was unique, and an example to every other society in Greece: It is called a 'democracy', because it subserves the interests not of the privileged few but of the bulk of its citizens" (p. 1). It is this prototype of democracy which was evident in the case of the Athenian city as this section will show.

Blackwell (2003) postulated that the Athenians lived under a clearly defined democratic government[4] during the period from 508 to 322 BCE. It is noteworthy that Blackwell (2003) does not deny that other features of democracy may have existed

[4] Stockton (1990, p.1) maintains that "the democracy which existed in the Athens for the two hundred years which followed the reforms of Cleisthenes differed in important respects from the democracies under which we live [in] today".

before and after the stipulated period in the city of Athens. Nonetheless, a clearly defined democracy was only evident during the mentioned timeframe.

> the Athenians also attached great importance to the equality of all citizens in formulating and deciding public policy. This was secured by the right of every citizen to speak and vote in the assembly, and by the composition of the council of Five Hundred, which prepared the agenda of the assembly; this body was annually chosen by lot from all the demes of Attica. (Jones 1953. p. 5)

In Jones's (1953) understanding, the democratic principle is somehow in conflict with the oligarchic view as notably developed by Plato (1994) which presumes that the government was an art which can only be understood by a few who possess the highest skill. In terms of the structure of the Athenian society, Stockton (1990) reported that, during the Athenian democratic era, people belonged to different social classes and the council had the prerogative to decide on a person's rights and responsibilities. It is of note that during that period, the Athenian slaves were in their own class and they were a property of other human beings (Fisher, 2006). In addition to this, Frank (2019) posits that most of the slaves were people who were captured in a multitude of wars that were fought by the Athenians. "Slavery in ancient Greece thus relied less on claims about 'racial hierarchy' than on realpolitik: most enslaved people were made slaves after having been kidnapped by pirates or conquered in war" (Frank, 2019, p. 1307). Interestingly, Finley (1981) expounded that slaves in the Athenian city had the opportunity to be in charge of a property, have legal duties, and (albeit, in rare instances) admittance to citizenship.

> the standard view is that Athenian institutions maintained in principle the strict political and legal distinctions between citizens (normally called *politai*, or sometimes *astoi* when distinguished from *xenoi*, foreigners) and metics; though there were constant fears that metics were gaining access illicitly to the deme lists by bribery and collusion with citizens, and occasionally revisions of the lists were ordered (Finley 1981 pp. 339-340).

Men who were not enslaved in the Athenian society were part of one of the two classes namely citizens or the metics. In explicating this, Rothchild (2007) clearly stated that the citizens were only men who were born and bred in Athenia by both parents who

were also Athens by origin. Rothchild (2007, p. 14) highlighted that "in 451 BCE, Pericles introduced a law further limiting participation, by providing that one was an Athenian citizen only if both of one's parents were citizens; previously it was enough if one's father was a citizen". On the other hand, the metics class was made up of foreigners (Fisher, 2006). Women together with children did not have the freedom or luxury to hold government positions or vote (Mathebula, 2013). This simply highlights some of the pitfalls of democracy in the Athenian city. Rothchild (2007) noted that:

> in Athens, the right to participate in the political[5] life of the *polis* was limited to what we would consider a narrow segment of the population. Participation was restricted to free adult (18 or older) male citizens, thus excluding women, resident aliens, and slaves. (pp. 13-14)

In brief, the Athenian democracy was rooted in the interests of a few people. Simply put, power was vested in the hands of adult males. The quote above reflects that females, children and slaves were not given an opportunity to participate in the governance of the city of Athens. Despite its imperfection, the notion of democracy as conceptualised and instigated by the Athens laid a solid foundation for modern democracies. Moreover, the Athens heavily shaped the manner in which we come to fathom such notions as democracy and citizenship although we constantly modify what we mean and understand by such ideas and or concepts. I found it imperative to highlight some of the major criticisms of the Athenian democracy. Hence, the researcher now turns to the reproaches of democracy in the city of the Athens.

The Athenian democracy introduced the idea of giving power to the people. Nonetheless, there were many hurdles in the way. Rothchild (2007) notes that citizenship was only given to the Athenian-born men. This was, as previously underscored, done at the expense of women, children, slaves and foreigners who were also excluded from leadership or governance roles (Rothchild, 2007). This suggests that ironically the Athenian democracy was not a full democracy since it gave power only to a small segment of the Athenian population and excluded the majority of the

[5] Rothchild (2007, p. 13) articulated that "the word 'political' derives from the Greek '*politēs*,' meaning 'citizen,' or literally 'one who is a member of the *polis*.' The root meaning of 'political' is therefore that which concerns the affairs of the *polis*".

people. The Athenian democracy was disparaged by a number of philosophers. According to Aristotle, in the democratic city of Athens, people lived as they wished and this was not good (Jones, 1953). In simple terms, Aristotle did not concur with the notion that people should be in charge of their own lives or decisions. Furthermore, Aristotle purported that, before the advent of the Athenian democracy such freedom was nigh-impossible since all men were supervised by their masters (Jones, 2003). In further challenging the Athenian democracy, Jones (2003) expounded that Aristotle believed that the *Areopagus*[6] should get back to its ways of taking charge of the private lives of all ordinary citizens. One can extrapolate that Aristotle did not in any way perceive the Athenians as autonomous beings who were capable of making their own decisions.

Aristotle vehemently lambasted the fact that *demos* gained power over the political system through the use of power in the courts in order to hold politicians accountable (Cammak, 2013). Additionally, Aristotle articulated that "democracy is the rule of the poor; oligarchy (rule by the few) is that of the rich" (Aristotle, 1943, p. 37). Thus, Cammak (2013) postulated that until the end of the democratic era the "orators regularly referred to the courts as the bulwark of democracy--even complaining that the Athenians' dependence on their courts went too far and was hamstringing their preparedness for war against Philip of Macedon" (p. 179). Aristotle was not only denouncing the notion of democracy or giving power to the *demos*, he was also rebuffing what was presumed to be an abuse of power. One can deduce that Aristotle believed that when ordinary citizens are at the helm of powerful institutions, they tend to stifle progress and abuse power. In the *Republic*, Plato (1994) bemoans that under the so-called democracy

> the city is full of liberty and free speech and everyone in it is allowed to do what he likes... each man in it could plan his own life as he pleases … the citizens are various, instead of conforming to one type, and … foreigners and even women and slaves are free as the citizens. (p. 304)

[6] It was a meeting site within the city of the Athens and it was designed for the *Council of the Areopagus.* It was comprised of King's chief men and had the power to try cases which mostly involved murder and it lasted until the advent of the Athenian democracy (Blackwell, 2003).

This is in line with Aristotle's view of the Athenian democracy. Plato further proclaimed that democracy, as witnessed in the city of the Athens, allocated parity to the equal and the unequal alike (Jones, 1953). This implies that democracy, as observed by the Athenians, provides both those who are at the helm of social hierarchy and those who are at the bottom of the chain of command with the same privileges or equal rights. It is important to highlight that Plato and Aristotle were not the only ones who were opposed to equality that was brought about by such democratic processes. Isocrates made the same point when he argued that under the Athenian democratic dispensation, the good and the bad seemed to share the same rights (Jones, 1953). It is upon this background that Jones is justified in contending that Aristotle's argument also cascades into Isocrates's line of thought since Aristotle seems to ponder on the criteria by which rights ought to be measured when he stated that "democracy take Equality for their motto … the mass of the people (or the majority) is sovereign instead of the law; this happens when decrees are valid instead of the law" (Aristotle, 1943, pp. 37-40).

Jones (1953) further propounded that in a democratic society, freedom is the ultimate criterion and that all men ought to be free and equal and this is what Aristotle was fervently rejecting. This infers that Aristotle was against the view that all free men need to be equal. According to Jones (1953), Aristotle was of the view that freedom of men should be measured by their wealth or birth. This meant that those who were born in the Athens with both parents also originating from the city of the Athens would enjoy more freedom compared to those who were not born in the said city. It can also be extrapolated that Aristotle suggests that if wealth was used as a criterion to measure freedom, then those with more wealth would inevitably have an advantage over those who were less wealthy. In a conspicuous contrast, Aristotle is assumed to have also rejected oligarchic perception and "the reason that Aristotle gives for rejecting the oligarchic perception of society is that it entails a view of *koinonia* which is based on wealth, like a business partnership" (Lintott, 1992 p. 116). In elaborating on this, it would strike the reader as a surprise to find out that some scholars have argued that Aristotle was not totally opposed to democracy as shown in this section. This implies that Aristotle was also not in support of the hegemony of

the wealthy citizens under the regime of oligarchy. Furthermore, Lintott (1992) purports that

> from Aristotle's conception of the polis that the *plethos*, the mass of citizens, has a part to play in running a city … Aristotle takes it to be a matter of fact that the mass tends to pursue its class interest, and not that of the community as a whole, unless it is restrained. It is because of this that he lists democracy as a deviant constitution and he introduces the conception of a *politeia* as a constitution where the mass rules but pursue the interest of the city as a whole. (p. 118)

In this case, unrestrained democracy in any form is thought to be calamitous. As a result, this quote shows that there was a constant reconceptualisation of democracy and the struggle for meaning. This melee over what and how human beings should characterise a democratic society continued for centuries. The researcher will, in this chapter, engage with the work of some of the scholars who contributed to the debates of how democratic societies need to organise themselves. In summing up the discussion on the criticism of the Athenian democracy, numerous philosophers shared the view that the Athenian democracy brought unbounded freedom which was a problem. Furthermore, they also critiqued democracy for providing the poor with the opportunity to be equal with wealthy *demos*. This is summed up in Plato's (1994) assertion that democracy "distributes a kind of equality to the equal and the unequal alike" (p. 296).

2.3 INSTRUMENTALISM: ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST DEMOCRACY

I found it imperative for this chapter to discuss the reasons for and against democracy (at least in the context of normative democratic theory[7]). Equally so, the discussion of the motives against and for democracy should not be perceived as a focal point of this chapter. Instead, they should be thought of as being part of the broader discussion which seeks to show that all democracies need democratic education in order for them

[7] "Normative democratic theory deals with the moral foundations of democracy and democratic institutions. It is distinct from descriptive and explanatory democratic theory. It does not offer in the first instance a scientific study of those societies that are called democratic" (Tom, 2018 p. 1).

to endure varying circumstances and become sustainable. Tom (2018) articulated that good laws, policies, and the cultivation of character of the citizens who ought to participate in a democracy are often credited as three of the key[8] benefits of democracy. Furthermore, Mill (1991) contended that the manner in which legislation is made within democracies is superior to non-democratic methods. Mill (1991) stated that such superiority unfolded in three ways: epistemically, strategically and through the cultivation of individual character. Tom (2018) further posited that:

- Firstly, in terms of epistemic superiority, this means that democracy brings an opportunity to make the right decisions since it involves many people (i.e. multiple sources of information).
- Secondly, strategic superiority refers to the fact that democracies are somehow ideologically compelled to take into account the views, interests and rights of their citizens unlike in the case of a monarchy or oligarchy. Consequently, democracy strategically gives some form of power to individuals or citizens.
- Thirdly, in terms of character cultivation, Tom (2018) also noted that for both Mill and Rousseau, democracy allows people to fight for themselves since the so-called collective decision-making is vested in individuals more than in the case of aristocracy or monarchy.

Tom (2018) also maintained that democratic character cultivation somehow leads to "a society of autonomous, rational, and moral decision-makers [who are] more likely to produce good legislation than a society ruled by a self-centred person or small group of persons who rule over slavish and unreflective subjects" (p. 1). It is of note that the researcher will from time to time revert to the notion of an autonomous and rational being. To be precise, such notions are at the centre of the last section of this chapter and the following chapters. In terms of the arguments against democracy, Tom (2018) noted that democracy has been thought to be problematic by some

[8] It is important to note that the researcher is also conscious of the non-instrumental arguments made for democracy which include the quest for individual liberty (which presumes that principles of democracy should be based on the fact that each individual must have or deserves individual liberty) (see Gould, 1988), democracy as public justification (the assumption that the legitimacy of laws and policies in democratic societies lies in the fact that they ought to be publicly justified) (see Cohen, 2002) and equality (based on the view that democracy ought to offer an equal treatment for all persons) (see Singer, 1973).

scholars and thinkers. According to Plato in the *Republic* (1994) unlike in monarchy, aristocracy and oligarchy, democracy fails to take seriously the expertise needed to govern a society. Additionally, the ability to win elections seems to outweigh the ability to govern in democratic societies. Hence, Hobbes (1651, cited in Tom, 2018) believed that due to collective-decision-making processes, democracy tends to be weaker than in a monarchy because both citizens and politicians are most likely to have no sense of responsibility when it comes to the legislation put in place since none of them is more responsible than the other. Furthermore, according to Tom (2018):

> many public choice theorists in contemporary economic thought expand on these Hobbesian criticisms. They argue that citizens are not informed about politics and that they are often apathetic, which makes room for special interests to control the behavior of politicians and use the state for their own limited purposes all the while spreading the costs to everyone else (p. 1).

On this elucidation, the notion of democracy is thought to be a hindrance to public obligation and possible service delivery due to politicians and citizens not taking full responsibility for the legislation that is put in place. Even so, in this thesis, I maintain that democracy remains a desirable ideal despite its shortcomings. The impetus for this is due to the fact that democracy, unlike monarchy, aristocracy or oligarchy, does, to some extent, give the individual some form of power or freedom to decide on the kind of life they may want to lead. The researcher shows towards the end of this chapter that, in order for this freedom or power to be utilised, citizens of democratic societies would then need to be educated in line with the ideals of democratic education. This chapter now turns to a discussion of some of the theories which are thought to be a solution to the problems of democratic governance. The focus of such theories is explored in light of modern societies which are filled with far more complexities than ancient societies. Furthermore, such complexities undoubtedly influence the manner in which democracy is conceived and practiced throughout the world. Thus, the relevance of the following democratic theories lies in their critical exploration of democracy and the implications of the proposed democratic theories.

2.4 THEORIES OF DEMOCRACY: SCHUMPETER'S DELINEATIONS AND CRITIQUES OF CLASSICAL DEMOCRACY

> I will therefore repeat that even if the opinions and desires of individual citizens were perfectly definite and independent data for the democratic process to work with, and if everyone acted on them with ideal rationality and promptitude, it would not necessarily follow that the political decisions produced by that process from the raw material of those individual volitions would represent anything that could in any convincing sense be called the will of the people. (Schumpeter, 1950 p. 254).

It is well-evident in this case that Schumpeter was critiquing the notion of democracy as evident in the case of the Athenian democracy. Schumpeter (1950) contended that if the people are an aspect of the classical democracy (*Kratein*) or the manner in which a society is ruled, classical democracy can be understood as the "rule by the people". Schumpeter (1950) argues that in much smaller communities which are primitive in terms of their civilisation with minimal incongruities, it is possible for all the *demos* to take part in the governing of the defined societies. In simple terms, population plays a significant role in shaping the art and science of what is possible or permissible in a democratic society. It becomes incontestable then that, in modern societies (which are overpopulated), it is virtually impossible for everyone to take part in the governing of their respective societies (Schumpeter, 1950). In other words, the direct participation of all citizens is arguably impossible when it comes to the governance of modern societies. Thus, societies with smaller populations and minor complexities can easily employ the notion of direct democracy whereas those with more complexities and people would have to find alternative ways of realising democracy.

In the case where the idea that people need to directly participate in governance becomes impracticable, then such formation would be substituted by the government that ought to be approved by the people (Schumpeter, 1950). Uninterruptedly, Schumpeter (1950) suggests this is possible through the creation of a parliament or an assembly and it ought to be made up of members who have been elected by the citizens. This implies that those who desire to partake in the governing of their respective societies will then compete for votes. In turn, this can be presumed to be an

opportunity for the citizens to vote for the candidate whose manifesto is in alignment with their will. In terms of this outlook, it is not surprising then that Schumpeter (1950) contended that the duty of those in government (including administrators and politicians) is to implement the mandate given to them by the citizens who elected them. This denotes that there is a need to have a substantial congruity within the will of the citizens. To put it directly, according to Schumpeter (1950):

> it is held, then, that there exists a Common Good, the obvious beacon light of policy, which is always simple to define and which every normal person can be made to see by means of rational argument. There is hence no excuse for not seeing it and in fact no explanation for the presence of people who do not see it except ignorance—which can be removed—stupidity and anti-social interest. (p. 250)

This indicates that one man's (or woman's) will is most likely to be concomitant to that of another provided that it is reasonable. In simple words, reasonable human beings are not likely to share an adverse will or notion of what is considered good for the development of their society. With that being said, a society that is democratically inclined is characterised by what Elliott (1994) calls "popular sovereignty, substantial unity, individual rationality, and political equality" (p. 284). The researcher now turns to Schumpeter's' substantial rebuffing of democracy as rule by the people. It is against this background that Schumpeter seems to be opting for a representative democracy over direct democracy (which is nigh-impossible in modern societies). This Schumpeterian argument for a common good also makes it explicit that rationality is not relative. This means that elected officials in democratic societies are at times expected to justify their decisions publicly; their justifications hinges on the presumption that citizens are rational beings and that such rationality is not relative to any particular context or individual circumstances.

2.4.1 Denunciation of Democracy as Rule by the People

In line with the classical conceptualisation of democracy (assumed to be rule by the people), Schumpeter (1950) enunciates that the "democratic method... realises the common good through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will" (p. 250). This insinuates that a "common good" and political unity

on what this common good really constitutes does exist. It can then be inferred that people's public or societal interests do not exist in isolation from those of their fellow community members. This means that people have a mutual understanding of what is it that can be considered good for any or in any given society. Schumpeter (1950) rejects the notion that democracy is "rule by the people" and outlines two reasons for his position on democracy. Firstly, he is of the view that playing part in governance either through influencing political leaders or direct participation has never been limited to what are assumed to be "democracies". According to Schumpeter (1950) the impetus for his contention that democracy is not rule by the people is based on:

> historical cases – of autocracies, both *dei gratia* and dictatorial, of the various monarchies of non-autocratic type, of aristocratic and plutocratic oligarchies, which normally commanded the unquestioned, often fervent, allegiance of an overwhelming majority of all classes of their people and which, considering their environmental conditions, did very well in securing what most of us believe the democratic method should secure. (p. 246)

This supposes that having majority of the people or citizens at the helm of decision-making does not equate to such instances being democratic. Consequently, democracy cannot be reduced to unprincipled majority rule. Furthermore, Schumpeter (1950) argues that "rule by the people" which can, for example, happen indirectly or through electing members of a particular legislative body, presumes that the people or the electorate give their power to the legislature which ought to represent them. However, it is only physically existing and moral beings that can be represented. In addition, according to Schumpeter (1950), a legislature should be considered an "organ of the state" just like a court of law. Therefore, in as much as popular participation in governance does not necessarily need democracy, democracy in itself does not really amount to "rule by the people" (Schumpeter, 1950). It is clear from this discussion so far that, for Schumpeter, democracy is not simply an issue of numbers: it goes beyond direct participation. Secondly, Schumpeter (1950) is of the view that in a democratic society:

> it is true that the management of some of these affairs requires special aptitudes and techniques and will therefore have to be entrusted to specialists who have them. This

> does not affect the principle, however, because these specialists simply act in order to carry out the will of the people exactly as a doctor acts in order to carry out the will of the patient to get well. (p. 250)

It is evident in this excerpt that, governance in democratic societies, as conceived by Schumpeter, is reserved for a few individuals who are assumed to be specialists in governance. This view is in line with Plato's oligarchic view of governance as mentioned previously which supposes that governance should be earmarked for a few individuals who are thought to be knowledgeable in ruling the public. The only difference is that, for Schumpeter, competition amongst the elite for power takes place in a context of democracy while Plato mainly envisaged an oligarchic setup since he was not in favour of the idea of democracy.

2.4.2 Schumpeter's Conceptualisation of Democracy: Tensions and Possibilities

Schumpeter (1950) stated that in the classical doctrine of democracy, there seems to be an emphasis on giving the electorate the power to decide political issues. This is because ordinary citizens have a voice in shaping decisions that impact their everyday lives. Thus, the election of representatives of citizens becomes a tributary (Schumpeter, 1950). To be precise, the election of representatives in a classical democracy becomes just another branch or aspect of democracy which does not have dominance over the views of ordinary citizens. In short, representatives do not exist in order to shape the views of the people; rather, they exist in order for their views to be shaped directly by the electorate. For Schumpeter (1950), the manner in which the two are prioritised or emphasised should be inverted. That is to say, the involvement of the electorate in deciding on issues should be the least priority while electing the representatives of citizens who ought to make the necessary decisions should be prioritised. In his proposed theory of democracy, Schumpeter (1950) maintains that the duty that should be delegated to the citizens is to:

> produce a government or else an intermediate body [or parliament] which in turn will produce a national executive or government… in this case, democracy becomes an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals

> acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. (p. 269)

This implies that direct democracy is not possible in the context of modern societies. Therefore, there is a need for democratic institutions to be built in order for the elite to compete for votes so that they can be able to take charge of such institutions and make decisions on behalf of the electorate. It is against this backdrop that Schumpeter (1950) emphasises parliamentary democracy. It is of value to highlight the following tensions and possibilities within Schumpeter's theory of democracy

- First, Schumpeter provides a logical and meaningful argument explicating the reasons as to why direct participation in modern complex capitalist societies which are considered to be democratic is illogical.
- Second, Schumpeter also offers a compelling argument as to why modern capitalist societies should instead opt for representative democracy whereby few individuals would compete for political offices while ordinary citizens would be given a democratic right to delegate a candidate whom they consider best able to represent their interests and needs. Nonetheless, the notion of 'Common Good' is problematic since it homogenises citizens by creating what Gutmann (1987) called 'collective self' whereby citizens are not seen as autonomous beings.
- Last, Schumpeter unfortunately, reserves power only for a few elites who are deemed fit to govern while the majority of the people are left with only the power to vote. Mathebula (2009) correctly questions this logic by arguing that, if the majority of the people are thought to be unfit to govern, on what grounds are they considered suitable to vote for those who ought to govern?

2.5 DAHL'S CONCEPTUALISATION OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION: CLARIFICATIONS AND CRITIQUES OF POLYARCHY

> Historically the case for political equality and popular sovereignty has usually been deduced from beliefs in natural rights. But the assumptions that made the idea of natural rights intellectually defensible have tended to dissolve in modern times.

> Unless it is simply an elliptical mode of argument that might be cast in more precise language, the logic of natural rights seems to require a transcendental view in which the right is 'natural' because God directly or indirectly wills it (Dahl 2006 [1956], p. 45).

In further elaborating on this, Dahl (2006 [1956]) advanced that "it is easy to see that such an argument inevitably involves a variety of assumptions that at best are difficult and at worst impossible to prove to the satisfaction of anyone of positivist or sceptical predispositions" (p. 45). It is evident in the two quotes that Dahl is pondering on the possibility of a moral case for a "populist" democracy[9]. This implies that it is difficult to make an intellectually compelling argument for political equality on the grounds that such equality is part of human nature or God's intents since there is hardly any evidence to prove (empirically) such contentions. Thus, such an argument on political equality becomes part of mere beliefs and is questionable in terms of substance. Additionally, MacGilvray (2016) states that Dahl also found it improbable that the notion of democratic populism could be established on instrumental grounds owing to the view that it is impossible to forecast what the "consequences of majority rule relative to some other possible arrangement would be over any significant period of time" (p. 1). It is on this basis that Dahl then rejects the notion of populist democracy. Dahl also rejected Madison's notion of democracy. In rejecting the Madisonian notion of democracy, Dahl (2006 [1956]) contends that Madison was driven by the plea to "bring off a compromise between the power of majorities and the power of minorities" (p. 4). In simple terms, Madison was trying to prevent dictatorship of the majority or minority where the interests of either group would be subjugated (MacGilvray, 2016).

Dahl (2006 [1956]) further argues that, for Madison, tyranny is defined as "every severe deprivation of a natural right" (pp, 22–27). MacGilvray (2016) states that such a definition of tyranny, which was attributed to Madison by Dahl, paved a way for his critique of Madisonian democracy. For Dahl (2006 [1956]), if we ponder on the existence of the so-called natural rights which are propounded by Madison, then the said definition of what constitutes tyranny and the basis of Madisonian democracy

[9] For the benefit of the reader, populist democracy is centred on the mobilisation of people (majority rule) (ordinary citizens) often against the elite or assumed to be powerful citizens.

falls short. This implies that instead of it being a balance between minority and majority power "the Madisonian system appears to Dahl as a compromise between majority and minority *rights*, with no clear account of what the rights in question are or how they should be traded off against each other" (MacGilvray, 2016, p. 1). Consequently, Dahl (2006 [1956]) concludes that "[T]he resulting logical confusion … is almost incredible, but the long persistence of logical inconsistencies hints at the fulfilment of some deep-seated social need. In the United States, this may be the minimisation of severe conflict" (p. 36). One can infer from the two quotes that the notion of trading rights (as argued for by Madison in his *Federalist essays* with Hamilton and Jay) lacks substance on the basis that Madison fails to give an explicit account of the rights that ought to be shared by both the majority and minority.

The concept of polyarchy was then devised by Dahl and Lindblom (1953). According to Coppedge and Reinicke (1990), polyarchy refers to a "set of institutional arrangements that permits public opposition and establishes the right to participate in politics. In these two respects public contestation and inclusiveness polyarchy is similar to the concept of democracy" (p. 51). For Krouse (1982), polyarchy "is neither pure majority rule nor unified minority rule. It is an open, competitive and pluralistic system of 'minorities rule'" (p. 443). What stems from these definitions is the view that leaders who hold political offices are held accountable through the existence of multiple centres or institutions of power. Furthermore, Coppedge and Reinicke (1990) suggest that polyarchy should not be perceived as being congruent to democracy since it was not intended to be synonymous with democracy. In other words, the existence of the two cannot be blindly thought of as being interwoven.

There are some differences between democracy and the notion of polyarchy; firstly, there is a clear disjuncture between actual systems that are considered democracies and the notion of democracy as an ideal (Coppedge & Reinicke, 1990). Accordingly, the notion of polyarchy exists in order to "maintain the distinction between democracy as an ideal system and the institutional arrangements that have come to be regarded as a kind of imperfect approximation of an ideal" (Dahl 1971, p. 9). This suggests that polyarchy exists in order to provide a clear representation of the democratic ideal

through a set of institutions which function as multiple centres of power. In terms of the second difference between polyarchy and democracy, Coppedge and Reinicke (1990) highlight that

> like democracy, polyarchy is a quality of a political system; but unlike democracy (at least as it is usually conceived), polyarchy is also a dimension. There are degrees of polyarchy, ranging from full polyarchy to the absence of polyarchy, or hegemony. (p. 51)

In explaining the quote above, it is notable then that the idea of polyarchy is not just a mere political system since its effectiveness can be measured. The third difference between polyarchy and democracy, according to Coppedge and Reinicke (1990) is that:

> polyarchy is concerned with imperfect approximations rather than ideals, the standard for the most democratic regimes is rather low. The concept of polyarchy is limited to the most basic institutional requirements for democracy.... A country can qualify as a full polyarchy even if it does not allow workplace or communitarian democracy, proportional representation, referenda, or party primaries. (p. 51)

The fourth evident difference between polyarchy and democracy is that polyarchy does not take into cognisance differing degrees of democracy which exist at varying levels of the polity; hence, polyarchy focuses mostly on the national regime (Dahl 1971). Coppedge and Reinicke (1990) note that the last difference between democracy and polyarchy is that countries do not have to achieve a certain level of socioeconomic equality in order for them to be considered fully polyarchic. As a result, polyarchy is mainly concerned with the political aspects of any given country rather than its economic essence or wealth distribution.

Dahl's (2006 [1956]) rejoinder to James Madison and others who were critical of the dictatorship of the majority was that polyarchy should be interpreted as a method whereby leaders compete with each other in order to gain votes from the electorate, thus encouraging competition amongst the elite. Dahl (2006 [1956]) opted for social pluralism instead of constitutional democracy or republicanism which was favoured by James Madison (see Rakove, 1988) who believed that the separation of powers and

representative democracy were a way to go in terms of averting the possibility of dictatorial government and help maintain the democratic procedure. Dahl and Lindblom (1953) define polyarchy as a set of procedures that are socio-political and by which those who are not leaders tend to have a high degree of power over their leaders, which is an operational equivalent of democracy. Dahl (1986) contends that what sets polyarchy apart as a regime comes from its two features: "high tolerance for opposition... and the relatively widespread opportunities for participating in influencing the conduct of government, including removal of incumbent governing officials by peaceful means" (p. 3). He also believed that "one of the principal attributes of a successful polyarchy is that its political leaders possess the skill to do this without alienating organized interests" (see Ware, 1974 p. 182). It is noticeable in this extract that polyarchy is most likely to succeed when the leaders are equipped with the necessary skills to lead without compromising the demands made by a large number of citizens.

Dahl (2006 [1956]) also articulated that polyarchy helps us understand democracy as an ideological model rather than an event that can be traced to the past. This implies that democracy in its ideal form has never been achieved. Nonetheless, the notion of polyarchy is far from perfect even at a theoretical juncture. In simple words, it has been roundly criticised as I will now show. Krouse (1982) argued that the participation of the *demos* plays a minor role in Dahl's early model of democracy. Krouse (1982) notes that, for Dahl, classical theories of democracy were not valid in terms of their stress on "total" citizen participation. Krouse (1982) articulated that in his quest for polyarchy, Dahl believed that the conception of democracy as a system of decision-making whereby leaders are expected to be more or less open to the inclinations of those who are not leaders can function with minor participation of the citizenry; hence, it is not correct to contend that one of the prerequisites of democracy is extensive participation of citizens. It is evident from this delineation that Dahl rejects popular participation or what is assumed to be majority rule. Moreover, Dahl (2006 [1956]) was of the view that the participation of the *demos* would lead to the destabilisation of the polyarchy or the supposed set of institutions that seek to move

polyarchic societies towards democracy as an ideal – which he believed was unattainable.

> current evidence suggests that in the United States, the lower one's socioeconomic class, the more authoritarian one's predispositions and the less active one is likely to be. Thus, if an increase in political activity brings the authoritarian minded into the political arena, we must expect that, after some lag, polyarchy... would decline (Dahl, 2006 [1956], p. 89).

In explaining this extract, it is clear that Dahl's notion of polyarchy was elitist since 1) Dahl did not seem to believe that democracy should be underpinned by popular participation; and 2) Dahl's theory of polyarchy has also been criticised and accused of being more of an "elite theory of democracy" since it presumed that poor *demos* are illiberal and tend to have an antidemocratic attitude (See Krouse, 1982). It is well encapsulated in this discussion thus far that the theory of polyarchy in its elitist form tends to undermine the core principle of democracy which is to vest power in the hands of the people by arguing that democratic societies should be led by a few who, in turn, compete for power or the votes of the electorate. In addition, one is left to ponder as to why the electorate should or would even bother to participate in elections given that they have been deemed illiberal and antidemocratic. Consequently, elitist theories of democracy such as Dahl's theory of polyarchy and Schumpeter's theory of democracy can only help us with ways in which power can be organised in modern capitalist societies (i.e. having leaders who are voted for by citizens into positions of power). But when it comes to the question of who is supposed to occupy such positions of power, they remain problematic and arguably undemocratic given that majority of the people are often discounted.

Mathebula (2013) argued that such elements of elitism (power centred around few individuals) are evident in the manner in which Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) are structured, and that often takes away power from the majority of learners. The inclusion of the so-called elitist theories in this thesis seeks to show the reader that different theories of democracy do not deny that an individual being is a rational being who is worthy of individual freedom. What is at the centre of these debates is the

nature and the means by which such individual freedom can be attained. A notable example is that, in the theory of polyarchy, complete individual freedom is thought to be unattainable in a practical sense. However, its possibility is not denied since polyarchy argues for a set of institutions which can assist in terms of measuring progress towards a democratic ideal. This thesis now turns to engage with debates on the nature of South African democracy.

2.6 PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

In his article, *The Eclipse of Consociationalism in South Africa's Democratic Transition*, Connors (1996) proclaims that the post-1994 constitution was nothing but a combination of 'quasi-consociational elements'. Furthermore, Connors (1996) contends that the 1996 constitution rejected the notion of consociational democracy or what is known as power-sharing. Thus, Connors (1996) is of the view that South African democracy is a majoritarian democracy. Prior to the 1996 constitution, South Africa was governed through an interim constitution. Connors notes that:

> in response to the emerging crisis in South Africa, and in the absence of commitment to democratic reform truly beyond the discourse of apartheid, consociationalism was grasped. Consociationalism was not a model for moderating political conflict of a plural society at all, but a manner of suppressing it, displacing it, turning it inward. Perhaps in this sense the question of the viability of consociationalism's capacity to stabilize conflict was ill-conceived (1996 pp. 423-424).

It is observable in this case that Connors was quite pessimistic about the plausibility of a true democracy in post-apartheid South Africa. This is because he argued that quasi-consociationalism was used as a tool to numb ethnic conflicts at the expense of pursuing true democracy. According to Lijphart (1998), there are four fundamental principles of consociational democracy: 1) the government is a product of a coalition which is mainly made up of different representatives from all different significant groups; 2) different groups have sovereignty through the means of non-territorial or regional decentralisation and federalism; 3) the number of people needs to be taken into cognisance especially when it comes to political representation, and (4) minorities need to have some form of power especially when it comes to issues that are thought

to be important to them. It is against this background that Lijphart (1998) articulates that the 1994 interim constitution encompassed all these principles of consociationalism and, as a result, it should be considered as a full consociational rather than 'quasi-consociational' constitution.

Connors (1996) disagreed that power-sharing in the context of South Africa was a favourable virtue since consociationalism was not apt owing to the view that it is a foreign or a Eurocentric constitutional approach and because it is rooted in the notion of "immutable ethnic segments" (p. 144). In contrast, Lijphart (1998) is of the view that it is only the 1996 constitution that shifted from strict consociationalism, although it was still closer to power-sharing than to majoritarian democracy. Furthermore, notable examples of what is thought to be consociational democracy are evident in all parts of the world. As a result, it is not correct to characterise South Africa's consociational democracy as a mere model taken from Europe (Lijphart, 1998). In other words, the notion of consociational democracy cannot be regarded as a model of democracy that is evident only in Europe. Consequently, for Lijphart (1998) consociational democracy is a global phenomenon. In addition, Lijphart (1998) suggests that rather than postulating that ethnic divisions are rigid and unchallengeable, "their frequent fluidity makes it advisable not to pre-determine any ethnic or other groups in consociational systems and instead to let these groups define themselves" (p.144). This implies that the pre-determination of any social group in a consociational democracy would lead to essentialism. Consequently, different groups should be allowed to define themselves to avoid widening the disparities that exist amongst different social groups. Additionally, Lijphart (1998) further enunciated that:

> the consociational model has played an important role in South Africa's democratization and that it has served South Africa – all South Africans very well. Contrary to what Connors implies, consociationalism is a perfectly democratic, one-person one-vote, system and it was also the optimal and most logical compromise between the two principal antagonists, the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Party, who originally favoured straightforward majority rule and continued white minority rule respectively. (p. 144)

Lijphart (1998) further advanced that in the case of South Africa, consociationalism was quite unusual since those who drafted the constitution were aware and influenced by how the consociational model had played out in different historical instances of power-sharing. Lijphart (1998) expounds that such was not the case in countries that adopted the idea of power-sharing such as "Canada in 1840, the Netherlands in 1917, both Lebanon and Switzerland in 1943, Austria in 1945, India in 1947, Malaysia in 1955, Colombia in 1958, Cyprus in 1960, Belgium in 1970, and Czecho-Slovakia in 1989" (p. 145). For Lijphart (1998), this denotes that, although the consociational advice which was given to South Africans was useful, it was not necessarily important since South Africans themselves would have been able to reproduce a system of power-sharing. Additionally, Lijphart (1998) contends that consociationalism and the African continent have strong links to Sir Arthur Lewis[10], who is thought to be the first scholar to establish the democratic model of consociationalism.

There are different views on the democratic nature of the post-apartheid constitution which *exist* independent of the contentions of whether the post-apartheid constitution is consociational or not. A notable example of such perspectives is that of Madlingozi (2017) who argued that the post-apartheid constitution is "part of the counter-decolonisation project of masking white hegemony and historical conquest through the economy of recognition-incorporation-distribution" (p. 139). In short, the neo-apartheid (because for Madlingozi the post-1994 constitution did not mean the end of apartheid) constitution seeks to legitimise white domination of the apartheid era. Ramose (2002) refers to the neo-apartheid constitutional supremacy as a legitimation of the coloniser and the benefit of the "right of conquest". This view suggests that the move from apartheid to democracy did not lead to a shift in terms of power dynamics. It is perhaps predictable that most proponents of decolonisation in South Africa share this constitutional outlook. For instance, Ndlovu-Gatsheni laments that:

[10] Sir Lewis was a well-known economist whose contribution within the field of economic development remains unquestionable. Sir Lewis is thought to have developed the model of power-sharing which was later revived by Lijphart in a multitude of his work on democracy as evident in Lijphart's (1998) defence of South Africa's post-apartheid constitution as a consociational democracy.

> South Africa, hailed by neoliberals as a democratic society with one of the most liberal, progressive constitutions in the world, has become the site of resurgent decolonial struggles, because what was gained in 1994 was democracy without decolonisation. The celebrated constitution 'constitutionalised injustices'. 'Neo-apartheid' rather than 'post-apartheid' best describes present-day South Africa… (2017 p. 75).

It is against this setting that Madlingozi (2017) argues that the neo-apartheid constitution is not human-centred given that majority of black people are still economically excluded. Madlingozi (2017) maintains that the "calls for a supreme constitution with a bill of rights came overwhelmingly from amongst the ranks of the historical beneficiaries with the view of keeping the main edifice of the anti-black bifurcated polity intact" (p. 140). Bluntly put, the notion of constitutional supremacy was enacted in order to take away some political power from the parliament which has been dominated by black people post-1994. Interestingly, throughout his thought-provoking decolonial critique of the post-1994 constitution, Madlingozi (2017) seems to shift between political and economic power. Neither Ramose (2002) nor Madlingozi (2017) is against constitutionalism. Instead, for Madlingozi (2017):

> the Constitution that was finally adopted in 1996 is the anti-thesis of the Ramosean constitution: it is not post-abyssal; it does not undo the settler-created house; it posits a social justice framework while hindering an extensive scheme of reparation and restitution; and it is a supreme deity that blocks revolutionary being-becoming. (p.141)

This explains that for both Madlingozi (2017) and Ramose (2002) the manner in which the post-apartheid constitution was drafted and came into existence is problematic since it legitimised the economic and land dispossession of the majority of black people: "post-1994 constitutional re-arrangements *are transforming* society in ways that do not instantiate a fundamental rupture with the inherited, sedimented and bifurcated social structure in terms of which the majority of black people remain confined in a 'zone of nonbeings'" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 146). The impetus for this is social and racial exclusion. Such notions of racial dispossession and inequality are also mentioned by Mbembe (2011) who contends that:

> another major challenge to any re-imagination of "the human" in contemporary conditions is race. South Africa's democracy asserts the equality of all human beings and seeks to derive powers of government from the consent of the governed. Yet, this is a democracy founded on deep and entrenched forms of racial dispossession and inequality inherited from a past of racial brutality. (p. 5)

It is for this reason that I do not seek to deny or invalidate the fact that the majority of black people continue to be economically subjugated even in the context of the post-1994 constitution. In this thesis, I also do not deny that most South Africans "live as if the present, democracy, the law and the Constitution, had unexpectedly betrayed them" (Mbembe, 2011, p. 6). Nonetheless, I reject the presumption that the post-apartheid constitution is not human-centred and by implication, it is undemocratic given that a few get to enjoy economic benefits while the majority of the population lingers at the poverty line. The motivation for such rejection is driven by the following reasons:

- First, Madlingozi (2017) argues that by his decolonial critique of the so-called neo-apartheid constitution he is not undermining the agency of those who are economically and socially excluded, the majority of whom are black. Unfortunately, he is trapped in what he denies given that the current constitution (political equality) guarantees every citizen the right to vote in the elections (not that such a right is unproblematic in itself). As a result, the government is legitimated by those who take the initiative to exercise their right to vote and this right is independent of anyone's socioeconomic status.
- Then, in his critique of the post-1994 constitution, Madlingozi (2017) tends to essentialise such a constitution as if it cannot be changed on legitimate grounds (i.e. a fixed constitution that cannot be changed under the paradigm of democratisation. It can only be changed under the decolonisation paradigm). In his critique of constitutional democracy, as it is practised in post-apartheid South Africa, Madlingozi (2017) completely overlooks the fact that the ruling party does have some form of power. In so doing, he arguably absolves those who are economically and socially excluded and those who are participating in the government of any sense of responsibility in being complicit with the *status quo*.

- Last, of course, Madlingozi (2017) is critiquing the democratisation paradigm and opting for a decolonial-paradigm. He fails to even acknowledge that democratisation when implemented in its true sense can lead to decolonisation (if it is what the people want) given that it would be rooted in the will of the people. Nonetheless, the question of whether South Africa implemented democracy in the post-1994 constitution is debatable (I maintain, however, in this thesis that the post-1994 South Africa is a democratic state). Thus, Madlingozi (2017) is not completely wrong in his critique of the post-1994 constitution in its current form, but I do not concur with his democratisation-decolonisation bifurcation.

2.7 A NEXUS OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

It is palpable from the above discussion that the notion of democracy revolves around ways in which individual freedom, which comes in many ways, can be sustained. At the heart of democracy is individual autonomy which is arguably evident in almost all conceptions of democracy. According to Pendlebury (2004), "an autonomous individual is one who is, in the ordinary sense, in charge of her [or his] own life" (p. 44). This indicates that an autonomous citizen is able to choose the kind of life they wish to lead with little interference from government, public or private institutions (Pendlebury, 2004). Additionally, Pendlebury (2004) maintains that individual autonomy is a political value. The impetus for this claim is that "in terms of the ideal of democracy, the legitimacy of the state depends upon the rational consent of its citizens, and this, in turn, presupposes autonomy on their part" (Pendlebury, 2004, p. 45). This denotes then that any democratic society that does not equip children with the necessary skills to be able to engage in rational deliberation, stands to delegitimise its democratic doctrine. This is because it will be constituted of and by citizens who are not a product of 'conscious social reproduction' which is the pillar of democratic education as envisaged by Gutmann (1987). Enslin, Pendlebury, and Tjiattas (2001) propounded that "for democracies to thrive, citizens have to be taught to be democrats" (p. 115). It is in light of this contention that this chapter now turns to Amy Gutmann who is arguably one of the most influential educational philosophers. Gutmann (1987) contemplates on:

> how does the ideal of democratic education fit into a democratic theory? If my understanding is correct, our concern for democratic education lies at the core of our commitment to democracy. The ideal of democracy is often said to be collective self-determination. But is there a "collective self" to be determined? (pp. 288-289)

In clarifying the quote above, it is evident that the notion of democratic education is heavily underpinned by the notion of democracy. In other words, democratic education ought to train children in such a way that they are able to participate in the different contexts of democracy which the researcher has discussed so far. Moreover, Gutmann (1987) seems to be thinking of whether:

> there [are] not just so many individual selves that must find a fair way of sharing the goods of a society together? It would be dangerous (as critics often charge) to assume that the democratic state constitutes the "collective self" of a society, and that its policies in turn define the best interests of its individual members. (pp. 288-289)

In this instance, Gutmann seems to be critical of the notion of democracy as a common good. Simply put, she does not perceive the individual as being part of the so-called 'collective self' which is presumed to be quite problematic since it homogenises the interests of democratic citizens. It is noteworthy that democratic education seeks to provide democratic societies with the necessary basis "upon which a democratic society can secure the civil and political freedoms of its adult citizens without placing their welfare or its very survival at great risk" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 89). The survival and sustenance of democracies depends upon a democratic education which is rooted in "the democratic ideal as that of conscious social reproduction, the same ideal that guides democratic education" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 89). In all the different forms of democracies that I have discussed in this chapter, citizens are given an opportunity to participate. Hence, democratic education aims to cultivate, through 'conscious social reproduction', citizens who are able to participate in shaping their own democratic societies. Most importantly, most forms of democracies perceive the individual as an autonomous rational being who is more than capable of leading their own life. Nonetheless, the debates on democracy are centred on the nature of governance. It follows then for Appiah (2013) that:

> …we can raise our children, in schools both public and private as well as at home, to understand the value of civic engagement and to undertake it in the right spirit. This is more than a matter of what we say to them in class or around the dinner table. It is a matter of what we get them to do. The habit of respectful attention to others can be taught through exercises (like high school debate) in which students are required to mount defenses of positions they do not share; to give an account of arguments made by others; and to imagine the world from points of view other than their own. (p. 218)

It is not surprising then that, for Gutmann (1987, p. 289), "democracy thus depends on democratic education for its full moral strength. The dependency, however, is reciprocal. Were we not already committed to democratic principles, our ideal of education might take a very different form". In simple terms, our commitment to democracy dictates that we also value democratic education which forms the basis for any democratic society. Gutmann (1987) also cautioned that:

> in the absence of democratic education, risks – perhaps even great risks – will still be worth taking for the sake of respecting the actual preferences of citizens, but the case for civic and political freedom and against paternalism is weaker in a society whose citizens have been deprived of an adequate education (although not as weak as Mill suggested). (p. 289)

In brief, democratic societies need democratic education in order for them to survive and to equip their citizens for meaningful participation. In the past few decades, the debates on the notion of democracy have shifted and they are now mainly centred on governance as opposed to the question of whether ordinary citizens deserve to be given their freedom which dominated the work of the ancient Greek scholars as shown in this chapter. In simple terms, democracy is tied hand and foot to education despite the fact that citizens in democratic societies have the option of choosing whatever form of education they envisage.

2.8 FINAL REMARKS

In this chapter, the researcher first discussed the origins of democracy. In so doing, this chapter first traced democracy from the ancient times of the Athens. Second, the researcher also looked at the criticisms meted out by different scholars on the nature

of Athenian democracy. Moreover, this chapter explored the key arguments for and against democracy. The researcher then argued explicitly and implicitly in favour of democracy while acknowledging its shortcomings which are arguably outweighed by the reasons for having democracy. This chapter also engaged with different theories of democracy and at least showed their defects. I then argued in line with Gutmann (1987) that despite the option to choose whatever education that is deemed fit, democratic societies are ideologically obligated to choose democratic education in order to reinforce and sustain democracy.

CHAPTER 3

DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

> The ideal helps define the scope of a democratic theory of education. A democratic theory of education focuses on what might be called "conscious social reproduction"- the ways in which citizens are or should be empowered to influence the education that in turn shapes the political values, attitude, and modes of behavior of future citizens (Gutmann, 1987, p. 15).

One can extrapolate from this quote that conscious social reproduction is thought to be a form of empowerment since it seeks to inculcate particular political values and attitudes into different generations of society. The cultivation of conscious social reproduction through education is done so consciously. This is a direct opposite of political socialisation "by which democratic societies transmit political values, attitudes and modes of behavior to citizens" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 15). In addition to this, Gutmann (1987) states that political socialisation as a form of reproduction can be referred to as "unconscious social reproduction" since it is a product of a multitude of unintended processes. This suggests that political socialisation does not always fall under the umbrella of 'consciousness'. But before this discussion moves further, it is pivotal to then offer an explication of the term 'consciousness', at least in the context of this study. According to Velmans (2009):[11]

> the term "consciousness" however refers to experience in itself. Rather than being exemplified by a particular thing that we observe or experience, it is exemplified by *all* the things that we observe or experience. Something *happens* when we are conscious that does not happen when we are not conscious—and something happens when we

[11] The term consciousness has been debated for a number of decades (see Velmans, 2009). The impetus then for using this definition is to give the reader a sense of some of the features of that which constitutes consciousness which are evident in most definitions of consciousness (see Tononi, 2004 and Velmans, 2009).

> are conscious of *something* that does not happen when we are not conscious of that thing. We know what it is like to be conscious when we are awake as opposed to not being conscious when in dreamless sleep. We also know what it is like to be conscious of something (when awake or dreaming) as opposed to not being conscious of that thing. (p. 3)

It follows from this definition that consciousness can be summed up as a mental state of being aware of a particular reality. This encapsulation refers to the reality of experience itself. In other words, when human beings are conscious, they are aware of a particular experience and not just the content of that experience. This implies that to cultivate conscious social reproduction involves cultivating individuals who are not only aware of what is expected from them in order to maintain democratic societies, but individuals who are also conscious of the system or theory that underpins such societal expectations. This will lead to such conscious citizens not only shaping democratic processes but democracy in itself. Consequently, the researcher believes that the inclusion of IKS in South African schools' curriculum cannot be seen in isolation from the notion of conscious social reproduction. Moreover, Odora-Hoppers (2005) upheld that:

> the notion of IKS [Indigenous Knowledge Systems] has been defined as the sum total of the knowledges and skills which people in a particular geographic area possess, and which enables them to get the most out of their environment … Traditional knowledge is … the totality of all knowledges and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, spiritual and ecological facets of life. In that sense, many aspects of it can be contrasted with 'cosmopolitan knowledge' that is culturally anchored in Western cosmology, scientific discoveries, economic preferences and philosophies (p. 2)

It is unclear from this delineation as to what the concept of IK implies. For instance, Odora-Hoppers fails to differentiate between what could be presumed to be indigenous factual or propositional knowledge and indigenous practical knowledge. This chapter aims to address this anomaly. Thus, this chapter is structured as follow:

- First, I engage with the notion of democratic education. In so doing, I particularly foreground not only Gutmann's theory of education but also her notion of conscious social reproduction.
- Then, this chapter critically explores the knowledge that is viable or desired by Gutmann's notion of democratic education which seeks to cultivate conscious social reproduction.
- Last, this chapter engages with the debates on IK. The reason for this is to show that there are still epistemological issues within the domain of what is supposed to be considered factual knowledge.

3.2 DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

3.2.1 Defining Democratic Education

Alshurman (2015, p. 864) postulates that the delineation of what constitutes democratic education revolves around three standpoints:

- Freedom to choose learning without any obligations.
- Democratic processes, citizenship, civic values, and school governance.
- Global aspects and self-actualisation.

The first point in the criteria used for defining democratic education is problematic. For example, the view that learners can choose what to learn without any obligations is problematic since factual knowledge exists within the boundaries of truth (see Horsthemke, 2004b). Furthermore, the notion that learners have no obligations regarding what they choose to learn is unrealistic and untrue since knowledge is delivered to learners through the intended curriculum (e.g. in the form of CAPS of the Department of Basic Education, 2012a). In terms of democratic processes, civic values, citizenship, and school governance, Alshurman (2015) seems to be in congruence with Gutmann's (1987) theory of democratic education. His notion of self-actualisation is arguably in line with Gutmann's notion of conscious social reproduction as this chapter highlights later. Alshurman (2015) further articulates that democratic education refers to "the fact that all the individuals regardless of their economic status should get hold of civic values, knowledge, and skills that are required to establish

democracy in a society" (p. 865). It is noticeable that justice or equal access to education is at the centre of democratic education. Nonetheless, what emanates from this definition is the question of whether schools should teach knowledge that seeks to protect and nurture an emerging democracy like that of South Africa even if it is not true. It is not my intention to offer an answer to this question at this juncture. In the next chapter, I argue that all democratic societies should teach true knowledge, but my focus now turns to one of the most influential political philosophers in education, Amy Gutmann. I will, in particular, explore her conceptualisation of democratic education which is evident in the current system of education in South Africa.

3.2.2 Democratic Education: Gutmann's Theory of Democratic Education

Gutmann (1987) notes the pitfalls within Plato's insights which suggested that the state should take total control of education. In countering state control of education, Gutmann (1987) argues that putting the entire responsibility of the child's education in the hands of the state would alienate the parent. The most significant "part of our good is the freedom to share in shaping the society that influences our very evaluation of a family and the degree to which different kinds of people can flourish" (Gutmann, 1987, pp. 26-27). Gutmann (1987) also highlights that giving complete power to parents is also unacceptable in a sense that it fails to secure freedom, mutual respect and that "parents cannot be counted upon to equip their children with the intellectual skills necessary for rational deliberation" (p. 29). Lastly, she expounds that providing an education that is confined to *opportunity* and *neutrality* is not acceptable because it will prevent society from teaching the children what is good, i.e. what is right and acceptable within the society in which they live. According to Gutmann (1987) "the state of individuals thus responds to the weakness of both the family state and the state of families by championing the dual goals of *opportunity* for choice and *neutrality* among conceptions of the good life" (p. 34). Furthermore, Gutmann (1987) argues that such view has moral limitations and that such a view often ignore that "children may grow to have a greater range of choice (and to live more satisfying lives) if their education is biased by those values favored by their society" (p.34). On this basis,

Gutmann (1987) maintained that any education should be compatible with the democratic ideal in which the main aim of education is conscious social reproduction. In summing up her argument, Gutmann (1987) proposes that democratic education is better because it distributes educational authority among the state, parents, and educators and that it has the likelihood of taking into cognisance the insights of all stakeholders on what is 'good' (as delineated above), at least when the educational choices of democratic authorities take note of the restrictions of the notions of non-repression and non-discrimination.

The principle of non-repression prevents anyone or group (and this includes the state) from using education to hinder rational deliberation on competing views of what or should constitute a "good life" and or a "good society" (Gutmann, 1987). The principle of non-repression also prevents any group from teaching untrue doctrines since they may hinder rational deliberation. On the other hand, the principle of non-discrimination is rooted in the view that "for democratic education to support conscious social reproduction, all educable children must be educated" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 45). Hence, non-discrimination protects all educable children from being deprived of an opportunity to engage in rational deliberations through education or schooling. Furthermore:

> Gutmann's central argument starts with the notion that political ideals ought to be based on principles (in this case, on principles of democratic education). For her analysis, the most important principles set limits on democratic education, limits required by the need to avoid repression and limits required by the need to avoid discrimination. (Floden, 1988, p. 382)

Furthermore,

> She [Gutmann] interprets these principles as a contractarian liberal, not (at least in the short run) as a consequentialist. That is, she thinks that repression and discrimination should be avoided even if the balance of benefits and costs would be improved by allowing them. (Floden, 1988, p. 382)

The first extract shows that the question of power is central to the notion of democratic education. Consequently, for Gutmann, democratic education as a political ideal

cannot exist without the two principles of non-repression and non-discrimination to ensure that there is equality, justice, and access for everyone. Furthermore, the second extract elucidates that the two principles in the context of Gutmann's democratic education theory are non-negotiable and they should not be tampered with even if it is for the benefit of someone or a certain group. In short, the principles protect conscious social reproduction as the main pillar of democratic education. Gutmann (1987) believes that to answer her overarching question about who should have or share authority in a democratic society; one needs to be cognisant of the fact that the learners are not just learners: they are individuals who are part of a family and the community or state at large. Hence, it makes sense to then have the state, parents, and learners as part of the decision-making body (Gutmann, 1987). In case of conflict, Gutmann (1987) believes that "[in] a democracy, political disagreement is not something that we should generally seek to avoid" (p. 5). Instead, there needs to be a framework for such differing points of views so that they can be fused into certain policies (Gutmann, 1987). In addition, Gutmann (1987) is of the view that democratic education should be driven by the aim to cultivate conscious social reproduction. In an interview with Sardoc (2018, p. 248), Gutmann was asked: "what skills and virtues to be cultivated in future citizens do you consider most important to the conscious social reproduction you articulate in democratic education?" to which she replied:

> Foremost among the skills and virtues necessary for conscious social reproduction – which is not mindless replication but rather mindful change over time – are those of deliberation. Future citizens need both the tools and the motivation to attend to different – sometimes vastly different – perspectives and to be able to discern what a society should maintain or change, and why (Sardoc, 2018, p. 248)

In addition to the above,

> The cultivation of truth-seeking and truth-telling, tolerance and mutual respect, the skills and virtues of robust yet reasoned debate, a willingness to forge and support beneficial compromises in decision-making, and a basic understanding of the value of deliberation – as well as its limits – all are keys to improving pluralist democratic societies (Sardoc, 2018, p. 248).

At the centre of the first extract, is that the state or community is an evolving organ. Furthermore, it is expected that this change should be a consequence of deliberation. It is not possible to deliberate without rationality or reasonableness and that will encompass some elements of truth. In the second extract, Gutmann comes out clearly on this notion of truth. In other words, democratic education values or aims at producing citizens who always aim for the truth. Gutmann (1987) further detailed that when children are still in their earliest years of schooling, it is possible to cultivate their ability to engage in rational[12] deliberation. Furthermore, she further outlined that it is also possible to inculcate in them the ability to make decisions through being taught to think in a manner that is considered logical and also to argue their case fairly and coherently so. The impetus for such is to nurture citizens who are able to communicate and resolve their incongruities (Gutmann, 1987). It is without a doubt, in this case, that Gutmann cannot circumvent knowledge and truth in the notion of rational deliberation.

The notion of truth in rational deliberation is also evident in Adams and Waghid (2005) when they propounded that what is "also embedded in the concept of rationality in quest of attaining the 'moral good'…are notions such as truth-telling, rejection of arbitrariness, impartiality, a sense of relevance, consistency and a respect for evidence and people" (p. 29). It follows from this that it is practically impossible to deliberate without knowledge. In other words, any form of deliberation is inevitably dependent on knowledge. This simply means that we debate with the aim of reaching a consensus or some form of understanding on the issue at hand[13]. Nonetheless, it would be irrational to deliberate on beliefs since people are allowed to hold varying and even contrasting beliefs on certain things (see Hospers, 1990).

Gutmann (1987) further contends that without the aforementioned, democratic societies stand to produce future citizens who do not tolerate disagreement and

[12] Rationality cannot exist without facts or truth. To put it simpler, rational deliberation has to revolve around the truth because people will never reach any consensus if they were to deliberate on mere beliefs. This is due to the view by Hospers (1990) which articulates that beliefs are allowed to contradict each other; as a result, there is no need to deliberate on them since they may, at times, not be able to be proven to be true or false.

[13] For the benefit of the reader, Horsthemke (2010) propounded that although understanding can be relative, it is difficult to understand without truth.

possess no respect for different ways in which others choose to lead their lives. Additionally, Gutmann (1987) posits that failure to cultivate conscious social reproduction would put democratic societies into a situation whereby "we [do not] expect minorities to convince majorities, or to be convinced by them, of their point view" (pp. 50-51). In moving this discussion forward, Gutmann (1987) expounds that besides the political aspect of democratic education, children will need to be equipped with the capacity to engage in rational deliberations, this is so that they can be able to take hard decisions in circumstances whereby authorities and guidelines do not provide a clear direction. According to Gutmann (1987), children should not be expected just to behave as mandated without pondering on the nature of such guidelines; that is if they ought to live on the basis of the democratic ideal of allotment of political sovereignty as citizens.

Gutmann (1987) advanced that people who only take logical reasoning earnestly and fail to take morality into account are *sophists* of the worst kind. This means that they are unable to differentiate between evident moral demands and the excruciating predicaments of life. On the other hand, Gutmann (1987) maintains that when someone has a solid moral character with the absence of a nourished ability to reason, they stand to be controlled by authority and habit, and therefore they can be considered inadequate to form a democratic society of independent citizens. Thus, for Gutmann (1987, p. 51) "education in character and in moral reasoning are therefore both necessary, neither sufficient, for creating democratic citizens". This suggests that education in character and moral reasoning are pivotal aspects of democratic education but not the only elements, even though they are important, the cultivation of democratic citizens goes beyond the two. For Gutmann (1987), citizens have a plethora of reasons for valuing primary[14] education, "they also value it for helping

[14] For Gutmann (1987, p. 49) the distinction between "elementary schooling as 'primary' and high school as 'secondary' education" would make sense in a society that does not have high demand for literacy. Thus, "when discussing the democratic purposes of education, we should therefore think of high school as part of primary education" (Gutmann, 1987 p. 49). This implies that countries such as South Africa which consistently perform poorly on literacy rankings, unfortunately, have to consider their secondary schooling as part of primary education. The impetus for this view is due to the fact that according to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena, & Palane, 2016) results, more than 78% 4th Grade learners in South Africa could not read for understanding in any of the languages tested. The remaining three Grades in South African primary schools are arguable not enough to cover the literacy demand. Hence, secondary schools should, on this basis, be considered part of primary education.

children learn how to live a good life in the nonmoral sense by teaching them knowledge and appreciation of (among other things) literature, science, history, and sports" (p. 51). Nonetheless, in the case of cultivating conscious social reproduction, it is without a doubt that it would be difficult for anyone to reason or be reasonable without facts or true knowledge. It is clear from this discussion so far that factual knowledge is inevitable in cultivating conscious social reproduction. Considering this enticing discussion on democratic education as conceptualised by Gutmann, it is, therefore, worth visiting the shortcomings of her theory before articulating reasons for the relevance of these debates for this thesis.

3.2.2 Defects in Gutmann's Theory of Democratic Education and its Relevance

Accordingly, the critics of Gutmann's theory of education (e.g. DeCesare, 2016; Merry, 2020; Sherry, 1988; Strossen, 1990; Waghid, 2014) have mainly focused on the merits of the practical realisation of conscious social reproduction and the controversies surrounding such practical implications. DeCesare (2016) argued that Gutmann's democratic threshold mainly focuses on democratic learning outcomes and not necessarily the process involved in achieving such democratic learning outcomes. Simply put, Gutmann's argument for the so-called democratic threshold does not take into cognisance that some students may reach the democratic threshold but only after overcoming a number of "factors, whether experienced inside or outside schools, [which] restrict [their] capabilities to be educated" (DeCesare, 2016, p. 136). In totality, "a child's attainment of the threshold of outcomes—regardless of how it comes about—seems to satisfy Gutmann's concern about conversion factors and, more generally, about the conditions under which children work to achieve democratic learning outcomes" (DeCesare, 2016, p. 134). Furthermore:

> Gutmann's process-oriented perspective is admirable in theory because it ostensibly offers neutral principles for resolving ideologically charged and divisive conflicts over educational policy. However, when applied to concrete controversies, this perspective often proves unsatisfying. It explicitly exalts form over substance. Moreover, analysis reveals that it implicitly exalts certain substantive values over others without adequate justification (Strossen, 1990, p. 152).

One can infer from the extract above that there is a disjuncture between Gutmann's notion of democratic education as a theory and its practical implications. The impetus for such dichotomy is the idea that, in practice, some values are often prioritised over others. Strossen (1990) explained that this might be the consequence of the fact that "individual rights are too often sacrificed to collective decision-making authority" (p. 152). In simple terms, the undervaluing of individual liberty with the aim of boosting majoritarian decision-making often proves to be controversial when the theory of democratic education is applied in practice. Strossen (1990) further noted the following:

- Gutmann's theory of democratic education fails to protect either the learners or parents from the collective will.
- Gutmann is unable to explain why schools are given so much power in order to decide on what is regarded or should be perceived as being 'unreasonable' (especially when it comes to the kind of books that should be provided to the learners).

Moreover, Waghid (2014) challenges Gutmann's rejection of views that seeks to discriminate against others under the guise of freedom of expression. According to Waghid (2014), unrestricted freedom of expression is assumed to be a hindrance to the principal aim of democratic education, which is to do justice to all individuals regardless of their affiliations. Nonetheless, Waghid (2014) challenges this line of thought which can be traced to Gutmann (2003, cited in Waghid, 2014, p. 11) by postulating that the so-called excessive expression which is assumed to be tantamount to hate speech is actually proportionate with freedom of some individuals. Thus, restricting their speech even when such speech is considered to be unjust to others would not be an appropriate way of ratifying democratic education (Waghid, 2014). Consequently,

> even though Gutmann's position sounds plausible it does make democratic education liable to exclusion, because others' views are considered as undesirable for human engagement. Unless the addressor of hate speech, for instance, does not consider her as undesirable, assaultive or offensive to the addressee, it does not give democratic

> education in its current liberal form the edge to deal adequately with such speech acts (Waghid, 2014, p. 12).

The view of exclusion in the pursuit of conscious social reproduction is buttressed by Merry's (2020) contention which supposes that Gutmann's quest for conscious social reproduction did not miss "the fact that speaking truth to power in schools most often does not end well for the speakers, especially when these speakers do not inhabit the social identities with the presumptive legitimacy to speak" (p. 128). The desire by liberal theorists such as Gutmann for public schools to cultivate conscious social reproduction for everyone has proven to be futile and anachronistic given that it has long been established that schools reproduce inequalities (Merry, 2020). This infers that the cultivation of conscious social reproduction reproduces societal inequalities and, in turn, it permits freedom for certain groups of people (that may be due to class, race, and gender discrimination).

Sherry (1988) argued that "sometimes Gutmann's applications seem to be missing elements of her own theories" (p. 1238). For Sherry (1988), the reason for this is evident in Gutmann's argument against the teaching of creationism over evolution. Gutmann (1987) proclaimed that the teaching of creationism as science in public schools would violate the principle of non-repression since it would hinder rational deliberation. Simultaneously, Gutmann (1987) maintained that citizens in democracies cannot agree on the knowledge that ought to be transmitted without accepting scientific standards. Sherry (1988) challenged this view and claimed, "while scientific practice often may be constrained by nearly blind acceptance of the 'truth' of the reigning paradigm, the goal of science is a search for knowledge" (p. 1238). It is for this reason that critical deliberation becomes "ideal than real in scientific inquiry, but it is still the ideal: there is no authoritative source of knowledge" (Sherry 1988, p. 1238). In brief, Sherry (1988) believes that what inhibits or enables critical deliberation in the teaching of creationism or evolution is the approach to truth rather than our perceptual understanding of which one is true. Simply put, according to Sherry (1988), science allows critical deliberation since truth is a contested matter while creationism encourages blind acceptance of the truth. I note, however, that Sherry did not even

bother to acknowledge that science, as it is understood in the modern world, can be taught in a dogmatic manner.

Adams and Waghid (2005) found that in the School Governing Bodies (SGBs), learners and parents are allowed to participate but they are often sidelined since their opinions were found to be infrequently taken into cognisance. This means that they participate without having the power to shape decisions or final outcomes of democratic deliberations which means that they are, technically speaking, omitted from the process. Additionally, Adams and Waghid (2005) maintain that learners and parents should be given a chance to take part "freely and through reasoned deliberation" (p. 31). Furthermore, they believe that following such a trajectory could bring out more democratic practices. Additionally, they note that "although some of the school managers claim that there is space within their SGBs for a fair exchange of ideas, this does not translate into the 'other' being able to influence the decision" (p. 31). Additionally, Adams and Waghid (2005) contend that, in such instances, the manager of the SGB tends to have the final say since they occupy the highest position. In other words, the opinions of those who occupy the lowest positions are not treated with equal weight with those of the manager. This denotes that Gutmann's notion of shared authority does have some practical problems, especially in the South African educational context which was once subject to racial segregation. As a result, a multitude of black people was left without formal education. Hence, participating in the post-apartheid democracy is somehow constrained by the legacy of apartheid. This also shows that the success of Gutmann's notion of shared authority is influenced by context.

Despite these weaknesses of Gutmann's theory of education, it is clear that its features are evident in the South African education system. Thus, debates on the knowledge that should be taught in schools must take Gutmann's theory of democratic education into cognisance. Gutmann's (1987) conception of a democratic education shows that power is distributed amongst the state, parents, and learners. This means that in a democratic society, the education of a child is not the sole responsibility of a single party. In the context of South Africa, section 29 (1) of the Bill of Rights as enshrined

in the constitution (RSA, 1996) states that everyone has a right to basic education, and this includes adult basic education. Section (34) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) indicates that the state must fund public schools from the public revenue on an even-handed basis to ensure suitable implementation and enjoyment of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past disparities in educational provision. Section 3 (1) of SASA (RSA, 1996) states that:

> every parent must cause every *learner* for who he or she is responsible for to attend a school from the first day of the year in which such learners reaches the age of seven until the last school of the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first (p. 6).

It is against this background that I maintain that the debates on what knowledge should be taught in South African schools cannot exist in isolation from the theory of democratic education that frames the South African education system. Simply put, if there is a need or desire to include a particular knowledge system that is not in line with this theory, then the entire system of education should be disrupted, and an alternative system of education should be introduced. This is not desirable since, as shown by Gutmann (1987), most of the alternative systems of education seem to be undemocratic. This chapter now turns to the question of what kind of knowledge is desired by democratic education to achieve its ultimate aim of cultivating conscious social reproduction.

3.2.4 Democratic Education and Knowledge

Magrini (2010) raises important points within the philosophy of the curriculum by questioning forms of knowledge (and intelligence) that are prioritised by the curriculum since they reveal some presumptions about the nature of knowledge and politics. Magrini (2010) is of the view that "the knowledge we value most, when manifest and passed along in our classrooms, has a direct and powerful effect on the type of student we envision our educational practices readying for the so-called 'real world'" (p. 2). This indicates that the knowledge that is included in the school curriculum is driven by a certain political ideology with its aim of shaping citizens into valuing certain things over others. In the case of America, for example, it would

be the emphasis on mathematics and science at the expense of the arts to advance economic competition (Magrini, 2010). From this view, it is clear that the question of political ideology in education does not exist in isolation from that of class ideology. What can be extrapolated from this view is that the kind of knowledge we choose is aligned with our contingent needs and interests. The question is; do our contingent needs and interests (ideology) influence the validity of what we consider knowledge? I intend to provide a detailed retort to this question in the next chapter. Magrini (2010) contends that when societies value mathematics and science, they then:

> place(s) an emphasis on knowledge emerging from the analytic-logical model, which in turn downplays the importance, or value, of knowledge stemming from the intuitive perceptual model, which is to say a model of knowledge that is associated with the humanities, fine arts, and music (p. 2)

It is well encapsulated in this discussion that the thinking behind the decision on what to include in the curriculum or what knowledge is important is, to some extent, a political decision. Thus, the decision in a democratic society is often influenced not only by the ideals of democracy but by economic ideals which include (1) enabling learners "to compete in a competitive workforce"; (2) enabling learners to become "good citizens who can make a difference in the world"; and (3) enabling learners "to develop themselves as individuals" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005, p. 172). Magrini (2010) is of the view that the first ideal of education in democratic societies often outweighs the other two and becomes a priority in the planning of the curriculum. This means that governments such as that of the United States may prioritise economic ideals over other democratic education ideals. This then has a direct impact on the kind of knowledge that is included in the curriculum or seen as being important. I state clearly elsewhere in this chapter that there seems to be some inflexibility between political and class ideology. This is evident from the sometimes-vociferous debates on factors that influence what is taught in schools. I note, however, that economic interests are forever present in education whether it is democratic or not. Thus, the debates on this issue need to move forward and focus on the extent of the presence of economic interests in education (and their implication for knowledge)

rather than the question of whether economic interests should be present in education or not. This chapter now turns to a consideration of democratic education and creationism.

> Creationists of course refuse to accept the evidence that supports the various hypotheses of evolutionary theory. As they see it, one must look to revelation to determine what is absolutely true, rather than believing the 'mere theories' of science. The basic issue, as they see it, is whose truths are to be taught (Pennock, 2002, p. 122).

To elucidate this view, creationists believe that the only truth that matters is that of God. Nonetheless, Pennock (2002) believes that creationists themselves hardly agree on the meaning or the direction of Christianity (except in the case of the Roman Catholics). The rejection of science by the creationists is unfounded given that they do not have methods of validating their knowledge claims (Pennock, 2002). According to Pennock (2002), creationists are not concerned with proving their methods of validating knowledge and their reliability. Likewise, Gutmann (1987) outlined that the capacitation of deliberative character is significant in order to reach the archetype of a democratic autonomous society or beings.

Gutmann (1987) upheld that deliberative citizens[15] ought to be unswerving in living up to the ways and habits of their societies; simultaneously, they need to be willing and able to question such ways and routines when they seem to threaten the foundational ideals of democratic independence. A notable example would be the ideal of respect for others. Interestingly, Gutmann (1987) later argued that evolution and creationism cannot share the same status within the classroom, because theories that ought to be taught in the classroom are a matter of professional decisions rather than those of democracy. Gutmann (1987) argues that "the rationale for teaching any particular religious doctrine in public schools – either as science or as a reasonable alternative to science – conflicts with the rationale for cultivating common, secular standards of reasoning among citizens" (pp. 103-104). This alludes that the teaching

[15] For Gutmann (1987, p. 52) "willingness and ability to deliberate set morally serious people apart from both sophists, who use clever argument to elevate their own interests into self-righteous causes, and traditionalists, who invoke established authority to subordinate their own reason to unjust causes".

of any content that is not rooted in truth or scientific scrutiny, unfortunately, fails to cultivate conscious social reproduction.

According to Gutmann (1987), in a hypothetical society (where human beings share the same religious convictions and tend to reject a literal interpretation of the Bible and theories that do not concur with the Divine), it would be possible for schools to teach creationism over evolution and this would be in line with their democratic standards. In the real world, human beings do not share similar religious convictions against accepting the procedures and outcomes of scientific reasoning. "On the contrary, our ability to agree upon a body of knowledge worthy of transporting future generations depends in significant measure upon widespread acceptance of scientific standards of evidence and verification" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 102). In simple terms, to put creationism over evolution would be another form of putting religious conviction over reason (Gutmann, 1987). This is in line with Pennock's view that:

> the knowledge that we should impart in public schools is not this private esoteric 'knowledge', but rather public knowledge – knowledge that we acquire by customary, natural means. The methodological constraints that science puts upon itself serve to provide just this sort of knowledge, and thus it is scientific knowledge that is appropriate to teach in the public schools. (2002 p. 123)

Scientific knowledge as delineated in the quotation above is mostly favoured by scholars such as Boghossian (2006) and Horsthemke (2004b, 2010). The impetus for the said scholar's support of scientific knowledge is the fact that truth is seen as the pillar of knowledge. Simply put, for Horsthemke (2004b) and Boghossian (2006) there can never be propositional or theoretical knowledge without universal truth. In addition, Gutmann (1987) contends that creationism should not be taught in public schools as science or an alternative to science. What this means is that, due to its lack of evidence and justification, creationism as science or an alternative to science fails to cultivate conscious social reproduction as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) in her quest for democratic education. Horsthemke (2010) compared the notion of multiple truths and 'knowledge diversity' by Green (2008) with that of creationism and the denial of universal truth. Gutmann (1987) further alluded that science is a more privileged way

of understanding the world compared to its counterpart which is creationism as science or an alternative to science. Thus, she rejected creationism as science (which she dubbed undemocratic).

According to Gutmann (1987), the nurturing of character combined with the cultivation of children's moral reasoning does not prevent the genuine aims of primary education in a democratic society. Additionally, citizens tend to see worth in education for a multitude of reasons and not just its political and moral purposes; they tend to cherish education for it being able to capacitate children in such a way that they are able to lead a good life in a nonmoral sense by providing them with the necessary knowledge and making them value (in addition to other things) history, science, literature, and sports (Gutmann, 1987). The mentioned subjects can be thought to be premised on factually true knowledge. To be precise, it becomes clear then that factual knowledge plays an important in the notion of conscious social reproduction. For Gutmann (1987), the motivation for valuing these subjects is that they are able to cultivate a nonmorally good life for children that is pigeon-holed by a "combination of literary appreciation, scientific and historical knowledge, and physical agility" (p. 51). She further posited that the education that seeks to capacitate children to live a nonmoral life also helps in the shaping of the desired virtuous moral character (Gutmann, 1987). Furthermore, the logical skills that are evident in mathematics and in the sciences, the interpretive skills that are provided by literature, the understanding of the complexity of life that is taught by both history and literature, and physical education which teaches sportsmanship, can also contribute to the moral education of democratic citizens (Gutmann, 1987).

Gutmann (1987) detailed that democratic communities are not mandated by principle to teach the truth, albeit the wisest communities would endeavour to teach the truth. Nonetheless, they must be mandated not to teach untrue doctrines which will compromise the possibilities of a shared democratic education. Of course, the possibility of a democratic society that does not teach truth is absurd. I believe that it is for this reason that Gutmann is of the view that democratic societies that strive to teach the truth are the wisest. It would not have made sense for Gutmann (1987) to

argue that deliberation and the questioning of unfair routines is mandatory for democratic societies yet the teaching of truth is optional; how would it then be possible to cultivate conscious reproduction in societies that may, for example, choose not to teach the truth since they are not bound to do so by any principle. It appears, therefore, that when Guttmann decided to refer to the communities that strive to teach the truth as the wisest, she was taking into cognisance the possible challenges (some of which I posed as questions) of not teaching the truth.

I have so far established why this thesis is premised on the view that her delineation of education constitutes conscious social reproduction. As a result, Gutmann (1987) is implicitly, explicitly and by ideological obligation (i.e. deliberative democracy or the quest for citizens who can deliberate) in favour of factual knowledge among other factors (e.g. moral education and values) that ought to cultivate conscious social reproduction. I argue that factual knowledge is inevitable in the context of conscious social reproduction: it is nigh-impossible for any individual to be conscious, value, or deliberate with an intent to shape their societies without propositionally or factually true knowledge. Most importantly, Gutmann (1987) does acknowledge the possibly problematic nature of the knowledge imparted by subjects such as science and mathematics. Nonetheless, she does not give clarity or specify in what sense are they problematic. It is in light of this unclear nature of factual knowledge (which is favoured by Gutmann) that the researcher will now show through the debates on IKS that the tenets of what should constitute factual knowledge remain a contested matter. This is because of the nature of truth that shapes what is considered to be factual knowledge. For instance, some scholars, as the next chapter will show, believe that truth is relative and, as a result, factual knowledge is relative. Others are of the view that the truth is absolute; consequently, factual knowledge is universal. I now turn to the notion of IKS to demonstrate the nature of some of these debates.

3.3. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

3.3.1 What is meant by Indigenous Knowledge Systems?

The notion of what constitutes indigenous knowledge has been a longstanding challenge with a plethora of researchers attempting to clarify the concept, and there is still no widely accepted definition of IK (Jacobs, 2015; Onwu & Mosimege, 2004; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Warren, 1991). According to Semali and Kincheloe (1999), IK refers to "the dynamic way in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their environment and how they organise that folk knowledge of flora and fauna, cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives" (p. 3). Furthermore, Smith (1999) postulates that IK is a concept that globalises the worries, sufferings, and experiences of those who were once colonially dispossessed. In light of the two definitions of IK, it is clear that IKS can be defined as knowledge that belongs to a specific group of people or region. This thesis notes that IK has also been defined as knowledge that is

> evolving, cumulative experience gained by continuously and carefully observing nature and by trial-and-error experiments, privileges the community to validate it using multitheories of truth over many generations as it is transmitted orally, and through imitation and demonstration (Zinyeka, 2014, p. 11).

In this case, IK is not a stagnant form of knowledge as normally portrayed in the literature. IK can be proven since words such as "carefully observing" are included in Zinyeka's (2014) delineation of IK. Zinyeka (2014) further advances that IK is a tested form of knowledge and not simply uncorroborated mythological beliefs. What stems from this definition of IK is the question of whether knowledge in its theoretical sense can be relative to a certain group of people. I chose this definition of IK since it is arguably a well-explicated definition of what constitutes the notion of IK. Nonetheless, I will show explicitly and implicitly throughout this thesis as to why the idea of a factually valid IKS is absurd and untenable. In addition, I will also show its implications for the notion of conscious social reproduction as envisaged by Gutmann (1987).

3.3.2 International Trends and Debates

Green (2012) posits that there has been a shift in the curriculum within universities when it comes to debates on intellectual heritage (which includes IK) in various faculties (including the Social Sciences) and that such debates have been evident in Latin America, Australia, and India. Green (2012) further articulated that:

- These contentions are mainly concerned with the essence of the connection between public, sciences, and states;
- At the centre of these debates, there is a concern regarding existing presumptions about the culture which underpin the conception of knowledge and knowledge itself.

In all three contexts (Latin America, India, and Australia) scholars (Banks, 2015; Smith, Messenger, & Soderland, 2017) have postulated that there is a need to integrate various intellectual heritages [and this includes different knowledge systems]. This implies that most parts of the world and especially of those who have been dispossessed are calling for the integration of their own knowledge systems within mainstream education. Frankly put, they are rejecting the exclusion of their knowledge systems which can be linked to numerous historical events such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid.

> The idea of method as a guarantor of truth and knowledge in the sciences emerged from a certain confidence about the capacities of the cognitive subject and the status of the object, method being that which allows the subject to produce and secure true knowledge about the object – that is, objective knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p. 432).

It is evident in this quote that the notion of universality has always been rooted in the methods used to generate such true knowledge within the confines of science. Maldonado-Torres (2017) argues that the changing of the "subject into an object of scientific enquiry via specific methods" (p. 433) has produced numerous scientific advances which helped advance the understanding of human beings. In other words, the methods used to generate what is presumed to be objective knowledge about the

nature of human beings have led to innovation and aided our understanding of human beings. It is against this background that Maldonado-Torres (2017) contends that "Western methodic knowledge acquired normative status and led to the rejection or subordination of other forms of knowing" (p. 433). This means that how people in the West accessed the truth about the external world was then universalised at the expense of other ways in which other people (mostly from the South) come to know the world. Maldonado-Torres's (2017) argument is rooted in the view that:

> epistemic and ontological colonization did not happen in isolation or were merely contingent results of the search for objectivity through methodic science… They were not happening in isolation either: undergirding them there was a more encompassing coloniality of being, power, and knowledge in the modern West. (p. 433)

In clarifying the above quote, for Maldonado-Torres, the colonisation of being or ontological colonisation is interwoven with epistemic colonisation. Simply put, the colonisation of who people are and how they come to know about who they are is interlaced. In his book titled *Epistemologies*[16] *of the South: Justice against Epistemicide,* de Sousa Santos (2015) argues against epistemicide which refers to the destruction of cultures, memories, ancestral ways in which indigenous people relate to the world and other people, and knowledge which is assumed to belong to indigenous populations. Bluntly put, he is against the obliteration of the knowledge that is thought to belong to indigenous communities. Further, Smith, Maxwell, Puke, and Temara (2016) advanced that "there are three major terms used internationally to describe indigenous knowledge: Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and Indigenous Knowledge (IK)" (p. 137). Smith et al. (2016) articulated that some scholars such as Little Bear (2012 cited in Smith et al., 2016, p. 137) preferred the term 'knowledges' over knowledge in order to not homogenise the knowledges of indigenous people. Moreover,

> The European paradigm of rational knowledge was not only elaborated in the context of, but as part of, a power structure that involved the European colonial domination

[16] Horsthemke (2020) questions the plausibility of plural 'epistemologies' on the basis that traditionally, epistemology has been defined as a theory of knowledge. Thus, it makes no sense to have multiple epistemologies since factual or propositional knowledge is universally valid.

> over the rest of the world. This paradigm expressed, in a demonstrable sense, the coloniality of that power structure (Quijano, 2007 p. 174).

In light of this view, it is clear that the notion of rational knowledge is problematised since it was imposed through violence or European colonial domination.Thus, Mignolo (2007) posits that "decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future – a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals" (p. 159). This line of thought is also evident in Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) argument that epistemology and methodology are linked, and that the current knowledge seeks to strengthen the status quo rather than to change it. By implication, learners are socialised into ways that serve imperialism or the West. In short, learners are socialised into reproducing their own oppression. Therefore, decoloniality aims to liberate the oppressed from the so-called 'objective' truth or knowledge.

Green (2012) states that, internationally, there has been a call for the recognition of knowledge as being plural in its nature by the 'indigenous knowledge movement'. Nonetheless, she argues that in this fight for recognition of various knowledge systems there has been a homogenisation of indigenous communities as if the Cree people in Alberta and the San people in Southern Africa are the same. To bring these debates home, Green (2012) enunciates that the debates in South Africa also reflect the international trends and debates as outlined above and that the discussions have also been about ways in which the gap between Western science and other knowledge systems can be bridged. Most importantly, Green (2012) argues that the homogenisation of indigenous people which suggests that indigenous people are all part of the same knowledge system does more damage than good. She is of the view that such homogenisation simply creates an unnecessary conflict between Western science and IK. To be precise, debates at the national level are in line with international trends and debates since they are also calling for the plurality of knowledge to be recognised.

3.3.3 Concerns in Epistemology: Rethinking IKS

Giroux (1988) was of the view that knowledge is socially constructed and that it needs to be presented and portrayed as such. This suggests that knowledge is not natural or innate; it is something that humans decide on. It can then be assumed that this knowledge belongs to the ruling class since they seek to maintain the *status quo*. To further strengthen his argument, Giroux (1988) rejected the idea of universalism and amalgamated forms of rationality. This is in line with the idea of relative propositional indigenous knowledge systems. In light of this contention, I now turn to Horsthemke (2004b) who expressed some doubt about the idea of IK as factual knowledge. He argued that there can never be IK in a propositional or theoretical sense since such knowledge should be underpinned by truth and that truth is universal. In contrast, Masemula (2013) maintained that IK has been presented and portrayed as being primitive and inadequate to adapt to change and solve modern challenges. She states:

> The marginalisation of indigenous knowledge is a well-orchestrated plan that continues to bedevil the recognition and affirmation of indigenous knowledge as knowledge in its own right. Africans born under colonial rule might not recognise the impact of their lack of indigenous knowledge and its contribution to lagging development and neocolonisation in their countries (p. 118).

In addition, Green (2008) believes that imperfections in the theoretical disposition or scholarship do not mean that IK does not exist. In other words, one cannot simply say that IK does not exist because it cannot be theoretically defended. In her response to Horsthemke's refutation of IK as another form of theoretical or propositional knowledge, Green (2008) states that:

> IK lobbyists' arguments about the nature-culture divide, Horsthemke 'completely agrees with' them – without acknowledging that that is the crux of the claim that there is not only one universally valid system of knowledge. The argument that knowledge about 'culture' and 'nature' ought not to be considered separately is a challenge to one of the orthodoxies of the sciences and demonstrates the argument of IK proponents that there is not only one way of knowing the world. (p. 146)

In the above extract, knowledge is perceived as being multiple. Unequivocally put, people come to understand and interpret the world in different ways which are all assumed to be valid. Green (2008) believes that the separation of 'knowledge' and 'belief' is not a neutral act since it is often done when it comes to IK and not when it comes to Western Scientific Knowledge. She challenges the notion that knowledge is underpinned by the truth which is independent of what people may believe in and rejects the contention that IK cannot withstand scrutiny and criticism, stating that, if this was the case, indigenous communities would not have evolved with times. Also, the belief that IK cannot be empirically verified is not appropriate since it often demands absolute truth instead of what is possible and true for a specific context (Green, 2008). For instance, an astronomer finds the sun useful for a different reason compared to that of a solar scientist. Therefore, Green (2008) proposes that there needs to be knowledge diversity in order to enhance and even advance understanding.

Horsthemke (2010) contends that it is quite difficult to come to understand without evidence of truth. Thus, he is of the view that without truth there can never be a theoretical or propositional knowledge in a real context. Horsthemke (2010) questioned the idea of knowledge diversity since it was driven by the assumption that there are multiple 'truths'. In her initial argument, Green (2008) pointed out that:

> Arguing for a way of regarding scientific laws and models that moves away from the assumption of literal truth, Elgin points out that in the sciences, precision, accuracy, and falsehood are a matter of context. Newtonian physics, for example, is true enough for specific purposes, rather than universally true. (p. 154)

Horsthemke (2010) challenges the above claim by Green by arguing that "all knowledge claims are made within specific contexts. Truth itself is not context-dependent" (p. 329). Simply put, knowledge is made up of facts which are underpinned by truth or evidence (Elgin, 2004, cited in Horsthemke, 2010, p. 329). In brief, Horsthemke (2010) believes that any knowledge that is true becomes universal knowledge since it cannot be true only to a particular group and not to other people. Horsthemke (2010) propounded that truth exists independently of what people think.

In short, all true beliefs about the world are universal knowledge. I now turn to African IK.

3.3.4 African Indigenous Knowledge

> The dynamics of AIKS [African Indigenous Knowledge Systems] operate on two entwined levels; namely the empirical level and the cognitive level. The empirical level can be unpacked into (i) natural (ii) technological and architectural and (iii) socio-cultural spheres. The natural sphere includes ecology, biodiversity, soil, agriculture, medicinal and pharmaceutical (Osman, 2009, p. 2).

It is well-captured in this quote that AIKS are multidimensional and complex. Nonetheless, the extract suggests that AIKS exist as another form of knowing and engaging with the world within different disciplines that are arguably universal. Osman (2009) posits that the second aspect of AIKS is made up of crafts which include food processing, metallurgy, textiles and basketry. The third part of AIKS "is that of socio-cultural aspects of life, e.g. social welfare, governance, conflict resolutions, music, art, etc" (Osman, 2009, p. 2). The existence of these disciplines or spheres of AIKS as factually true knowledge would mean that there are multiple truths. It is against this milieu that this thesis will in the next chapter reject such a proclamation of knowledge which may hinder conscious social reproduction.

The notion of AIKS also explains a cognitive structure whereby perceptions and theories of culture and nature are abstracted (Odora-Hoppers, 2005). According to Nel (2008, cited in Osman, 2009, p. 1), the connection between IK, technologies, its holders and devices used for its application are linked to a framework and a cosmology. The heart of indigenous cosmology can be assumed to be about "the co-evolution of spiritual, natural and human worlds" (Odora-Hoppers, 2005, p. 4). Moreover, Emeagwali and Shizha (2016) posit that:

> Scientific knowledge, in whatever form, definition and cultural context it may exist, is found in all societies. Each society has its own way of categorising and labelling types of knowledge. However, in African indigenous communities, knowledge is often treated as holistic body of knowledge. African indigenous knowledge systems, which

> are based on the natural environment and human practices for human sustainable development, are intricately interrelated. (p. 6)

In this construal, it is ostensible that IK is not just a distinct relative form of knowledge: it is also a science that is largely shaped by various indigenous communities leading to the concept of African IK. In clear terms, Emeagwali and Shizha are of the view that there is a science that is relative to particular African indigenous communities and the definition of such science depends on those communities. I reject this view on the basis that the two researchers failed to critically engage with the notion of 'truth', which is the pillar of knowledge. Thus, their claim which presumes that science is relative is unfounded and lacking in terms of substance. As I will show in the next chapter, factual knowledge which largely makes up the so-called science cannot be relative. Additionally, Higgs (2010) suggests that indigenous African epistemology can be understood as indigenous African ways of knowing. What is problematic about such conceptions of knowledge is that he does not engage with the components of knowledge which are belief, justification and truth. Consequnently, Higgs (2010) fails to establish grounds in which there can be such a thing as indigenous African epistemology. Further,

> with respect to indigenous peoples, their knowledges have been absorbed into the dominant (Western) cultural archive and represented in Western terms back to the West as well as to indigenous peoples themselves … Colonisation did not only involve colonisation of land owned by indigenous peoples, but also colonisation of the minds of indigenous peoples (Le Grange, 2001, p. 141).

What can be extrapolated from this view of IK in South Africa is that it also reflects some sense of ideological questioning. In other words, it focuses more on the presumed impact of knowledge instead of what makes knowledge valid or what counts as valid knowledge. Le Grange (2001) postulated that the exploitation of the knowledge that originates from indigenous people and communities can be easily understood as another form of epistemic colonization. The exploitation of African traditional knowledge and destruction of the environment is something that is acknowledged by Horsthemke (2004b) when he argued that "Western knowledge,

science, technology and 'rationality' have led to…the inferiorisation of indigenous peoples' practices, skills and insights has, to a large extent, been arrogant and of similarly questionable rationality" (p. 33). I concur with both Le Grange (2001) and Horsthemke (2004b) on this view; nonetheless, as I will show in the next chapter, IKS can only exist as practical knowledge.

Le Grange (2004) argues that a particular kind of knowledge does not become powerful because of its alignment with objectivism (or universality) and or rationality. Instead, it has the ability to shift from "the site and moment of its production to other places and times" (p. 87). What is strikingly shocking about this argument is Le Grange's failure to acknowledge the fact that it is nigh-impossible to have theoretical or factual knowledge without objective or universal truth and rationality. I will elucidate further on this point in the next chapter. Le Grange (2004) also argued that "Western science's powerful position also has been abetted by the use of military power and imperialism" (p. 87). It is clear that, for Le Grange, knowledge from the West is globally accepted for pragmatic reasons and not for epistemic reasons. To be precise, the rest of the world is, for example, assumed to have been coerced into believing that there is such a thing as a force of gravity, and they did so under the barrel of a gun. It is only then that the knowledge from the West became powerful and not because it was true and justifiable. It is noteworthy that Le Grange's (2004) contention on the existence of both IK and Western science is not convincing given that he does not engage in-depth with the main tenets of knowledge (i.e., truth, justification, and belief). Consequently, there is arguably some evidence of conflating issues in epistemology (i.e. what makes knowledge valid) with ideological or social justice issues (e.g. colonisation).

Horsthemke (2004a) contends that "an immediate problem with virtually any account of traditional, local or IK is that no proponent of Africanisation offers a definition or elaborates on the knowledge he or she is working with" (p. 582). Hence, it is not clear as to what exactly makes African knowledge indigenous 'knowledge'. Horsthemke (2004a) is of the view that such attempts "make a certain limited sense when applied to skills and to acquaintance-type knowledge. When applied to factual or

propositional knowledge, either the term Africanisation or what is at issue would more correctly be called the Africanisation of beliefs" (p. 584). Thus, one can conclude that it is a challenge to provide conceptual clarity on what constitutes African IK as factual knowledge. This challenge has also been taken into account by IK lobbyists such as Green (2008).

3.4 FINAL REMARKS

> In essence, the argument is as follows. Belief is the subjective component of (propositional/theoretical/factual) knowledge, while truth constitutes its objective anchor. While beliefs may vary from individual to individual, society to society, culture to culture – and indeed in terms of strength and duration – truth does not so vary. Truth refers to what is the case, independently of what individuals believe, think or feel may be the case – independently of their interests and preferences, and even of public and general consensus (Horsthemke, 2010, p. 330).

It is unmistakable in this case that truth is not a matter of being closer to what is supposed to be the case. Instead, it is either the case or it is not. Thus, we come to know what we know simply because it is the case (true) and not because it is closer to the actual case (Horsthemke, 2010). Horsthemke's assertion on truth shows that true knowledge is a subject of contestation as the next chapter will show. Nonetheless, in this chapter, I first looked at the notion of consciousness and clearly showed how it links with Gutmann's idea of conscious social reproduction. Furthermore, this chapter engaged with Gutmann's conception of democratic education which can be linked to a liberal or pluralist democracy.

Democratic education is inevitable in any democratic society. In other words, democratic societies are ideologically obliged to produce sovereign or intellectually independent human beings who are capable of not only deliberating (as mandated by existing democratic frameworks in order for citizens to participate meaningfully in their democratic societies) but also able to shape such democratic processes of deliberation and the entire view of democracy. Moreover, the researcher showed that in order to achieve conscious social reproduction, it is then impossible not to put factual knowledge at the centre of the curriculum in public schools. However, this

chapter showed through the debates on IKS that the notion of what constitutes factual knowledge remains a contested matter. I deliberately provided a descriptive account of the debates on IKS with the motivation of diving deep into the meta-theories that underpin different perspectives on IKS in the next chapter. The following chapter clearly shows that the debates on IK do not exist in isolation from other epistemological debates which have been taking place for centuries. Consequently, the next chapter ought to establish the significant features of that which is presumed to be factual knowledge which has been at the command of the deliberations on IKS.

CHAPTER 4

META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EPISTEMOLOGICAL REALISM AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

> There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns;... we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. (Rumsfeld, 2002, cited in Logan, 2009, p. 712)

It is observable from this quote that there are things that we know and we are aware of such knowledge. There are also things that we do not know and we are conscious of such epistemic deficiency. The quote also suggests that there are things we do not know as human beings and we are not cognisant of such unknowns. In other words, there are times when we do not know that we do not know. Of course, the context of this quote is not the same as that to which it is applied to in this chapter. Nonetheless, I chose the quote to show through the debates in epistemology and the researcher's contention the complex nature of *knowing* about the external world as this chapter will demonstrate.

Jorgensen (2010, p. 15) postulates that a "meta-theory simply means theoretical reflections on theory". This implies that meta-theories are evident in all theories that exist in different disciplines. I need to clarify the difference between meta-theories and theories. Meta-theories are often used as underlying philosophical presumptions about the nature of the world. On the other hand, theories refer to a set of clearly stipulated and accepted principles, assumptions and rules of a system brought about in order to predict, analyse or explicate the behaviour or nature of a particular phenomenon (Reynolds, 1971). Hence, Freire (2012) defines meta-theory as a "theory of theory or systematic discourse about theory" (p.56). In other words, meta-theories speak to the underlying philosophical assumptions of any given theory. The impetus

for this conceptual clarification is that, unlike conventional empirical or even conceptual research, this thesis is instead underpinned by a meta-theory as a framework instead of a theory. Another motive for using a meta-theoretical framework is because I focus mostly on the question of what counts as valid knowledge and the implications of such criteria for the conceptions of IK and democratic education.

Based on the above conceptual subtleties, it becomes important to define a theoretical framework and show how it differs from the proposed meta-theoretical framework. Osanloo and Grant (2016) are of the view that a theoretical framework "consists of the selected theory (or theories) that undergirds your thinking with regards to how you understand and plan to research your topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to your topic" (p. 13). It follows then that in line with the definition of a meta-theory as a theory of theory, a meta-theoretical framework would differ from the ordinary theoretical framework since it goes beyond the theories used in a theoretical framework and fortifies their philosophical presuppositions. To put it bluntly, a meta-theoretical framework will then allow me to see reality from a meta-theoretical perspective rather than just a theoretical outlook which by itself is also influenced by a particular meta-theory. As a consequence, this chapter is structured as follow:

- I will first engage with the notion of 'scepticism' and also offer a critique of the idea.
- I then engage with 'relativism' and 'constructivism' and offer a critique of each.
- This is followed by a critical explication of the notion of 'epistemological realism' as a rejoinder to the aforementioned meta-theories of truth and knowledge.
- Before concluding the chapter, I then look deeply at the implications of the realist contentions on IK (and democratic education) and argue in support of Horsthemke's doubts about the existence of IK which are concomitant to realism.

4.2. NATURE AND MEANING OF SCEPTICISM: A SCEPTICAL APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE

According to Stroud (1984) scepticism[17] refers to "the conclusion that we cannot know, that no one knows anything about the world around us" (p. 1). This implies that knowledge about the external or the world in which we live in is nigh-impossible. I will later show in this chapter why, despite the challenges posed by the sceptics, we can still get to know some things about the external world. The notion of being sceptical about the knowledge which we claim to possess, or gain through senses, about the external world is assumed to have been triggered by Descartes (1641) when he contemplated on how he could separate knowledge from the things that he dreamt about or considered to be 'true'. It is evident in this view that Descartes was pondering on the validity of the knowledge to which he claimed to believe or assumed to be true about the external world.

Stroud (1984) contends that Descartes's reflection on what he knows seems to be part of his quest for what he (Descartes) refers to as an overall technique for "rightly conducting reason and seeking truth in the sciences" (p. 4). In short, Descartes is reflecting on his own knowledge partly because he is searching for a reliable method through which he can come to know about the external world without any uncertainties. To support this view, Descartes (1641) put it bluntly that "if I am able to find in each one [senses] some reason to doubt, this will suffice to justify my rejecting the whole" (p. 6). Simply put, the methods of inquiry used when humans investigate the external world are not beyond a reasonable doubt, at least in the eyes of Descartes. Thus, Stroud (1984) is of the view that in the "*First Meditation,* Descartes finds that he

[17] There are different types (albeit not exhaustive) of scepticism which are as follow:

- Limited scepticism- refers to sceptics who question our knowledge of certain domains or spheres of reality (see Santayana, 1923).
- Absolute scepticism-refers to the questioning of whether it is possible to have knowledge of the world (see Unger, 1971).
- Academic scepticism- refers to the idea that we cannot know anything about the world with absolute certainty. This is evident in the view that: "while there has always been much dispute about the nature of the original academic scepticism…both Sextus and Cicero stress that while the Academics *reject* knowledge in the form of the Stoic *cataleptic impressions* they accept those which are 'probable'" (Wright, 1986 p. 418).
- Pyrrhonian scepticism- this refers to sceptics who do not accept that we know anything about the world and at the same who do not concur with the view that we do not know anything about the world. Instead, they chose to doubt everything including the basis for accepting the view that one does not know anything (Wright, 1986).

has no good reason to believe anything about the world around him and therefore that he can know nothing of the external world" (p. 4). Descartes (1641) was of the view that such a quest for what was thought to be the 'principles of knowledge', or grounds of legitimacy, would easily allow him to then examine them. In line with this, Descartes (1641) was of the view that if these 'principles' are evident in all of human knowledge, it then follows that assessing the legitimacy or validity of the so-called principles would simply mean assessment of most if not all of the human knowledge. Hence, if it was to be established that one of the 'principles' on which we often base our knowledge of the external world were undependable, it is inevitable that the knowledge gained through such 'principles' would be in question. Descartes (1641) further asked if there were any significant 'principles' to which human knowledge was based. He noted that much of our knowledge is based on senses. Stroud (1984) argued that by senses Descartes was mainly referring to senses such as smell, touch, taste, hearing and seeing. Descartes (1641) comes out strongly when he states that:

> all that up to the present time I have accepted as most true and certain I have learned either from the senses or through the senses; but it is sometimes proved to me that these senses are deceptive, and it is wiser not to trust entirely anything by which we have once been deceived. (p. 7)

Stroud (1984) argues that it is unclear as to what Descartes would consider to be part of the senses in this case. According to Stroud (1984), a number of philosophers would be of the view that Descartes was not clear on the nature of the senses he was referring to. Thus, Descartes (1641) contends that, for instance, mathematical knowledge is not gained through sense or from the senses; therefore, not all knowledge is known through the senses. This suggests that, as soon as we have established that senses are one of the bases of beliefs, as a consequence, humans ought to reject the supposed knowledge obtained from them. According to Stroud (1984), some philosophers seemed to be thinking along these lines and many believed that Descartes belonged to the supposed school of thought which falls within the notion of scepticism. Descartes (1641) further stressed that:

> I have in sleep been deceived by similar illusions, and in dwelling carefully on this reflection I see so manifestly that there are no certain indications by which we may clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep that I am lost in astonishment. (p. 7)

In light of the above quote, it is evident that Descartes was of the view that senses cannot be a reliable source of knowledge. Furthermore, Descartes (1641) expounded that appearance has at some point misled us; on that basis, it becomes clear that senses are undependable, hence, leading one to ponder on whether senses can be trusted as a source or tool that can be used to attain human knowledge. Descartes (1641) denotes that it is never a good idea to trust anything that has once deceived us. Stroud (1984) counters this view by arguing that the fact that senses sometimes deceive us is not enough to substantiate the view that senses are untrustworthy or the belief that senses as a source of knowledge cannot be trusted.

Reflecting on dreams and reality, Descartes (1641) posited that he needed to be aware of the fact that he was a man. As a result, he was in tune with the practice of sleeping, and in his dreams, he represented to himself some of the things that were evident in what was assumed to be the waking moment. He brooded over the question of how many times has it happened to him that in his sleep he had dreamt of himself being dressed and seated next to the fire when in reality he was just lying in bed undressed. In the *First Meditation*, Descartes (1641) asserted his views on human knowledge while he was sitting right next to a fire holding a pen in his hand. For Descartes (1641), such an illusion had deceived him often. Consequently, Descartes (1641) was of the view that there are no absolute clues which may assist in helping one differentiate between sleep and being awake.

Stroud (1984) notes that Descartes' recognition of the possibility that he could be dreaming, allows him not to divulge his judgement about the nature of the external world and how things might be around him. Thus, Descartes (1641) was of the view that if he was to possess the knowledge that he was seated next to the fire, he first needed to establish or at least know that he was not fantasising about being seated next to the fire. For Descartes, that was the essential requirement to know the external world. Consequently, Descartes (1641) noted that there are no clear signs by which we

can come to separate sleep from wakefulness. It is against this background that, Stroud (1984) is of the view that the Cartesian problem of the human knowledge of the external world brings the following questions and problems:

- How can human beings develop any knowledge of the external world based on senses if senses only provide us what Descartes believed they give us?
- Descartes was of the view that what we acquire about the so-called external world is only information that is in line with that which we gain when we dream about the world around us. Thus, on what basis can we then acquire knowledge through our senses?
- The Cartesian contention provides our knowledge with a challenge, and the problem is to prove that the external world does exist independently of dreaming. In short, the challenge of separating sleep from wakefulness needs to be met before we can claim to have knowledge of the external world.
- According to Descartes (1641), we cannot prove that we are not dreaming by using our senses since they have shown us that they are not a reliable source of knowledge.

The sceptical argument is not only limited to that of Descartes which delineated the nature and rejected the knowledge acquired through the senses. In essence, there are different arguments[18] presented by sceptics which cannot be clearly encapsulated in this chapter since they have been developed for many generations. Nonetheless, in his book, *Reason and Scepticism*, Slote (1970) recapitulates the prevailing perspective contained by the variety of arguments within scepticism by expounding that:

[18] Some of the differing arguments made by the sceptics are as follows:

- The first one is that of Descartes (1641) which rejects knowledge that stems from our senses since they have proven to be unreliable.
- The second one expresses doubts on the knowledge that comes from reason or theory since it is possible for us to make mistakes in our deductive and mathematical inferences. It is clear from this then that we cannot be certain of the knowledge we get from mathematical axioms (see Lenhard, (2004) for some of the debates on mathematics and skepticism)
- The third one assumes that, since there isn't a clear distinction between a state of dreaming and that of wakefulness. It follows then that some sceptics are of the view that actual experiences should not be thought as being absolutely certain (Descartes, 1641).
- The last one is again that of Descartes who also argued that there are high chances that human beings can be deceived by what is thought to be an 'evil genius'. Thus, our knowledge of the world cannot be reliable (see Slote, 1970).

> by scepticism about X (where X could mean any empirical claim), I shall mean or view that some hypothesis about X is no less reasonable than its deniable, which means that there is no more reason to believe that X exists than that X does not exist and that it is consequently unreasonable to believe that X exists. (p. 17)

It is observable from this quote that despite changes in the nature of the argument put forward by the sceptics, they all contend that, as human beings, we cannot have knowledge of the world. The difference is the degree of not knowing the external world and the nature of not knowing. For example, some sceptics are of the view that we cannot know the world through senses. Other sceptics expound that we cannot only know some aspects of reality (see Santayana, 1923). On the other hand, some sceptics do not discard the fact that we can know about the external world. Instead, they contend that we cannot know absolutely about such a world.

In brief, some sceptics such as Descartes argue that sensory knowledge is unreliable. Thus, if it is the only way in which we can gain knowledge of the external world; then we cannot get to know or be certain of our knowledge of the world since senses have proven to be untrustworthy. The sceptics are exposing the fact that there is a possibility that our knowledge of the external world can be wrong. Based on this discussion so far, I believe that the pressing question for the sceptics is, on what basis can we be sure or certain that we know? To put it bluntly, the sceptics wonder if there is a possibility of alignment between what we claim to know about the external world (since we could be dreaming or hallucinating) and reality. It is clear in the *First Meditation* that the main concern for Descartes is whether senses can reliably provide us with true knowledge of the external world since they have, at times, proven otherwise.

4.2.1 Scepticism and Realism: A Critique of Scepticism

It is certain that, despite the fact that sceptics have put forward an argument that is almost impossible to refute, they have also faced criticism from a plethora of scholars as I will show. Epistemological realists such as Heil (1998) and Horsthemke (2013) have acknowledged that it is almost (if not) impossible to refute the contentions of the

sceptics as delineated above. Horsthemke (2013) notes that major problems with scepticism are as follow:

- Scepticism disdains common-sense.
- If we cannot be certain that we know anything, how can an extreme sceptic then be consistently sure of our uncertainty as propounded by their thesis? Consequently, extreme scepticism becomes incoherent and self-refuting.
- If the contention that we cannot be certain that we know was true, it would then invite irresponsibility and epistemic insecurity since people would not be certain of what they know and do not know.

It can be deduced from these main points that scepticism in its essence makes it impossible to have knowledge of the external world. In addition, it makes it impossible to have knowledge of its own thesis which is incongruous and that cannot take human knowledge of the external world forward since it deems it impossible to attain such knowledge. In the same breath, Heil (1998) engaged with the Cartesian sceptics' argument. In so doing, he reached a conclusion that it is impossible to refute sceptics' argument since it requires one to provide an alternative that is not circular. Before this chapter turns to relativism and critically engage with its tenets and flaws, it is necessary to state that I reject scepticism on the basis that

- Extreme scepticism assumes that knowledge is impossible as shown in the discussion to this point.
- Even if sceptics were right in postulating that we cannot be certain about our knowledge of the world, such argument is not restricted only to scepticism. Epistemological realists acknowledge that at times we can be mistaken about our knowledge of the world (see Heil, 1998; Horsthemke, 2013).
- Another problem with scepticism is that for the purpose of this thesis, it will not only render IK impossible but universal knowledge too. Thus, scepticism in this study would not only undermine the very act of justification of the knowledge claims made by me – it would also render them incoherent.

- The reason for my inclusion of scepticism is mainly to show how 'realists' provide a much better explication of how we come to know what we know about the external world. It is to also provide a context to contestations within epistemology.

4.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL RELATIVISM: THE RELATIVIST POSTULATIONS

For the benefit of the reader, I first highlight that there are different types of relativism[19]. Nevertheless, it is practically nigh-impossible and redundant for I to dwell on all types of relativism when the main focus of this section is 'epistemological relativism'. Furthermore, the reader will be able to comprehend *prima facie* as to why 'epistemological relativism' is not viable, particularly for the central argument of this chapter which is to demonstrate that propositionally true knowledge cannot be relative and or socially constructed. According to Sankey (1997), epistemological relativism is a product of combining rational and truth relativism. In other words, the hybrid of truth and rational relativism amounts to relative knowledge. In addition, Sankey (1997) posits that:

> Philosophers have traditionally conceived knowledge as justified true belief, meaning that a belief that is rationally held and true constitutes knowledge. By combining truth relativism and rationality relativism with a justified true belief account of knowledge, we obtain epistemological relativism or relativism about knowledge. (p. 10)

Thus, epistemological relativism may be defined as:

> the view that knowledge (and/or truth or justification) is relative – to time, to place, to society, to culture, to historical epoch, to conceptual scheme or framework, or to personal training or conviction – in that what counts as knowledge (or as true or

[19] Sankey (1997, p. 7) notes that there are different types (not exhaustive) of relativism which are as follow:

- Rationality relativism refers to the presumption that what is considered or ought to be considered rationality is in fact underpinned by theoretical and historical context and, as a result, rationality is relative to a specific context.
- Truth relativism refers to the view that the truth of a proposition, sentence or given belief is and should be considered to be relative to the historical, theoretical and social context in which it takes place. It is noteworthy that through epistemological realism, I will later reject the notion of relative truth.
- Ontological relativism refers to the understanding that what is real heavily depends on beliefs, conceptual apparatus, and theories we use.
- Conceptual relativism-refers to the notion that there might be a plurality of alternative conceptual schemes of which none can be proven to be better than others (see Aune, 1987).

> justified) depends upon the value of one or more of these variables. (Siegel, 1986, p. 747)

In elaborating on this point, Siegel (1986) further outlines that for a relativist, knowledge is relative since different epochs, societies and cultures accept varying sets of circumstantial principles, criteria, and standards of assessment for knowledge claims. That is to say, there is no universally acceptable criteria of what counts as knowledge. Instead, what counts as knowledge depends on a multitude of factors which include time, purpose, historical and theoretical contexts. As a result, different spaces, times and cultures decide on what should then count as valid knowledge for them. Siegel (1986) posits that for relativists, there is no neutrality in the methods used to choose between alternative sets of criteria. Simply put, the standards used somehow depend on our contingent needs and interests. Thus, different factors that influence the relativity of knowledge turn to be based on different interests and needs.

According to Sankey (1997), epistemological relativism is rooted in the view that knowledge is relative to the context of the knower. This implies that the knower's context influences the manner in which such knowledge is produced and applied. Moreover, it follows that knowledge becomes relative to a particular theoretical lens, context, culture, or advocates of a certain scientific theory (Sankey, 1997). It is without a doubt then that, on the basis of this line of thought, there is no objective standard against which such knowledge can be assessed since knowledge in itself is relative to a particular context. The relativist's presumption on the nature of knowledge can be summed up as follows:

> on the assumption that truth and rational belief are relative to context, the belief that *p* constitute knowledge only if, relative to a given context, '*P*' is both rationally believed and true. It follows that a belief that constitutes knowledge in one context may not be knowledge in another (Sankey, 1997 p. 10).

Additionally, Siegel (1986) articulates that:

> the relativist's basic thesis is that a claim's status as knowledge (and/or the truth or rational justifiability of such knowledge claims) is relative to the standards used in evaluating such claims; and (further) that such alternative standards cannot

themselves be neutrally evaluated in terms of some fair, encompassing meta-standard. (p. 747)

This view can also be traced to Plato's *Theaetetus*. In the *Theaetetus,* Socrates[20] expounds that, according to Protagoras, a human being is "the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (Plato, 2004, p. 29). Siegel (1986) posits that Protagoras's view of relativism is extreme. This means that knowledge and truth are relative to what the person thinks about the proposition in question. In short, *p* is true for me because I see it that way and the question of *p* being false is dependent on what I think about *p* and not whether *p* exists independently of my thinking about *p*. Both truth and knowledge are tied to what a man thinks or believes in. Thus, according to Siegel (1986), Protagoras's form of relativism puts the individual above any criterion that can be used to judge knowledge claims. On the other hand, Socrates provides us with a counter-argument to that of Protagoras as I will later show. It is clear from Protagoras's view that if a man is the measure of all things, then the correctness of such a statement will depend on the man who is given the liberty to decide on whether such utterances are correct or not. Before providing a critique of epistemological relativism, I first apply epistemological relativism to the following pictures of *homo* Naledi[21].

[20] Since Protagoras was no more (he is also known as the "abused orphan") when this conversation took place, Socrates conceded perhaps if Protagoras was alive, he would have been able to defend his views on relativism.

[21] Both pictures evident in figure 1A and 1B are pictures of *homo* Naledi which stems from the remains which were discovered in the Dinaledi Chamber which is located in the Rising Star cave system, Cradle of Humankind, South Africa. This species is thought to be *Homo* on the basis of cranial and lower limb morphology (VanSickle, Cofran, Martinez, Williams, Churchill, Berger, & Hawks, 2018). Although the classification of *homo* Naledi is still a subject of contestation amongst scientists. I chose to use it as an example to show how we use evidence as justification for our beliefs with the hope of finding the truth.

Figure 4.1A: The skull of Homo Naledi

(Source: sci-news.com).

Figure 4.1B: The anatomically reconstructed version of Homo Naledi

Source: Nationalgeographic.com

What can be deduced from the above discussion so far is that when truth and rationality are relative, it follows then that knowledge also becomes relative since it is heavily underpinned by the two. I argue that if we are to follow the logical impulse of relativists, we would, for example, accept the view that our knowledge of the existence of *homo* Naledi (as evident in figures 4.1A and 4.1B) is relative to the time in which it was discovered since truth is relative to time. We would also have to accept that although our knowledge of what constitutes a species of *homo* dictates that *homo* Naledi belongs to such a category, it is possible that in a different theory or context, *homo* Naledi might have been considered to be something else and that such a description would be equally valid. If one claims to be a relativist, they would then accept the view that our knowledge of figures 4.1A and 4.1B is relative to a particular time, theoretical context and purpose. Thus, if the purpose, time, or theoretical context (or even the standard used to assess the knowledge) changes, then our knowledge of *homo* Naledi could be considered invalid. To put it simpler, according to epistemological relativism the claim that the skull of *homo* Naledi and other remains makes it clear to the scientists that *homo* Naledi falls under the *Homo* species is subject to time, purpose, theoretical as well to historical context. Therefore, our knowledge of

homo Naledi is relative and not universal. I will, when engaging with constructivism, use both pictures (Figure 4.1A and 4.1B) as examples. This chapter now turns to a critique of epistemological relativism.

4.3.1 Relativism: A Critique of Relative Truth

Socrates challenges the justifiability of Protagoras's doctrine about what is true:

> Well, Protagoras, how are we going to treat the statement? Are we going to claim human beings always hold true opinions, or sometimes true ones and sometimes false? From both claims, surely it follows that they do not always hold true opinions but both sorts. So consider, Theodorus, whether any of the people surrounding Protagoras, or you yourself, would want to insist pugnaciously that there's no other person who considers anyone else to be lacking in understanding or to hold false opinions. (Plato, 2004 p. 60)

Furthermore, Socrates articulated that:

> And what about Protagoras himself? Isn't it necessary, if neither he himself, nor most people, were to believe that a human being is a measure, as in fact the others don't, that what he wrote is the truth for no one? But if he himself did believe it, while the multitude do not share his belief, you know that first of all, however many more there are to whom it doesn't seem so than there are to whom it does, then it is not so by that much more than it is. (Plato, 2004, p. 61)

In the above quotes, it is evident that Socrates rejects Protagoras's thesis due to the presumption that it is self-refuting. Siegel (1986) believes that Socrates clearly exposes the inconsistency of Protagoras's argument on truth and knowledge being relative. Protagoras is portrayed as being playing part in what is assumed to be a "project of overhauling and testing one another's notions and opinions" (p. 2). Siegel (1986) further elaborates this view by articulating that Protagoras is involved in the epistemological act of deciding on what should be considered knowledge. Nonetheless, Siegel (1986) is of the view that Protagoras's thesis on what should be considered truth and knowledge seeks to contradict the main aim of such a project, since if his argument is correct, then there ought to be no grounds of any contention being thought of or judged as being unjustified because each and everyone is right, at

least according to their own relative standard which is mind-dependent. In short, it becomes perceptible that if and when knowledge is considered to be relative, then the act of arbitrating knowledge becomes a futile exercise. Consequently, Siegel (1986) contends that

> If relativism is right, it undermines the very notion of rightness, by denying the very criteria necessary for the judgment of its rightness to have cognitive or epistemic force. Now, if the relativist embraces the concept of relative truth, she embraces the thesis that any claim is true for those who believe it. (p. 240)

It is evident from this quote that it is logically impossible to then defend relativism without giving up the doctrine itself (Horsthemke, 2013). This suggests that one cannot defend relativism without falling into the trap of absolutism. Additionally, if the truth is relative, it follows then there can never be such a thing as factually or propositionally true universal knowledge claims. I will later clarify this view when I engage with the works of John Hospers on knowledge (in particular the notion of propositionally true statements and different meanings of knowledge). I now explore the notion of 'constructivism' which has direct implications for knowledge or epistemic claims.

4.4 CONSTRUCTIVISM AND KNOWLEDGE: AN EXPLANATORY APPROACH

> Ordinarily, to say that something is constructed is to say that it was not there simply to be found or discovered, but rather that it was built, brought into being by some person's intentional activity at a given point in time (Boghossian, 2006, p. 16).

It is clear from this quote that when one says something is constructed, they are simply referring to things that are brought into existence by intentional deeds of human beings. A typical example of intended human construction would be the anatomical reconstruction of *homo* Naledi from figure 1A to figure 1B. In this section, I interrogate the presupposition that knowledge is socially constructed. I mainly focus on the work of Paul Boghossian and in particular his book titled *Fear of Knowledge: Against Relativism and Constructivism* which generated a number of debates. At this juncture, I have no intention to explore such debates given the purpose of this thesis which

argues for a particular kind of factual knowledge that can contribute to the cultivation of conscious social reproduction. In addition, I am of the view that even in such debates (generated by Boghossian's book), the notions of epistemic relativism and constructivism remain untenable.[22] Boghossian (2006) notes that there are three theses of constructivism which are as follows:

- Constructivism about knowledge (in particular about facts): This supposes that the world which we strive to know is not independent of our minds and social contexts; instead human beings socially construct all facts in a way that ought to serve their contingent needs and interests.
- Constructivism about justification: The facts that we use to support statements such as that 'E justifies belief B' are not independent of our minds and social contexts; instead, human beings socially construct all facts in a way that echoes their contingent needs and interests.
- Constructivism about rational explanation refers to the view that our explanations of why we believe what we believe will always reflect our contingent needs and interests. Thus, exposure to evidence alone cannot be the only basis that justifies our beliefs.

It can be inferred from the above three theses of constructivism that we come to know about the world through our construction of such a world. Also, it is evident in all the three theses on constructivism that knowledge is pursued in order to meet particular needs and interests. Consequently, we construct it in a way that seeks to validate these contingent needs and interests. For the purpose of this thesis, I will mainly dwell on the first point or thesis which is constructivism about knowledge. Boghossian (2006) posits that, according to fact-constructivism, facts become what they are simply because we have constructed them in such a way that echoes our interests and contingent needs. In other words, there are no facts outside of our thinking about facts. That is to say, facts are not mind-independent. It is noticeable that this view is a direct

[22] See Neta's's (2007) paper titled "In Defense of Epistemic Relativism" and Boghossian's (2007) response to Rosen and Neta in a paper titled "The case against epistemic relativism: Replies to Rosen and Neta" where he defends his case against relativism. It is clear that, although these debates are continuing, proponents of epistemic relativism and constructivism have not managed at this juncture to provide compelling epistemic reasons as to why knowledge can be relative and/ or constructed.

opposite of fact-objectivism which assumes that facts are mind-independent. It is of importance to state that fact-constructivists are not providing a different explication of which facts ought to be attained and are also not in agreement with a radical sceptic who presumes that knowledge of facts is impossible (Boghossian, 2006). In elaborating this view, Boghossian (2006) proclaims that fact-constructivists are not challenging the nature of existing facts or what we refer to or ruminate on as a fact. Fact-constructivists are of the view that facts can never be obtained independently of existing societies and their interests and contingent needs (Boghossian, 2006). Before proceeding to engage with the work of prominent fact-constructivists, I allude to the following extract:

> Presumably, anyone must be able to make sense of the existence of facts which antedate the existence of human beings. A fact-constructivist is better off saying that even those facts – the facts that were obtained before there were any human beings around to talk about them – were constructed by human beings. (Boghossian, 2006 p. 27)

The question that follows from this quote is, how do we or can we construct facts? Boghossian then turns to Richard Rorty, Nelson Goodman and Hilary Putman who are assumed to be well-established fact-constructivists. Boghossian (2006) postulates that, in much of the works of the said researchers, there is conspicuous evidence that facts are thought to be constructed by our thinking or talking that describes something as a fact. In further elaborating on the view that facts are constructed, Boghossian (2006) challenged Goodman's (1978) view which presumes that we create the world through making comparable forms of it. Interestingly, this view presumes that what we know about the world is not exactly how the world is structured independently of our thinking. Consequently, our knowledge of the world is assumed not to correspond (or not having to) with how the world is in itself. This then implies that what we come to know about the world is just an idea or a version (not necessarily the world which is independent of our minds) of that world which we have constructed. Goodman (1978) is of the view that the word 'version' refers to fixed descriptions of the world, which are generally understood.

Furthermore, to illustrate the practical implications of the aforementioned contention on how we as human beings come to construct facts, Rorty (1998, cited in Boghossian, 2006 p. 27) articulated that, if we are to take dinosaurs as an example, once one describes something as a dinosaur, then they must be cognizant that the sex life and the skin colour of the dinosaur are thought to be not causally dependent on having been described. Nonetheless, prior to describing it as what is assumed to be a dinosaur, (or as something else for that matter), there are no grounds to which one can claim that it exists in the real world with its own particular features (Goodman, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 27). In addition, Rorty (1998, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 27) is of the view that the world is not independent of our descriptions or that the world cannot exist without being described. It becomes clear that constructivists are of the view that facts are dependent on descriptions; that is to say, a fact about the nature of things or matter cannot exist outside or beyond our ability to describe it as being in a certain way (Boghossian, 2006). Consequently, if we accept a particular description of how things are in the world; that is when facts about the world come to exist. Rorty (1998, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 27) contends that the difference between what we consider to be a fact or opinion lies in the fact that human beings often find it relatively easy to reach consensus on certain topics but not on others. It follows then that for Rorty (1998, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 27), truth is a product of sentences which heavily depend on vocabularies which are created by human beings; as a result, truths are created by human beings. In other words, our reality is not independent of how we come to construct it through language or vocabulary *per se*. Hence, facts come to exist because we construct them.

Boghossian (2006) is of the view that the notion of facts being socially constructed is a version of a broader constructivist paradigm which contends that all facts are not mind-independent. This is because it assumes that it is only through the mind that the world can easily be described or understood (Boghossian, 2006). To add to this, Boghossian (2006) maintains that for fact-constructivists, since some facts can be easily assumed to be description-dependent, nothing could, for example, be money, and also no one could have been a president or priest unless someone decided at some point to give a description of such occupations or designations. In short, fact-constructivists

are of the view that a fact can only exist if there is a description that speaks directly about such a fact. As a result, facts are not mind-independent. One can extrapolate that on the basis of the argument provided on fact-constructivism, the human mind possess the power (through description) to make facts exist.

Boghossian (2006) advanced that much of the constructivist literature shows some controversial claims on the supposed view which presumes that facts are description-dependent. He uses Michel Foucault, as an example where he (Foucault) postulated that before the concept of *homosexual* (which gives a descriptive account of some men) came into existence, homosexuals did not exist; instead, it was just men who only preferred to have sexual relations with other men (Foucault, 1978, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 28). "'I doubt Foucault's particular claim, but that is just to quibble about the definition of 'homosexual'. I do not doubt the general phenomenon" (Boghossian, 2006, p. 28). In this quote, Boghossian shows that the notion of description-dependence is absurd given that it takes away our knowledge of reality and reduce it to mere constructs.

In light of this discussion so far, fact-constructivists would then be of the view that *homo* Naledi (Figure 4.1A) did not exist independent of human discovery and description. Therefore, *homo* Naledi only became part of the *homo* species when scientists decided to assign such status. They did so, not because of the truth which is independent of their thinking (evidence), but because of their contingent needs and interests. Another example would be that the anatomical reconstruction of *homo* Naledi in figure 4.1B has nothing to do with the evidence (or the scientist's knowledge of *homo* Naledi) presented in figure 4.1A. Instead, such reconstruction was done in order to fulfil our contingent needs and interests. In addition, fact-constructivists would then argue that the anatomical reconstruction of *homo* Naledi would have been done differently had our contingent needs and interests been different (or in a different community with different needs and interests perhaps). Obviously, such an argument would have been made despite the structure of the skull as evident in Figure 4.1A. I elaborate on the notion of contingent needs and interests in the following section.

4.4.1 Revisiting the Notion of Descriptions

In this section, I explore the nature of social relativity of descriptions in isolation as evident in Boghossian (2006, p. 29) who noted that on the question of "which scheme we adopt to describe the world will depend on which scheme we find it useful to adopt; and which scheme we find it useful to adopt will depend on our contingent needs and interests as social beings". In light of this quote, constructivists such as Rorty (1999, cited in Boghossian, 2006, p. 29) argued that we reach a consensus on which descriptions to use not because they are in line with how things are independent of what we think, but because such descriptions correspond with our interests and contingent needs. Therefore, had our contingent needs and practical interests been different, we would have devised and accepted different descriptions of what could be assumed to be a real-world or different descriptions of things such as mountains or giraffes. Boghossian (2006) argues that

> it is simply not true that a denial of description-independent facts is a generalization of the social relativity of descriptions. It is one thing to say that we must explain our acceptance of certain descriptions in terms of our practical interest rather than in terms of their correspondence to the way things are in and of themselves; and it's quite another to say that there is no such thing as a way things are in and of themselves, independently of our descriptions. It is entirely possible to hold the former thesis without in any way endorsing the latter. (p. 31)

Boghossian (2006) further argued that even radical fact-objectivists can concur with the view that it is possible to have a plethora of equally valid descriptions of things or the world at any moment or given time. According to Boghossian (2006) to acknowledge that descriptions are socially relative is to concede that there is a need to choose a description that seeks to explicate to us or correspond with the way things are in the real world which will be heavily underpinned by our practical interests. Consequently, some descriptions will be of better use than others depending on our interests (Boghossian, 2006).

> Since all sorts of things could be less than four miles from an emperor, knowing only that something satisfies that description will not tell us anything about what it is likely

> to do. On the other hand, knowing that something satisfies the concept giraffe can tell us a quite a lot: that the animal in question has a long neck, that it feeds on the leaves of acacia trees, that it has a heart and lungs, and so forth. (p. 31)

Boghossian (2006) also maintained that social relativity of description does not mean that facts about the world do not correspond with how things are, independent of our thinking. He further challenges the view that social relativity of descriptions provides us with an opportunity to refer to things in any manner we wish to even when our descriptions do not correspond with reality. In other words, if I were to refer to a mountain as a river, such a description would be false since such a description would not be consistent with reality. This means that mountains have particular properties that make them different from rivers. It is for this reason that they are described differently. Consequently, the fact that descriptions of the world can be socially relative is something different from fact-constructivism (Boghossian, 2006).

The notion of social relativity or description-dependence of facts seems to be in line with the view that there is a correspondence between words and what we mean by those words. Such a view seems to be evident in Putnam's (1977) presumption that a "'correspondence' between words and sets of things (formally, a satisfaction relation, in the sense of Tarski) can be viewed as part of an explanatory model of the speakers' collective behaviour" (p. 483). The problem with the contention that words correspond with the objects we describe is not just relative constructivism as such a view would:

- imply that people of different languages have no knowledge of the same thing given that they describe it differently. In other words, it suggests that truth or facts are discourse-dependent.
- fail to account as to what are the grounds on which human beings can use synonyms to refer to the same thing.

Boghossian (2006) is of the view that fact-constructivism hinges on the untrue assumption that social relativity of descriptions means that facts are a product of social construction. Fact-constructivism simply implies that a fact can only exist after we have concurred on a particular description of it as opposed to other possible

descriptions of the same entity, and that, before agreeing on the description, there can never be a sense that the fact of the matter "out there" makes our description true or false (Boghossian, 2006).

4.4.2 Facts and the Conception of Descriptions-Dependence

In further challenging constructivists' presuppositions on facts being dependent on descriptions, what Boghossian does is to turn to Goodman's argument of how facts depend on the description. Boghossian (2006) posits that Goodman's view on facts presumes that if, for example, one decides to draw a line around atoms, and then refer to them as a molecule, that is when they come to exist as molecules. The same logic can then be applied to a collection of protons, electrons and neutrons by drawing a line around them, and referring to them as an atom; that is when an atom will come to exist (Boghossian, 2006). It, therefore, becomes clear, on the basis of this argument, that one can assume that we do not have epistemic reasons to draw such lines in the manner that we do. For a fact-constructivist, our reasons to do such are not epistemic; instead, they are pragmatic since they always appeal to our contingent needs and interests (Boghossian, 2006). Thus, drawing these lines is presumed to be serving our practical purposes.

Boghossian (2006) clearly articulates that, for Goodman (1978), none of our drawing of lines can be said to correspond with how things are independent of our construction. Boghossian (2006) counters this view by stressing that it is possible to have equally valid descriptions of how things are in and of themselves. Boghossian (2006) believes that this cannot be denied even by the extreme fact-objectivist that is if such descriptions are consistent with each other. All descriptions that do not correspond with that which is the case become false since they are not consistent with the truth or fact of the matter. Boghossian (2006) makes an example of a party that has eight people. In so doing, he argues that he would still be consistent if he was to say that the same party has four couples (if it is true that they are couples). Thus, the two descriptions of eight people and four couples in the same party are consistent with each other since they correspond with what is true.

4.4.3 Fact-Constructivism: A Critique

Boghossian (2006) offered an encapsulated criticism of fact-constructionism by putting forward three main problems of fact-constructivism. The first problem is that it is obviously true (truism) that the actuality of rivers, lakes, electrons, giraffes and mountains predates human existence (Boghossian, 2006). It is upon this background that Boghossian (2006) is left in awe of how then it becomes possible for human beings to create what antedates their existence. If fact-constructivism was true, it would mean that human beings can create their own past which would lead to backward causation (cause of the activity coming after the effects of the activity) (Boghossian, 2006). In other words, it would lead to events becoming true not because they happened independently of what we think but because we have come to socially construct them through descriptions. As a consequence, Boghossian (2006) suggests that fact-constructionism has a problem of causation. More to the above, Boghossian (2006) further notes that, even if humans and the universe were known to have existed at the same time, it would still be bizarre to consider electrons as a mere human construction. He ponders on this view by asking

> Is it not part of the very purpose of having such a concept that it is to designate things that are independent of us? According to the Standard Model of particle physics, electrons are among the fundamental building blocks of all matter. They constitute the ordinary macroscopic objects that we see and with which we interact, including our own bodies. How, then, could their existence depend on us? (Boghossian, 2006, p. 39)

Moreover, Boghossian (2006) is of the view that if we continue to imply that electrons are a product of social construction through description by human beings, then we enter into the problem of stating what could be presumed to be not only false but also conceptually incoherent. Therefore, he is of the view that such errors can be easily thought of as a problem of conceptual competence (Boghossian, 2006). In sum, social constructivists are not interested in facts that are presumed to be mandated by reality in and of itself since they are of the view that facts are a byproduct of contingent needs and interests (Boghossian, 2006). Nonetheless, according to Boghossian (2006):

- Social constructivists reject mandated constructions while emphasising the view that facts depend on our interests and contingent social needs. This line of thought implies that had our contingent needs and interests been dissimilar, the facts would have been different too.
- Social constructivists do not accept constructions that are commanded by reality in itself. Furthermore, it is quite difficult to understand why then there would be no circumstances in which human beings would choose to construct a fact that is not in line with the one that is claimed to owe its presence to our intentional deeds.
- If we then follow the logic of fact-constructivists, it becomes clear that it is possible for us to construct fact *P* which is metaphysically contingent. In addition, for constructivists, it is also conceivable that a different community might be of the view that fact *P* is not the case, despite our construct which assumes that *P* is the case.

It follows from this discussion so far that constructivism is not plausible and consequently fails to give a clear account of what makes mere constructions knowledge. It is upon this view that I ought to reject epistemic constructivism. In addition to this, constructivism lacks a clear distinction on what separates a mere opinion from knowledge. Before I proceed to define knowledge, I refer to Boghossian's (2002) thinking about the following questions:

> Does classical epistemology deny that knowledge is often produced collaboratively, by members of a social group? No. Does it deny that scientists have political and social values and that those values may influence what questions they ask and what they end up believing? No. Does classical epistemology have a view about how often in the course of history beliefs have been shaped by political and social considerations as opposed to other types of considerations? No. (pp. 217-218)

It is clear from the above quote that classical epistemology or 'epistemological realism' does not deny that knowledge is linked to power and values. However, it rejects the view that the validity of knowledge depends on either of the two. This implies that what human beings consider knowledge is sometimes tied to power or values. To be precise, certain people or institutions with power would, for example, have a

monopoly over a certain kind of knowledge but its validity is independent of their contingent interests and needs. It is clear then that according to Sosa (1991):

> A person *S* is considered to have knowledge that *p* iff[23]
>
> (i) *P* is true
>
> (ii) *S* believes that *p*;
>
> (iii) *S* is justified in believing that *p*. (p. 15)

It follows from this traditional definition of knowledge that knowledge cannot exist without truth. Interestingly, such a notion is not denied by either relativists or constructivists. What is at the basis of these debates is the nature of such truth. This means that there is no agreement on whether truth is relative, constructed or it is independent of what we think or believe. Additionally, it is observable then that such debates have had a tremendous impact on the manner in which human beings have come to conceive the idea of knowledge. Nonetheless, the preceding debates on relativism and constructivism fail to provide compelling epistemic reasons as to why knowledge can or should be considered relative or a product of mere constructs. I instead opt for 'epistemological realism' due to its intellectually rigorous nature and its assumption about truth and knowledge as I seek to show in the next section.

4.5 EPISTEMOLOGICAL REALISM: A REALIST EPISTEMIC OUTLOOK

> Although the relevant notion of mind-independence is tricky to make out, I shall suppose that it comes to something like this: objects or properties of objects are mind-independent just in case they are what they are independently of how we take them to be. Alternatively, a truth, T, is mind-independent just in case T is logically (or conceptually) independent of our believing (or more generally, taking) to be the case. (Heil, 1998, p. 69)

In this quote, truth is not a matter of construct or relativism. It is visible from this definition of epistemological realism[24] that facts are independent of what we think or

[23] if means, if and only if

[24] I am cognisant of the debates made by a number of Critical Realists such as Bhaskar (1975) and Sayer (2000). The reason for not focusing on Critical Realists is because epistemological realism as a perspective on what counts as valid knowledge serves the purpose of this study well since the entire thesis is based on what criteria knowledge should meet in order for it to be taught for the purpose of cultivating conscious social reproduction. Also, realism has been

believe. Thus, our contingent social needs or interests do not have anything to do with the fact that the truth is mind-independent. This definition of realism is in line with that provided by Pring (2004) which portrays truth as a mind-independent phenomenon. (In this thesis, I do not intend to discuss whether Pring is a realist or not.) Further, Heil (1998) propounded that the world exists even when observers are not aware of its existence. In other words, our description of the world can only correspond with the way things are in and of themselves. Hence, it becomes possible that our understanding or description of the external world can be wrong. Heil (1998) argued that the view that there is a mind-independent reality also means that "truths about minds and their contents are to count as mind-independent: there being a mind, *M*, need not depend logically or conceptually on anyone's taking it to be the case that there is a mind, *M*" (p. 69). This implies that my thinking about the mind in itself or its contents is also mind-independent. Simply put, my assumption about the mind and its content can be false. Heil (1998) clearly illustrated this point by expounding that "my thinking that *p* does not depend logically or conceptually on my taking it to be the case that I am thinking that *p*" (p. 69). The reason for this is to make it clear that realism does not suppose a mind-world bifurcation by claiming that there is a mind-independent reality (Heil, 1998). As a result, Heil (1998) believes that realism helps us differentiate between how things are in and of themselves, how we think or take them to be and the manner in which we take them to be.

A realist would concede that objective truth is independent of how we take it or come to perceive it (Heil, 1998). For example, it is true that the earth is round independent of what I think about such truth. Realism purports that, the fact that my presence is in a certain subjective condition, is also an objective state (Heil, 1998). Therefore, when one is in a subjective state, realism dictates that such a condition is conceptually or logically independent of how they take it to be (see Heil, 1998). A typical example is when a '*madman*' sees nothing wrong with his mental state. A realist would then argue that how he comes to regard his mental state is subjective. Nonetheless, the objective

evident in debates in IKS. Hence, it makes sense for this thesis to be underpinned by epistemological realism or classical epistemology.

argument would be the fact that there is something wrong with his mental condition despite his subjective view.

4.5.1 Epistemological Realism: Propositional Truth, Beliefs and Knowledge

As things stand, the reader is able to distinguish between scepticism, relativism, constructivism and realism because I have clearly articulated the meaning of truth for each of these theories. Nonetheless, I have not elaborated on the nature of truth and knowledge, in particular from a realist perspective. In his book, '*An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*', Hospers (1990) upholds that a proposition[25] refers to the meaning carried by a sentence. Further, Hospers (1990) contends that, from a philosophical point of view, propositions can either be true or false. This means that propositions somehow reflect things about the world that can or might be considered to be the case or corresponding with reality. Hospers (1990) rejects the view that propositional statements can be true and relative simultaneously. Consequently, he rejects relativism and he distinguishes between truth and belief. According to Hospers (1990) there is a difference between sentences "*p* is true" and "I believe that *p* is true" (p. 11). He further argues that it is possible for a person to believe that a proposition is false when it is in fact true. Frankly put, truth is, as shown previously, independent of our beliefs and our claims or beliefs about the world do not necessarily amount to the world which exists as a mind-independent ontological entity. Hospers (1990) notes that the implication of relative truth is that characteristics of things also become relative to what the speaker believes.

Furthermore, Hospers (1990) contends that a degree of belief regarding the truth of the matter has nothing to do with what is true. To put it simpler, the fact that I believe tomorrow might be colder than today has nothing to do with what might transpire tomorrow at least in terms of weather. This means that reality is independent of my beliefs. It is possible for my beliefs to obviously correspond with the truth but they are not the truth. Consequently, Hospers (1990) is of the view that "a true proposition correctly reports reality, but what people *think* correctly reports reality may not do so"

[25] Propositions are mostly symbolised by the letter *P (*A second proposition can also be represented as q while a third can be symbolised as *r* and etc.) (Hospers, 1990, p. 10).

(p. 11). He expounds that the motivation for such an assertion is to make it clear that at times people may not be convinced or believe that a proposition is true even when it is true, while others may believe that a proposition is true even when it is not. This shows that the truth carried by propositions has nothing to do with our beliefs. Hospers (1990) highlights that people can contradict each other when it comes to beliefs (provided that narrators are not telling lies); for example, *X* can say "I believe that *p* is true" while *Y* can say that "I believe that p is not true" (p. 12). Propositional statements on the effects of things such as music on a person, although different, can be true and they do not contradict each other (i.e. someone may find a particular song boring while it may be extremely interesting for someone else) (Hospers, 1990). He further argues that this does not imply that truth is relative to the individual even when such truth speaks about the individual. A typical example would be when *X* has asthma while *Y* does not. Hospers (1990) would ask if the statement "I have asthma" is only true to *X* and not to *Y*. Hospers (1990) is of the view that the pronoun used which is "I" refers to different people, but the propositions are true not only to the individuals they are about. In other words, the propositional statements are true since they can be considered to be reporting on a mind-independent reality. So the sentence "I have asthma" just shows a different proposition when it is said by *X* than when it is said by *Y*. In simple terms, the fact that *X* has asthma does not change from one individual to another. It remains true and that is it.

Hospers (1990) maintains that instances where someone would, for example, claim that "South Africa has about 55 million people" can be relative since its meaning is not completely specified in terms of time or when such is the case, but once the meaning is completely specified then such relativity vanishes. For instance, if one claims that "In 2019, South Africa has about 55 million people", it becomes true independent of time. This means that, even after 90 years, we cannot undo the fact that South Africa once had a population of about 55 million people. Hospers (1990) states that this also applies to a place. This suggests that if we specify the place then we cannot later claim that such is no longer true even if things change, the fact that something happened in a particular place will forever be true. Thus, a proposition about a place becomes true

especially when its meaning is complete as I have shown with time. Hospers (1990) highlights that

> A true proposition correctly reports reality…the proposition is not "true at a certain time" but true, period. What changes when the future becomes the present and the present becomes the past is not the truth of the statement but our knowledge of it. (pp. 11- 14)

Furthermore, he contends that a propositional statement must be true or false in a sense that one cannot say that "it could be true or it could be false, or it could be unknown" (Hospers, 1990, p. 14). He contends that the statement conflates truth with our knowledge of it. The truth of a particular proposition does not depend on our knowledge of it. For instance, the fact that the earth was not flat did and does not depend on the human realisation of such a matter. It is independent of our knowledge of it. Hospers (1990) further articulates that the truth about some mind-independent ontological entities is being revealed all the time. Hospers (1990) made an example of the weather and posited that it can only be true or false that it will rain in your neighbourhood tomorrow even if we do not know at the moment. In short, the reality (truth) of what will happen tomorrow in terms of weather is independent of our knowledge of it.

4.5.2 Epistemological Realism: Converging and Diverging Points between IKS and Democratic Education

In light of the above discussion, it is pivotal to distinguish between ways in which the word "know" has been or is used to demonstrate our knowledge of certain things. Hospers (1990) postulates that there are three kinds of meanings (or ways of using the word) that can be attached to the word "know". The first one is *knowing how*. In elaborating on this, he is of the view that *knowing how* is mostly referring to one's ability to be engaged in a particular activity. For instance, if someone asks "Chan, can you dance?" and then Chan confirms that indeed he can dance, the person who asked

if Chan can dance can easily ask Chan to dance to substantiate his rejoinder to the query[26].

The second meaning attached to the word "know" is that of *knowledge by acquaintance* which refers to knowledge of places and persons. Hospers (1990) further claimed that often when someone asks if you know a particular place or person, they are usually asking if you have seen such a person, been to such a place or maybe came across it through your senses at some point. Knowledge by acquaintance does not mean that you know all the facts about a place or a person. It simply means that you know someone or something exists. For example, it is possible for someone who has never been to Johannesburg to know more facts about the city through reading than someone who has been or lived there. In addition, "you couldn't have knowledge of the world without acquaintance, but acquaintance alone is not yet knowledge" (Hospers, 1990, p. 20). The third meaning that is also concomitant to the word "know" is that of *knowing that*. According to Hospers (1990), *knowing that* mainly refers to factual or propositionally true knowledge. For a clear explication of this aspect of knowledge, I now turn to Horsthemke's doubts about the existence of IK as propositional knowledge.

> Can a realist account be given of the epistemological and scientific significance of diversity and context?... In essence, the argument is as follows. Belief is the subjective component of (propositional/ theoretical/ factual) knowledge, while truth constitutes its objective anchor (Horsthemke, 2010, p. 9).

Moreover,

> While beliefs may vary from individual to individual, society to society, culture to culture – and indeed in terms of strength and duration – truth does not so vary. Truth refers to what is the case, independently of what individuals believe, think or feel may be the case – independently of their interests and preferences, and even of public and general consensus (Horsthemke, 2010, p. 9).

[26] Hospers (1990) further highlights that *knowledge-how* is not only evident within human beings. For instance, through instincts, some animals know *how* to engage in certain activities without being taught. Thus, he is of the view that animals have more *knowledge-how* than human beings.

Given that truth is not context-dependent, epistemological realism (the meta-theoretical framework) rejects the notion of IKS as posited by Green (2008, 2012) since it assumes that there are multiple factually true knowledge systems. I have mentioned previously that Horsthemke (2004b) expressed some doubts on the view that IKS can exist as propositionally true knowledge since truth is universal. In this thesis, I take Horsthemke's contention further and I argue that IK is not only factually or propositionally nigh-impossible but also counter to conscious social reproduction, especially if it is to be taught as factually true knowledge underpinned by context-dependent truth as evident in Green (2008). In other words, the teaching of IK as factually true knowledge does not help to advance conscious social reproduction as envisaged by Gutmann (1987). As clearly stated previously, the aim of democratic education is to cultivate conscious social reproduction which refers to individuals who ought to deliberate in search of the truth. If one then takes the logic which assumes that the truth is context-dependent, it becomes a futile exercise to produce or cultivate truth-seeking individuals since everything is true for its particular purpose or context, rather than it being true universally. In fact, how will curriculum planners be able to determine which knowledge to include since everything is right or true? This is in line with epistemological realism as delineated above. In light of the above discussion, I revisit the concept of IK. According to Odora-Hoppers (2005):

> the notion of IKS has been defined as the sum total of the knowledges and skills which people in a particular geographic area possess, and which enables them to get the most out of their environment … Traditional knowledge is … the totality of all knowledges and practices, whether explicit or implicit, used in the management of socioeconomic, spiritual and ecological facets of life. In that sense, many aspects of it can be contrasted with 'cosmopolitan knowledge' that is culturally anchored in Western cosmology, scientific discoveries, economic preferences and philosophies. (p. 2)

In explaining the extract above, I argue that it does not give a clear definition of what IK is. It seems to prevaricate between IK being factual knowledge (e.g. scientific discoveries) and it being practical knowledge. In addition, Odora-Hoppers (2005, p. 3) purported that the "concept of IKS … delineates a cognitive structure in which theories and perceptions of nature and culture are conceptualised". However, I do not

concur with the notion of multiple 'truths' and I argue that universally true knowledge is the only permissible knowledge that needs to be taught as factually true knowledge in public schools. In a similar instance, Gutmann (1987) supposed that creationism should not be taught in public schools due to its assumptions about truth and the nature of the world. For example, creationists, as mentioned previously, failed to substantiate their claims about the world with concrete or sound evidence. It is noteworthy, however, that democratic education as proposed by Gutmann does not absolutely reject IK in public schools in as much as it does not with creationism. Instead, it rejects it as factually true knowledge since it renders conscious social reproduction useless due to its presumptions about truth. As things stand so far, IK can then be taught as *knowledge-how* or practical knowledge. This is because how people do things sometimes differs from one place to another (Horsthemke, 2004b). Thus, African traditional knowledge is a notable example of *knowledge-how*. I revert to Gutmann's (1987) notion of conscious social reproduction:

> our task therefore is to find a more inclusive ground for justifying nonneutrality in education. … As citizens, we aspire to a set of educational practices and authorities of which the following can be said: these are the practices and authorities to which we, acting collectively as a society, have consciously agreed. It follows that a society that supports conscious social reproduction must educate all educable children to be capable of participating in collectively shaping their society. (p. 39)

It remains unknown and perhaps problematic as to how citizens can consciously agree on anything when truth and rationality (or when there are multiple factually true knowledge systems) are relative or constructed. Further, the convergence of practical knowledge or the so-called *knowledge-how* with democratic education is not automatic. To put it bluntly, there is a certain criterion that needs to be met in order for such practical knowledge to be considered educationally worthwhile. Thus, for MacAllister (2013, p. 919), "the most important purpose of pupil participation in physical education [practical knowledge] should not be the promotion of hedonism. Physical education is, I think, most valuable when it contributes to the long-term intellectual and moral development of pupils". Therefore, the teaching of African traditional knowledge, practices or *knowledge-how* should be done with the purpose of

intellectually capacitating learners. Also, I argue that such would be in line with the notion of conscious social reproduction. In the next chapter, I will expand on this view in the new realist rejoinder.

4.6 FINAL REMARKS

In this chapter, I first engaged with the notion of scepticism. I showed how sceptics have come to the conclusion that as human beings we can never get to know the world. Furthermore, I showed that there are many types of scepticism and that there are many different arguments which are made by sceptics. I then rejected the notion of scepticism since the arguments for and against IK do not constitute the view that we can never get to know the world. This chapter then explicitly traced the origins and the debates on the notion of epistemological relativism. In so doing, I showed that epistemological relativism is logically impossible without giving up the very same idea of relativism. In light of such contentions, I then moved to the notion of epistemological constructivism and demonstrated the arguments which are often made by prominent social constructivists, and provided reasons as to why fact-constructivism is untenable. After a critical engagement with relativism (which assumes that truth is relative and so is knowledge) and constructivism (which presumes that as human beings we socially construct knowledge and so is the truth), I chose epistemological realism due to its assumptions about truth. To be precise, for a realist, truth is mind-independent and knowledge is not a mere social construct. In addition, knowledge is not relative to the knower as delineated in this chapter. I am cognisant of a multitude of debates concerning each of the covered paradigms. Nevertheless, it would not only be near impossible for me to cover each of the differing perspectives but also redundant since they all somehow link to the main scholars or researchers which I have covered in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND CURRICULUM: A NEW APPROACH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter goes further than just providing a critical [philosophical] analysis of the nature of that which is thought to be indigenous knowledge in three of the post-apartheid curriculum statements. As a rejoinder to the evident inadequacies within the three analysed curriculum statements and a defence of Gutmann's conception of conscious social reproduction, the researcher argues for a new approach that is not conceptually incoherent. In doing this, I will first expose the fallacy of the assumed gap between the knowledge held by indigenous people (and communities at large) as factual knowledge and its repercussions for the notion of conscious social reproduction. In the proposed approach, I will argue not just for the inclusion of indigenous practical knowledge (African traditional knowledge) in South African school's curriculum but also for the inclusion of factual knowledge which articulates the true identities of indigenous people and their communities. It is true that "an investment in [true] knowledge pays the best interest" (Benjamin Franklin, 2010, n.p.). In light of this quote, the new approach definitely does not seek to debunk the contributions made by indigenous people who possess African traditional knowledge and universally true knowledge. Nonetheless, it rejects African traditional knowledge as factually true knowledge that is relative or constructed.

It is noteworthy that the concept of curriculum is complex and as a result, offering a widely adequate definition of curriculum is a nigh-impossible task due to different conceptions of that which constitutes a 'curriculum' (Su, 2012). Therefore, in this chapter, I adopt the view that "a curriculum is the offering of socially valued knowledge, skills, and attitudes made available to students through a variety of arrangements during the time they are at school, college or university" (Robert 1971, cited in Stenhouse, 1975, p. 104). The motivation for choosing this definition of

curriculum is because, at the command of education or schooling, it is the imparting of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that are thought to be socially valued or worthy. It is against this backdrop that this chapter is structured as follow:

- Firstly, I use epistemological realism (universal truth or knowledge as established in Chapter 4) as a tool to provide an analysis of indigenous knowledge in the RNCS, NCS, and CAPS.
- Secondly, I interrogate the inclusion of the supposed IK in certain subjects of the RNCS. The focus will mainly be on Grades 4 to 9 with no specific focus on a certain grade.
- Thirdly, I use epistemological realism as a tool to provide an analysis of indigenous knowledge in both the NCS and CAPS concurrently. The emphasis is mainly on a multitude of subjects that are taught in Grades 10 to 12. Again, this is done with no focus to a particular grade.
- Lastly, I propose a new meta-evaluative framework or criteria that can be used when including African traditional knowledge or factual knowledge about indigenous people or communities in the South African school curriculum with the intention of cultivating conscious social reproduction.

5.2 CURRICULUM CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS: A DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE

5.2.1 Revised National Curriculum Statement: Retracing the Integration of IKS

In post-apartheid South Africa, controversies surrounding the inclusion of IK in the school curriculum can be traced to as far back as the introduction of C2005 in 1997, curriculum planners in South Africa were of the view that it was necessary to integrate IK with science. When the government revised C2005 and implemented the RNCS in 2004, Learning Outcome (LO) 3 of Natural Sciences postulated that learners should "be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between science and technology, society and the environment" (DoE, 2002, p. 10). I deliberately chose to focus on Natural Sciences and other subjects which were taught from Grade 4 to 9. The reason for this is that I intend to show how IKS was included within different

curriculum statements and also within different phases and subjects. It is upon this background that this study will now look at IKS in the RNCS. Although I do not cover all subjects, different categories (e.g. Commercial Subjects, Mathematics, Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences) under which most subjects can be classified, are all represented. The reason for making sure that all major categories are represented is (as indicated in chapter 3) that, according to Gutmann (1987), people value education for different reasons and not just for political or moral purposes (i.e. conscious social reproduction). Interestingly, Gutmann (1987) further noted that the teaching of subjects such as history, science, and mathematics contributes to morality. Hence, the focus on different categories of subjects is underpinned by the fact that all school subjects play a role in shaping children's ability to reason and, as such, conscious social reproduction or the cultivation of individuals who are able to deliberate depends on a multitude of school subjects and other extra-mural activities.

Table 5.1: IKS in Natural Sciences, Technology, and Mathematics in the RNCS Grades R–9

Subject	**Component of indigenous knowledge systems included**
Natural Science	• Within the Natural Sciences the inclusion of IKS is encouraged since it is thought to be "a means of understanding science as a human endeavour within cultural contexts" (DoE, 2003a, p. 27). Also, it is clearly stated that: "Most learners within South African classrooms think in terms of more than one worldview…[thus]ignoring these different worldviews and the challenges they bring with them, would probably make science teaching and learning more difficult than it should be" (DoE, 2003a, p. 31). • The learners are also expected to comprehend science and technological knowledge in the context of history and/or of indigenous knowledge (DoE, 2003a, p. 43). In doing this, they need to articulate similarities in challenges and solutions in their own and other societies in the past, present, and future.

Technology	• Learners were expected to engage with what was assumed to be indigenous technology and culture by looking at what is similar in terms of problems and solutions in indigenous and other societies in the present, past, and future (DoE, 2003b, p. 48). • Learners had to also engage with the impact, biases of technology, and indigenous knowledge (DoE, 2003b, p. 48).
Mathematics	Indigenous art form.

The first subject that I will now examine is Natural Sciences (DoE, 2003a), I argue that it is possible for teachers or curriculum planners to include African traditional knowledge such as African traditional medicine (Horsthemke, 2004b; Mathebula, 2019). Nonetheless, it is not possible to include IK as alternative facts. To put it bluntly, the fact that learners have different worldviews has nothing to do with factually true knowledge being relative or indigenous. Learners can hold different views about the world since their thinking about the world may not be grounded in evidence except in the case of practical knowledge or skills. Even in instances when such views are true and are in contrast, truth or theoretical knowledge does not become relative or a mere construct (Boghossian, 2006; Hospers, 1990). Furthermore, Horsthemke (2017) draws this distinction clearly by contending that:

> there are grounds for reasonable doubt on the plausibility of the 'ethnoscience' or 'indigenous scientific knowledge' project. If anything qualifies as science, there are certain criteria that must hold. For anything to be called science, it necessarily involves reference to laws or regularities, observation, description, explanation, prediction, and testable hypotheses. If it does not meet these criteria, it is not science, strictly speaking. (pp. 6-7)

In clarifying this view, it is regrettable that science unlike technology (as I will show) cannot be reduced to skills or *knowledge-how* which is practically plausible. It follows then that, science or scientific knowledge, since it is made up of facts, is therefore universally valid. To be specific, science transcends context. On the other hand, when it comes to technology, it is ostensibly in the RNCS (DoE, 2003b) that learners are expected to engage with what is thought to be indigenous technology. Before I engage

with the notion of indigenous technology, I first provide a definition of technology followed by that of indigenous technology. According to Cross and McCormick (1986), the best way to differentiate between science and technology is through the two categories of knowledge; namely *knowing-that* and *knowing-how* which are also evident in the work of Hospers (1990) as shown in the previous chapter. As a consequence, Cross and McCormick (1986) are of the view that *knowing-that* is a much more explicit form of knowledge which can be classified in terms of particular rules. This means that *knowing-that* as an abstract or theoretical form of knowledge can be easily categorised.

As explained in the previous chapter, *knowing-how* is thought to be an implicit form of knowledge that is heavily underpinned by practicality. Simply put, one can know how to do something but (in some instances) lack the necessary theory that shapes such activity. Accordingly, Cross and McCormick (1986) postulated that "the activity of science is directed by *knowing that*; towards error-free explanation, towards scientific 'truth'" (p. 31). Technology and Design are thought to be part of the category of *knowing-how*. Technology becomes a product of how human beings have practically manoeuvred around their own environment. In line with the purpose of this analysis, according to Horsthemke (2017), indigenous technology refers to:

> the application of indigenous science, the whole body of methods used in such application, that is, the body of knowledge available to a civilisation that is of use in fashioning implements, practising manual skills and arts, and extracting or collecting materials. (p. 4)

This view assumes that indigenous technology does exist. However, I maintain that its theoretical conceptualisation and teaching or inclusion in the school curriculum cannot be considered IK in a propositional sense (since there is no indigenous science) since it is most evident when learners practically engage with such a notion of indigenous technology. Even so, the RNCS (DoE, 2003b) only required learners to theoretically engage with the idea of indigenous technology. Thus, it follows then that the idea of indigenous technology in the context of the RNCS (DoE, 2003b) cannot be considered IK since it is mainly concerned with factual or theoretical knowledge about

ways in which indigenous people or communities developed their own technology. Bluntly put, learners were actually taught (universal) factually true knowledge which happens to be about technology used by indigenous people. At this juncture, I purposely chose to not engage with the plausibility of indigenous (art form) mathematics (DoE, 2003c) or ethnomathematics. I will, however, at a later stage debunk such plausibility.

Table 5.2: Social Sciences, Arts and Culture and Life Orientation in RNCS Grades 4–9

Subject	**Component of indigenous knowledge systems included**
Social sciences	The Social Science curriculum indicates that "the rich heritage of indigenous knowledge found within the diverse/multicultural society we live in has worth and must be emphasised" (DoE, 2003d, p. 22). In addition, it further states that "this learning area emphasises the construction of knowledge by encouraging learners to ask questions and to find answers about society and the environment in which they live, at the same time developing the principle of social justice" (DoE, 2003d, p. 22). In both Social Science (History) and Natural Science the curriculum encouraged the teaching of indigenous medicine by looking at the history of health care [systems] that was available in ancient African societies. More so, the curriculum in Grade 6 also encourages engagement with comparable types of traditional healing and indigenous medicine that were and are still used by other cultures. Furthermore, the curriculum required learners to ponder the following: • The role that is played by plants in modern medicine (taking into account insect repellents as well). • Exploring the places in which these plants are found and are grown for commercial purposes. • Investigate possible future consequences of losing biodiversity and deforestation on [African] medicine. • Look at indigenous environmental practices, tradition, and indigenous knowledge, African farmers, Belief systems (Grade 4)

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
Arts and culture	Within the Arts and Culture curriculum, indigenous knowledge is assumed to be the recognition of value systems and what is thought to be "intergenerational knowing" with a specific focus on socio-ecological and cultural settings. Additionally, learners are expected to engage with varying cultural practices and this includes African cultures (DoE, 2003e p. 24). There is a clear inclusion of design, dance, poetry and/or music. • Evident examples of indigenous African genres (i.e. Mmpadi/Kiba, Indlamu, Tshikona, Malende, Umxhentso, Domba, Umbhayizelo). • Children's activities (i.e. Black Mampatile, Masekitlana, Kgati). • Festivals and cultural rituals (i.e. initiations, naming ceremonies and weddings) (DoE, 2003e. p. 32).
Life Orientation	Evidence of what could be assumed to be indigenous knowledge or African philosophy can be drawn from the teaching of the following (DoE, 2003f): • Ubuntu • Artistic and cultural processes in context. • Knowledge of wedding ceremonies • Rituals, dramatisation of cultural rituals. • Creation of dances and songs associated with weddings • Comprehension of the nature of diverse cultures and religions

The above table outlines the content of a multitude of subjects that were thought to be inclusive of indigenous knowledge, what I found to be quite problematic with the Social Sciences (DoE, 2003d) subject in the RNCS is the view that knowledge is constructed. I presume that it is upon such postulation that the RNCS included what is thought to be IK as an alternative worldview. For instance, it is stipulated in the Social Sciences that teachers and learners need to look at health care that was in existence in ancient African societies. This is by no means IK (in either a factual or propositional sense). That is to say, it cannot even be categorised under the African traditional knowledge (indigenous *knowledge-how*). To put it bluntly, this is factually

true knowledge or *knowledge-that* and if it is true, it cannot be true only to indigenous people or communities. Therefore, most of the knowledge that is thought to be IK within the Social Science (DoE, 2003d) either falls into the category of *knowledge-how* (indigenous *knowledge-how*) or it becomes factual knowledge about indigenous people rather than facts that are true only to indigenous people.

What can be considered IK in the RNCS Social Sciences (to a very limited extent) is the exploration of the history of traditional healing and indigenous medicine and indigenous environmental practices (this is not to say that these ideas are unproblematic). It would be naïve for any realist to argue that how we do things is the same throughout the world. Of course, indigenous people have their own indigenous herbs or medicine which they used in order to heal whatever health issues they faced or continue to face. This is known as traditional healing which is often practised by *Sangomas* (traditional healers) or any indigenous person who happens to know the herbs and how they ought to be used. Nonetheless, even the so-called practical knowledge is not totally excluded from propositional knowledge or *knowing-that*. It is for this reason that it is difficult (although I believe it is possible in rare instances) to know how to use or do something without knowing what it is (*knowledge-that*) (see Horsthemke, 2004b). Thus, the exploration of the history of traditional healing amounts to evidence of universal knowledge about IK in a theoretical sense since its existence is only theoretically explored.

In the case of the Arts and Culture (DoE, 2003e), indigenous knowledge makes sense only when it is applied to how indigenous people come to do arts. For instance, dancing is dancing no matter the context and, as a result, the same applies to music and any other form of art such as painting. What differs then, is how people dance or make music. In other words, *knowledge-how* is, to some extent, context-dependent. It is also without a doubt that what makes some aspects of Arts and Culture context-dependent (to some extent) is the inclusion of *knowledge-how* through activities that require learners to practically do things such as African dancing, music, or painting instead of just absorbing factual knowledge about such practical activities. Further, in Life Orientation (DoE, 2003f), the notion of *Ubuntu* (as a theoretical knowledge about

indigenous people and communities) is evident and again the rest of what could be assumed to be IK in propositional sense is actually practical knowledge of indigenous people or communities (i.e. how indigenous people come to do certain things such as weddings, rituals, dancing and songs associated with such ceremonies).

5.2.2 Perspectives in NCS and CAPS: Reviewing the Incorporation of IKS

The NCS (DoE, 2007a) posits that, in the early 1960s, the theory of multi-intelligences compelled a number of educationists to take into cognisance that there are multiple ways in which people come to interpret or make sense of the world. The NCS further highlighted that on the basis of this background, the redefinition of intelligence meant that one would inevitably have to take into account such varying approaches or interpretations of the world. Additionally, before the advent of the theory of multi-intelligences, it is believed that the Western world valued mathematical, certain linguistic aptitudes, and logic. Therefore, people were considered to be 'intelligent' if they were able to do mathematics, use language correctly, and think logically (DoE, 2007a). To further elucidate this point, the NSC is of the view that, the theory of multi-intelligence paved a way for the recognition of the diversity of knowledge systems that are used by different groups of people in order to make sense of and ascribe meaning to their own world. The NCS (DoE, 2007a) states that IKS "in the South African context refers to a body of knowledge embedded in African philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over thousands of years" (p. 9). It is against this backdrop that the NCS Grades 10-12 (General) integrated IKS into the various subject statements. The impetus for doing this was to "acknowledge the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution. As many different perspectives as possible have been included to assist with problem-solving in all fields" (DoE, 2007a p. 9).

Table 5.3: Agricultural sciences and other subjects in Grades 10–12 NCS

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
Agricultural Sciences	• In this subject, learners were expected to study and understand changes that have occurred in the practising of

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
	agriculture and they were also expected to show understanding of indigenous agricultural knowledge. This was also done so that they can integrate all pertinent systems, practices and technologies in order for them to manage a sustainable agricultural environment. • This was possible when learners were able to explain changes that took place in practising agriculture over time. They were also expected to explain the indigenous agricultural knowledge that has to some extent influenced production practices. In short, learners were expected to describe and show an understanding of the indigenous practices of agriculture. • To top it all, learners were supposed to examine and assess indigenous agricultural knowledge and describe its impact on agricultural enterprises.
Engineering Graphics and Design	Learners were expected to • Identify ways in which indigenous South African cultures have integrated design into graphical communication. • Look at indigenous and global graphical communication.
Information Technology	When it comes to social, ethical, accessibility, economic, and human-computer interaction, the NCS stressed the importance of looking at these issues from the following perspectives: • inclusivity, human rights issues, accessibility (from a language, equipment, and disabled perspective); • impact of IK.
Life Sciences	• The Life Sciences NCS (DoE, 2007d) stipulates AIKS as another form of interpreting the world needs to be taken into account. • Constructing science knowledge (DoE, 2007d, p. 10).In this case, knowledge is thought to be constructed. • IKS is expected to be taught alongside biotechnology mainly focusing on “micro-organisms and biotechnology in the food

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
	industry (e.g. cheese, beer); traditional technology (e.g. traditional medicines and healers)" (DoE, 2007d, p. 35).

As mentioned before, indigenous knowledge subsists in practical terms; hence, indigenous agricultural knowledge (DoE, 2007a) does exist, and in fact, it has existed long before the advent of colonialism. However, it exists in a practical sense rather than in a theoretical sense[27]. In essence, there are ways in which indigenous people and communities come to practice agriculture and those ways can be considered to be relative to their context. In the case of indigenous agricultural knowledge what can be considered not relative to any individual or community is our theoretical or propositional knowledge of such ways. Simply put, it is universally true that there are certain ways in which indigenous communities come to practise agriculture. The only time when the notion of indigenous agricultural knowledge becomes context-dependent is when it is meant in practical terms. Indigenous people become the only (*not always*) ones who then know-*how* to apply such knowledge. It is worth remembering that our theoretical or propositional knowledge of those ways cannot be relative since truth is not relative (see Hospers, 1990). Accordingly, the inclusion of what is assumed to be indigenous agricultural knowledge in the NCS does make limited sense provided that learners have or will be exposed to such practices in one way or another. Nonetheless, what is most evident in NCS (DoE, 2007a) and CAPS Agricultural Science (DBE, 2012a) (as I will show) is actually propositional (universal) knowledge about the ways in which indigenous people practise/d agriculture.

The notion of indigenous agricultural knowledge is also evident in CAPS (DBE, 2012a) where it is stipulated that learners should explore indigenous knowledge that is used in agriculture. Additionally, they are expected to engage with the challenges and benefits of using IK in agricultural production. CAPS (DBE, 2012a) also encourages Agricultural Science learners and teachers to explore the difference between improved

[27] This is not to imply that indigenous people did not have theoretical knowledge of some sort. Instead, I argue that whatever theoretical knowledge indigenous people had was, and is still universally valid. The only difference is how such knowledge was and is still used by indigenous people in various communities.

and indigenous breeds. In the following agricultural subjects there is also some evidence of what is assumed to be IK in the CAPS;

- Agricultural management practices – learners are expected to take care of the environment by addressing social issues and IKS (DBE, 2012b).
- Agricultural technology – it is anticipated that learners should demonstrate some understanding of the relevant IK which is applicable to Agricultural Technology (DBE, 2012c).

Undoubtedly, the inclusion of what is believed to be IK was not well thought of. Despite the ambiguous nature of the kind of indigenous knowledge that is referred to in Agricultural Technology, the rest of the agricultural studies subjects conflate universally true knowledge that is about indigenous people or practices with knowledge that is indigenous or true only to indigenous people. In addition, when it comes to Engineering Graphics and Design in the NCS (DoE, 2007b), learners were expected to identify ways in which indigenous South African cultures have contributed to graphical communication. This cannot be considered IK. Instead, it can be considered knowledge about indigenous people in South Africa. The reason for this view is that, if indeed those ways or contributions made by indigenous people are true, such facts would be true not only to indigenous people but to everyone which will then make it universal knowledge than IK which does not exist in a propositional sense. My argument is premised on the fact that the NCS (DoE, 2007b) mostly required learners to engage with such a notion at a theoretical level. In the CAPS, Engineering Graphics and Design (DBE, 2012d) does not have explicit ideas on how IK can be integrated into teaching and learning. Furthermore, when it comes to Information Technology, NCS (DoE, 2007c) stresses the importance of looking at the impact of IKS but what is not clear in the context of that curriculum statement is what is meant by IKS. Frankly put, it is not clear if IKS is meant in a practical or theoretical sense. Additionally, in CAPS (DBE, 2012e), Information Technology also lacks explicit ideas on how it ought to integrate IK into teaching and learning. Interestingly, in the CAPS (DBE, 2012f) Electrical Technology, it is acknowledged that indigenous knowledge systems need to be valued in line with the values enshrined in the South African

constitution. I note, however, that there are not many conspicuous examples of how such an acknowledgement of IK would practically take place within the epistemological as well as pedagogical bounds of the said subject. In the CAPS Life Sciences (DBE, 2012g), there is an emphasis on traditional technology (e.g. traditional medicines and healers). This is similar to the case of Natural Sciences in the RNCS. Hence, I see no value in reiterating the argument that I have already made. Moreover, this is also evident in CAPS Life Sciences (DBE, 2012g) where:

- It is stated that the aim of Life Sciences is to make learners aware that school science is also relevant in their everyday context.
- Life Science teachers are encouraged to link science with IKS (where applicable) or teach it in an integrated way by showing learners how it relates to society or their everyday experiences.
- Learners have to be taught the history of science and IKS which emanates from other cultures and other times.

Table 5.4: Physical sciences and other subjects in NCS Grades 10–12

Subject	**Component of indigenous knowledge systems included**
Physical Sciences	Physical Sciences included IKS in the following manner • Learners were expected to engage with knowledge by showing the relationship between scientific knowledge and IKS (DoE, 2007e, p. 28). Realisation of this skill was evident when the learner could, for instance, ➢ Make use of scientific knowledge in order to delineate the importance of traditional practices. ➢ Can compare the varying understandings of the properties and nature of matter. • The learners were also expected to recognise, discuss and compare the worth of knowledge claims within IKS and clarify the acceptance of varying claims. Realisation of this skill was thought to be evident when the learner could, for instance,

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
	➢ Trace and compare the historical changes or growth of varying electronic technologies; and ➢ Examine ways in which different communities come to explain lightning.
Geography	DoE (2007f) posits that "Geography is in the unique position of drawing together aspects of natural sciences, humanities and IKS in order to contribute to the understanding of spatial distribution, human-environment interactions, and sustainable development" (p. 9). In addition to the above, learners were expected to evaluate various approaches used in order to maintain an environment that takes into cognisance differing knowledge systems in diverse contexts (DoE, 2007f).
History	• Learners were expected to explain what is meant by the concept of knowledge systems including IKS. • In this curriculum History "enables us to listen to formerly-subjugated voices, and focuses on the crucial role of memory in society. This comes particularly through an emphasis on oral history and an understanding of IKS" (DoE, 2007g p.9).
Mathematics	In this case, IKS was encouraged to manifest in the following ways: • Mathematics was assumed to be embedded in some cultural artefacts used and experienced by indigenous people. • The murals of the Ndebele, the rhythm of the drums of the Venda people, the Vedic art of the Hindus and the beadwork of the Zulu people. • Ethnomathematics was endorsed and presumed to be useful (in the classroom) in terms of providing an enormous amount of worthy materials that have been recently discovered while being sensitive to the sacredness of culture. More so, "ethnomathematics also stresses that Mathematics originated in cultures other than the Greek and that it continued to be developed in sophistication by many societies other than the European" (DoE, 2007h, p.62).

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
Mathematical literacy	IKS was encouraged as one of the useful central tools in the teaching of mathematical literacy.

Agrawal (1995) argued that science is science and that there is no such thing as indigenous science or knowledge. In the same vein, Horsthemke (2017) maintained that there is no such thing as indigenous scientific knowledge since propositional or theoretical knowledge cannot be true only to a certain group of people. In addition to this, Horsthemke (2017) claimed that a person:

> knows that something is the case if she believes that it is; it is so (or it is true that it is the case); and she has adequate evidence for believing that it is. "Adequacy," here, is determined by the kind, degree, as well as the context of evidence (p. 7).

In the context of the NCS Physical Sciences (DoE, 2007e), there is evidence of the assumed distinction between scientific knowledge and IK. It is against this presumption that learners were tasked to show the relationship between the two supposed different 'knowledge systems'. In addition, it is stated in the NCS Physical Sciences (DoE, 2007e) that learners will be considered to have acquired the necessary skill to compare the two 'knowledge systems' when they can, for instance, use scientific knowledge to explain the importance of traditional practices. This is an interesting angle since it perceives IK as being in tune with traditional practices. On the other hand, learners were given the duty to compare what can be considered to be theoretical in its essence with practical knowledge. It is worth reiterating that, in Chapter 4, I used Hospers (1990) to show or explicate why propositional knowledge cannot be relative since propositional statements need to be in line with the truth. In light of this delineation, the tasking of learners to compare and also to explain requires strong propositions which must, as a result, be true. As specified, Physical Sciences in the context of NCS required learners to compare two knowledge systems (DoE, 2007e). Before I pass judgement on whether the task of comparing two knowledge systems is good or bad, especially for cultivating conscious social reproduction, it is of value to revisit a history lesson which was observed in one of the public schools in Brooklyn, New York by Gutmann (1993) which she used to demonstrate how the

notion of conscious social reproduction can be pedagogically cultivated within the classroom. Gutmann (1993) articulated that:

> the lesson was taught in a Socratic manner. Bruckner did not lecture. He asked questions and kept up a rapid-fire dialogue among the students. "Why?" "How do you know?" "What does this mean?"... By the time the class was finished, the students had covered a great deal of material about American foreign and domestic politics during World War II; they had argued heatedly; most of them had tried out different points of view, seeing the problem from different angles. (p. 6)

It is evident in this lesson that learners were expected to explain how they know and were asked to justify their answers through the "why?" question. In simple terms, many of the task words in Physical Sciences (DoE, 2007e) can lead to conscious social reproduction given that they need stronger propositional statements. However, in the case of Physical Sciences, task words such as 'compare' and 'explain' were problematic given that learners were asked to compare theoretical knowledge (scientific knowledge) with practical knowledge (indigenous knowledge) under the assumed guise that they were learning IK. In terms of how Physical Sciences should be integrated with IKS in CAPS (DBE, 2012h), it is articulated that when learners are exploring food additives and preservation, they are expected to contrast such with indigenous ways of food preservation. Moreover, it is also posited that learners are expected to be taught that indigenous people were the first people to make *fire* by making use of friction (DBE, 2012h). As stated elsewhere, IK does not exist as factual knowledge. Consequently, the conflation of factual knowledge about indigenous people with IK is also evident in the CAPS for Physical Sciences (DBE, 2012h). For example, the view that indigenous people were the first to make *fire* is implied to be IK. Further, it is worth remembering that practical knowledge and factual knowledge have notable differences. I now turn to discuss the possibility of ethnomathematics.

> I suggest that the idea of "culturally specific knowledge" makes sense only with regard to practical knowledge or "mathematical practices" - but not when it is taken to refer to theoretical (mathematical) knowledge. Theoretical, factual or propositional knowledge cannot be culturally specific. Neither can truth. Mathematical truths hold transculturally. My hunch is that when ethnomathematicians and indigenous

> knowledge apologists speak of culturally specific knowledge or of truth being relative, they are actually referring either to practices or to beliefs (Horsthemke, 2006, p. 18-19).

In this exposition, it is noticeable that the case for a relative form of mathematics is difficult to defend since truth in itself is universal. When it comes to mathematics and mathematical literacy, ethnomathematics or the supposed indigenous knowledge is endorsed and it is also stressed that "Mathematics originated in cultures other than the Greek and that it continued to be developed to sophistication by many societies other than the European" (DoE, 2007h, p. 62). Horsthemke (2006) does not deny the existence of mathematical practices and beliefs in different societies which can arguably be relative to that context. A notable example of such practices is evident in the NCS Mathematics (DoE, 2007h) through the following:

- Mathematics is assumed to be embedded in some cultural artefacts used and experienced by indigenous people;
- The murals of the Ndebele, the rhythm of the drums of the Venda people, Vedic art of Hindu people, and the beadwork of the Zulu people.

It follows then that there is no evidence of ethnomathematics in the propositional or theoretical sense in the NCS. This might be due to the fact that truth is not relative and, consequently, propositional or theoretical knowledge is not relative. The NCS Mathematics (DoE, 2007h) also claims that mathematics did not originate only in Greece but it also comes from other cultures. Of course, this argument misses the point, because the argument against ethnomathematics is not about the origins of mathematics or mathematical practices; rather, it is about the sense in which mathematics can be relative or universal. In this case, the researcher also refers to Mathematical Literacy as Mathematics. In other words, the argument against ethnomathematics also applies to mathematical literacy the same way it applies to pure mathematics (DoE, 2007i).

The NSC for Geography (DoE, 2007f) articulated that "Geography is in the unique position of drawing together aspects of natural sciences, humanities and IKS in order to contribute to the understanding of spatial distribution, human-environment interactions, and sustainable development" (p. 9). It is not clearly stated as to how IK

ought to contribute to the understanding of things such as spatial distribution; consequently, I do not engage in detail with its epistemological misapprehensions. In CAPS for Geography (DBE, 2012i) the integration of indigenous knowledge is thought to be possible when learners have developed "an appreciation of the attitudes, values, beliefs and indigenous knowledge systems of others in cultural, economic, environmental, political and social issues that have a geographical dimension" (p. 60). The appreciation of attitudes and values of others is universally evident since differences in values and attitudes do not only exist in Africa but throughout the world, within and beyond indigenous categories of being. However, at an epistemological level, such differences can only be possible in the context of the origin of knowledge claims and the content of such knowledge claims. The validity of such epistemic claims is universal.

When it comes to History, it is presumed in the NCS that history "enables us to listen to formerly-subjugated voices, and focuses on the crucial role of memory in society. This comes particularly through an emphasis on oral history and an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems" (DoE, 2007g p.9). What emanates from this extract is that the NCS also fails to distinguish knowledge about indigenous people and indigenous factual knowledge *per se*. A notable example is that even the so-called oral history does not imply epistemological relativism. This is because oral evidence is not recognised only by indigenous people. It is globally accepted and it can be easily corroborated with other forms of historical evidence in order to produce historical knowledge. Thus, the argument that oral history is indigenous because of its orality falls short of a clear justification. On the other hand, CAPS for History (DBE, 2012j) theorizes that history teachers and learners are expected to look at different case studies and one of them should include a case study on the impact of the slave trade on varying societies and its consequences for indigenous societies and the world at large. Given that history is mainly a product of propositional statements (at epistemological level) since it is concerned with the past and (perhaps) how such past shapes the present and the future, the researcher is then left in awe as to on what grounds can history as a study of the past be indigenous, relative or constructed? This chapter now turns to arts and commercial subjects.

Table 5.5: Arts and Other subjects in the NCS Grades 10–12

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
Dance Studies	The NCS (DoE, 2007j, p. 30) posited that the inclusion of indigenous dance intends to make learners realise the significance of the contributions made by IKS in shaping our understanding of dance and practices.
Dramatic Arts	When it comes to the NCS (DoE, 2007k) in Dramatic Arts, indigenous cultural practices and products are believed to be an integral part of such practices and products. Consequently, the subject aimed at inculcating an appreciation of indigenous dramatic forms, therefore conserving and endorsing South Africa's national heritage through the cultivation of skills in storytelling, praise poetry and oracy. The dramatic arts curriculum states that the following features are evidence of celebration and promotion of indigenous knowledge: • Exploring different contexts in terms of time and engaging with diverse traditions and heritages. • Looking at various cultural processes and practices which include customs, festivals, traditions and rituals in local and continental (Pan-African) contexts and at the global level. • Practising of Oral Studies (which includes myths, legends, folktales, laments, storytelling, praise songs, public speaking and praise poetry).
Visual Arts	IKS in Visual Arts is assumed to exist and it should be taught in the following manner: • Clay vessels and carved wooden artefacts (e.g. headrests, staffs and meat plates), mats, beadwork worn as adornment, grass baskets functional objects in the Southern African region are assumed to reveal IK. • It is believed that people's beliefs often impact how they make particular objects, so each object shows some aspects of IKS.
Music	The NCS (DoE, 2007m, p. 52) stipulated that it aimed to "affirm own and national heritage by creating opportunities for learners to

Subject	Component of indigenous knowledge systems included
	participate in the performance of and research into indigenous musical practices".
Economics	Economics infused IKS in the following manner: • Learners were expected to examine and detail the historical setting of economic growth in South Africa, highlighting IKS and the effect of imperialism and colonialism. • Learners ought to detail the main features of developing countries while also articulating ways in which strategies can be used for the purpose of economic growth. Learners are mandated to take IKS into cognisance. • In the teaching of agriculture and mining, manufacturing and services, animal husbandry and agriculture, the curriculum encourages the infusion of IKS where applicable.
Life Orientation	• Learners were expected to show understanding of indigenous beliefs in South Africa and explain how they contribute to peacefulness in the country. • Learners were also expected to participate in indigenous games.
Accounting	Learners were expected to • "Investigate the differences between informal and indigenous bookkeeping systems and integrate them into the formal bookkeeping system" (DoE, 2007P p. 38).

It is acceptable to include IK in the NCS as practical knowledge in subjects such as Dance Studies (learning traditional or African dance) (DoE, 2007j) or Dramatic Arts (DoE, 2007k) where learners are presumably expected to perform activities such as praise poetry, storytelling, folk-tales, and legends. Moreover, I see no harm in including IK as practical knowledge in subjects such as Music (DoE, 2007m) (practical making of traditional music), Visual Arts (DoE, 2007l) (clay vessels and carved wooden artefacts), and Life Orientation (indigenous games as part of physical education) (DoE, 2007o). This is evident within the CAPS (DBE, 2012k) where, in Dance Studies, it is set out that:

- Learners should be taught indigenous/cross-cultural dance. Non-African dance majors are expected to learn and perform any of the African indigenous dance steps which include (but are not limited to) gumboot dance/*pantsula*/*kwassa kwassa*.
- African dance majors are expected to learn and perform non-African culture dance forms which include ballet/contemporary/Spanish/Indian and others.

Music in the CAPS (DBE, 2012l) encourages the teaching of indigenous African instruments, indigenous music theatre, and performances as evident in indigenous music genres. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to teach the history of indigenous African music and its composers. This is theoretical knowledge about indigenous African music. Furthermore, the NCS for Life Orientation (DoE, 2007o) states that learners should be taught about the origins and practices of indigenous belief systems in South Africa and indigenous games as part of the playground skills. Visual Arts in NCS (DoE, 2007l) encourages the learners to be taught African art, indigenous art forms and African tribal art (including Ndebele architecture and wall decoration). In the CAPS (DBE, 2012m), Hospitality Studies, it is clearly articulated that learners should plan a three-course meal and make use of indigenous ingredients such as (but not limited to) biltong, *mogodu*, *morogo,* game meats*, mabella* or *maltabella* meal, *sheba*. Further, the CAPS (DBE, 2012n) document on Dramatic Arts outlines that learners need to be introduced to South African oral/indigenous performance forms which include cultural performance forms and oral tradition. In the CAPS, Commercial Subjects, learners ought to be taught IK in the following manner

- Accounting – learners were supposed to learn about informal or what is known as indigenous bookkeeping systems (DBE, 2012o);
- Business studies – learners ought to be taught ways in which IK can be utilised in order to identify business opportunities (DBE, 2012p);
- Economics – Learners should also be taught about the history of money which includes indigenous money (DBE, 2012q).

In the NCS for Accounting (DoE, 2007p) and Economics (DoE, 2007n) learners mainly engaged with theoretical knowledge; even when they touched on practical

knowledge, they did so theoretically. For instance, in the NCS for Economics (DoE, 2007n) learners had to examine economic development while highlighting the influence of IKS. They would need propositional statements which are underpinned by truth and cannot be relative. Hence, the idea of IK (as presumed in varying curriculum statements) as factual knowledge does not make sense since much of what is in these curriculum statements is theoretical knowledge or universally true knowledge about indigenous people or communities and this includes the tasks that are enacted at a pedagogical level. This problematic conflation of indigenous knowledge with practical tasks is evident in the NCS for Accounting and in the CAPS for Accounting, Business Studies, and Economics as demonstrated in this section so far.

In light of the analysis so far, it is worth highlighting that, through the following debates, engagement on the inclusion of IK tends to reflect conceptual ambiguity. This is in alignment with the deliberations on the existence of IK. The inclusion of what is assumed to be IK in the curriculum has some pedagogical implications as I will show. To take this discussion further, Semali and Kincheloe (1999) suggest that the integration of IK in the curriculum was necessary to bring about the needed social change in various communities and to advocate for equity and justice. The CAPS (DBE, 2011) which is the most recent curriculum in South African schools, supports the use of IKS to create a relationship between what learners do at school and their realities at home in most school subjects. Lazarus (2011) posits that there is value in knowledge systems that belong to certain groups of people and that integrating these knowledge bases will inform and contribute positively to the existing body of knowledge. Moreover, "this merging of perspectives could also be of practical use in helping people to engage with the world and address social challenges" (p. 24). Lazarus (2004, 2006) engaged in numerous studies attempting to devise ways in which IKS and Western knowledge could be integrated and came to realise that there were a number of impediments to the integration of IKS and Western scientific knowledge such as failure to recognise and value various knowledge systems, conceptual language, and internal problems within varying knowledge bases, leading to one knowledge base dominating or being favoured over others. Ogunniyi (2005) also

raised concerns about the amalgamation of IK and scientific knowledge; arguing that such a move failed to materialise in both Australia and North America. In addition, Ogunniyi (2005) is of the view that these countries removed some important parts of IK in order to make the curriculum fit within the Western scientific knowledge paradigm. In driving this point home, Diwu and Ogunniyi (2011) believe that there are no clear or visible, practical examples in IK while such examples do exist in the Western sciences and that IK is seldomly assessed, especially in the final examination. As a result, educators do not feel the need to incorporate IK in their teaching. Nonetheless, Mathebula (2019) is of the view that it is possible to integrate IK and western scientific knowledge.

It is clear from this analysis that despite the controversies engulfing the notion of IKS, the South Africa government, in particular, the post-apartheid Department of Basic Education took the initiative to include IK in the curriculum. In brief, what emanates from the analysis of the three curriculum statements which have been implemented in post-apartheid South Africa is that IKS have to some extent been included in all three of the curriculum statements. I agree with the inclusion of IK as practical knowledge in subjects such as Hospitality Studies and other subjects as I have indicated throughout this chapter. Nonetheless, on the basis of the discussed conceptual incongruences, I reject the manner in which the notion of indigenous knowledge has been approached in the South African school curriculum statements. The motivation for rejecting the notion of IK as it is portrayed in the three curriculum statements is as follows:

- The manner in which indigenous knowledge has been integrated into the three curriculum statements is arguably problematic since it implies a false dichotomy (i.e. it gives the impression that there is such a thing as factual or propositional knowledge that is indigenous or western).
- How IK has been included in the three curriculum statements somehow creates a false sense of identity (i.e. it makes indigenous and non-indigenous learners think that factual knowledge about indigenous people and their societies is IK. As a

result, indigenous learners may feel that they somehow have propositional knowledge that is true and forms part of their own identity) (see, Luthfa 2006).

- I am of the view that both a false dichotomy and a false sense of identity are a product of the inclusion of IK as propositional knowledge, which unfortunately fails to cultivate conscious social reproduction. This is because truth is not at the centre of knowledge in these instances.
- According to Gutmann (1987), the teaching of untrue doctrines as indicated in Chapter 2 violates the principle of non-repression and, as a result, it hinders children's opportunity to deliberate. I contend that such is due to much of the included factual knowledge about indigenous people (and communities) which is taught as factually true IKS; such epistemic misapprehension is, unfortunately, detrimental to the notion of conscious social reproduction.

5.2.3 Indigenous Knowledge and the School Curriculum: A New Realist Rejoinder

In his book, *The Struggle for Meaning: Reflections on Philosophy, Culture, and Democracy in Africa*, Hountondji (2002) provides reasons as to why ethnophilosophy should not be considered philosophy. He does this by making use of Husserl's notion of first-order *hyle* (or matter) and the *morphe* (or form) which is the second order. According to Hountondji (2002), Husserl's notion of the *hyle* refers to the 'nonintentional' or 'primary' aspect of the mind, the level of thought in which perceptual content or sensory information is established. By implication, this can then be considered the first layer of thought since it requires a direct connection with the external world. To further expand on this point, Hountondji (2002) highlighted that Husserl's idea of a *morphe* refers to the layer of the mind which links the raw experience of the first layer of thought which is the *hyle* with objective reality. Furthermore, Hountondji (2002) is of the view that the *hyle*

> expresses our primordial interlacing with the world, and the initial complicity that conditions any later distance that might be observed; it expresses this place of silence where, before any enunciation and verbal expression, the configurations of our relation to the world and to others are sketched out. (p. 24)

It is against this backdrop that Hountondji (2002) criticised the presumption that African philosophy is another form of implicit philosophy of failing to differentiate between the aforementioned layers of thought. Hountondji (1977) articulated that

> If we pose that it is absurd to speak of unconscious algebra, geometry, linguistics, etc. and if we accept that no science can exist historically without an explicit discourse, then by the same token we must regard the very idea of an unconscious philosophy as absurd (p. 47).

In light of this view, Hountondji (1977; 2002) contended that Africans, like all human beings, possess the ability to think abstractly. The reason for this view is that, according to Hountodji (2002), Husserl proved that there is a universal architectonic embodiment of consciousness. Thus, the presumption that Africans could not think as individuals outside their 'communal' way of seeing reality was implied in the arguments often made by ethnophilosophers and to some extent undermined the universal nature of individual human consciousness which is necessary for philosophising. Against this background, I now focus on the construct of school knowledge as an object which is necessary for the cultivation of conscious social reproduction.

It follows from the discussion so far that the inclusion of African traditional knowledge in the school curriculum will not make things easier for indigenous learners or more difficult for non-indigenous learners. This is because much of what is considered African traditional knowledge is often taught or transmitted in an everyday or informal domain. This is not to reduce African traditional knowledge into everyday knowledge. African traditional knowledge that is not taught in the everyday context is mostly meant to be a secret (e.g. the training of traditional healers). More so, I argue that due to the context in which African traditional knowledge or indigenous-*how* has been imparted, unfortunately, for it to be taught at school, it will have to be made an 'object of thought'. Additionally, Charlot (2009) postulates that there is "the specificity of school activity" or 'object of thought'. What this means is that there is a particular or precise reason which compels parents to send their children to school. According to Charlot (2009), at school, the world in which we live is treated as an

object and not as an environment or an everyday world perceived by our experiences. It is clear that the notion of school knowledge being an 'object of thought' can easily be linked with Husserl's notion of a *morphe* as evident in Hountondji's (2002) argument.

I need to state that the relevance of this discussion lies in the fact that, in Chapter 1, I explicitly mentioned that I intended to cast some doubt on the view that the inclusion of IK in the school curriculum would benefit or be of detriment to some learners. I have (throughout the thesis) affirmed the disposition that IK exists as practical knowledge. Therefore, it makes sense for me to highlight ways in which such knowledge can cultivate conscious social reproduction – one of them is through it being made an object of thought. But before doing that, I would like to outline some differences between school, everyday and indigenous knowledge (as promised in Chapter 1) in the context of this thesis.

Table 5.6: Differences and similarities between school, everyday and indigenous knowledge.

School knowledge	Everyday Knowledge	Indigenous knowledge systems
Systematically organised /formal	Spontaneous/informal	Organised but outside of formal schooling context.
Abstract and it can be generalised or universalised.	Some aspects of it can be generalised (i.e. learning that fire is hot while playing at home). Other parts of it cannot be generalised because of their practical nature.	Mostly based on practical viability or *knowledge-how*. Thus, it cannot be generalised or universalised. But the theory about such practices can be generalised.
Acquired under the guidance of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (intentional)	It can be acquired without the MKO.	Mostly acquired through the guidance of an elder who happens to be the MKO (Not trained the same way teachers are trained).
Imparted at school through a planned curriculum.	Imparted in informal spaces.	Imparted in an informal environment (e.g. home).

Emphasis on reading, listening, speaking, and writing.	It can be acquired through doing (practically), reading, writing, and speaking.	Emphasis on orality (i.e. speaking and listening) and practise or doing.

Charlot (2009) further states that "at times, this object of thought has a referent outside school, in the environment of the pupil's life. But in this case, the relationship with the object of thought should be different from the relationship with the referent" (p. 91). This has direct implications for the so-called African traditional knowledge or IK as practical knowledge. To put it bluntly, the inclusion of African traditional knowledge will require the learner to be able to distinguish between how things are done in his/her own place of experience (the context where African traditional knowledge is mostly taught or evident) and how things are thought to be done in an objectified reality. In their place of experience, learners may, for example, be accustomed to ways in which their community engages in agriculture (agricultural practices), but at school, learners are expected to understand that their world of experience is different from what is taught at school (object of thought) (Charlot, 2009). For instance, in the case of agriculture, learners are expected to comprehend that agriculture is an economic activity and that there are different categories of agriculture which include commercial and subsistence farming (propositional knowledge). Thus, teaching learners African traditional agriculture will go beyond their world of experience or practice. Hence, such African traditional agriculture will be taught as universally true factual knowledge (theoretical knowledge about indigenous practices) except in rare cases where learners are expected to practically engage in an activity. In this case, the world of experience refers to the everyday context where African traditional knowledge or agriculture is notably taught.

It is against these whys and wherefores that Charlot (2009) posits that the relationship between the learners' background and the knowledge that is taught in school needs to be prudently questioned. This implies that schools do not exist to teach what ought to be in line with the reality of the learner or the everyday context. Charlot (2009) is of the view that when learners struggle in school, there is often an attempt to link school knowledge with the everyday context. Nonetheless, she believes that this link can be

both beneficial and disadvantageous at the same time. The reason for this view is that the link between the everyday context and the world as an object of thought tends to sometimes give meaning to what is being taught or what schools teach (Charlot, 2009). This is one of the reasons African traditional knowledge should be included in the school curriculum since it is also different from theoretical knowledge. Nonetheless, the link between the two worlds can also be a challenge since it ought not to hide the true or exact denotation of the school activity (Charlot, 2009). This suggests that the inclusion of African traditional knowledge can easily be confused with the meaning of what a school is (or is about). For instance, some learners may be of the view that schools exist to teach what is in or about their informal concrete context; this perception is wrong.

Charlot (2009) draws ideas from both Bachelard's notion of epistemological obstacles and Vygotsky's differentiation of everyday and scientific knowledge to argue that schools exist to take learners from the everyday concrete world to the scientific abstract (made of universally true knowledge) world. Charlot (2009) further contends that what matters pedagogically is not the link between the everyday context and the world as an object of thought. Rather, it is whether teaching has meaning or not. Thus, this link between the two worlds can be helpful in some instances and almost impossible in others (Charlot, 2009). I have, however, shown through the analysis of the three curriculum statements that, in some instances, it is possible to incorporate African traditional knowledge. My focus is mainly on the epistemological aspect of IK and I do not intend to draw a complete or totally demarcating line between epistemology and pedagogy. Also, I do not imply that the two are the same.

In light of the discussion thus far, I propose an approach that seeks to delegitimise the unsubstantiated epistemic dichotomy which is assumed to exist between that which is considered IK and western scientific knowledge. In this thesis, I argue for a particular meta-evaluative framework or criteria which can be used as a barometer for including IK in the South African schools' curriculum. Although I will use some content as an example of the knowledge that needs to be included in the South African school curriculum, the main aim of this is not to stipulate what content needs to be

included in the curriculum. Instead, at a meta-theoretical level, I develop a meta-evaluative framework or criteria that can be used to assess the suitability of such knowledge in terms of cultivating conscious social reproduction. Consequently, I propose that the curriculum should instead include factual knowledge about indigenous people and not be included under the guise of propositionally true IK. The inclusion of theoretical or factual knowledge which mainly focuses on indigenous people should not be conceived as a relative form of knowledge; instead, it should be perceived as universally true knowledge which speaks to the true identities of indigenous people. Furthermore, the inclusion of such factual knowledge together with African traditional knowledge or indigenous *knowledge-how* should not be thought of as a way of mitigating the difference between learner's everyday context and school context. The proposed approach seeks to reject the following

- The assumption that knowledge is socially constructed;
- Epistemological relativism; and
- False dichotomy which yields a false identity.

The impetus for the rejection of the notion of knowledge as a social construct goes beyond epistemological concerns. If knowledge is to be thought of as a social construct in order to sustain the notion of IKS as another form of factual knowledge, proponents of IK would be left with no choice but to accept other constructs of indigenous people which may not be in line with their contingent needs and interests. More so, if knowledge is to be accepted as a social construct, indigenous people together with the proponents of IK may, at times, due to historical nostalgia, romanticise terrible aspects of the commonly shared identity of mostly indigenous communities. This would mainly be achieved by constructing an idealistic image of indigenous people/ communities. In other words, this proposed approach is rooted in realism and consequently, it seeks to encourage the teaching of factual knowledge that clearly corresponds with the true identities of indigenous people and their communities. Additionally, I concur with Horsthemke (2010) that the teaching of what is assumed to be a socially constructed knowledge actually "gives people (educators as well as learners) a false sense of empowerment and authority" (p. 84), i.e., the inclusion of

factual knowledge about indigenous and communities as indigenous facts can be considered to be disempowering. As a result, the proposed meta-evaluative framework (rooted in realism) denotes that factual knowledge about indigenous people or communities in the curriculum should not only be true to indigenous people but globally acceptable. It is this true knowledge that can cultivate conscious social reproduction in a democratic society such as that of South Africa.

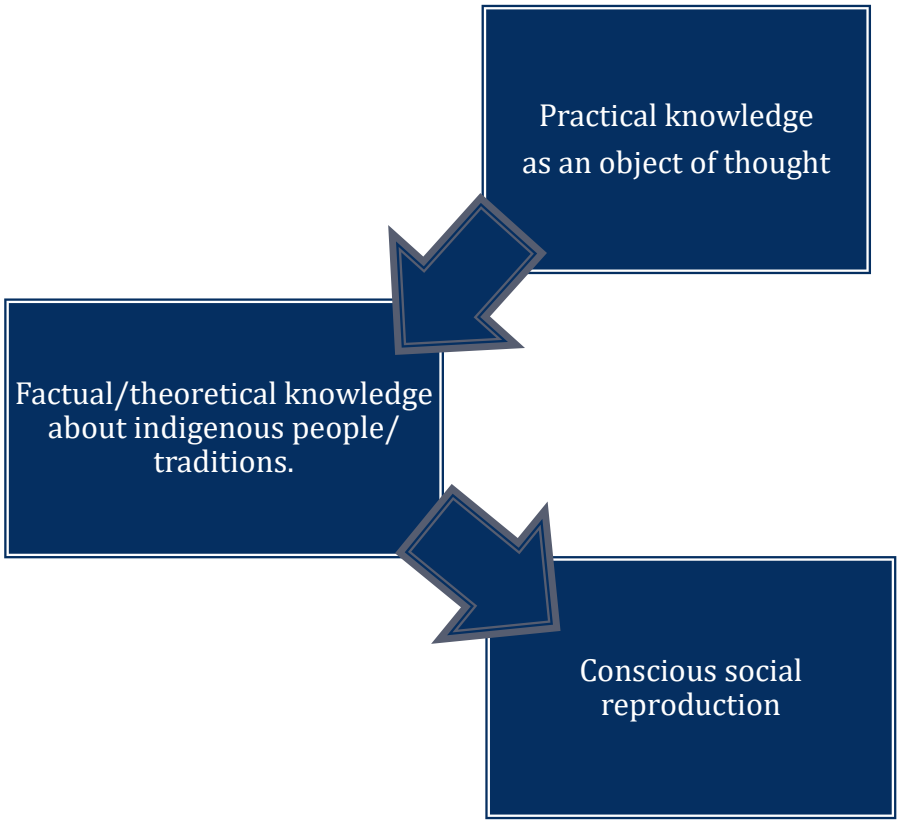

Figure 5.1: Epistemic diagram for conscious social reproduction

What emanates from the above diagram is that practical knowledge cannot, unfortunately, cultivate conscious social reproduction on its own since it does not guarantee theoretical reflection or thinking (i.e. in some instances people *know-how* and often do things on the basis of habit). In simple terms, it is possible for someone to *know-how* or have the ability to do something and not have factual or theoretical knowledge about such activity which is necessary in order for them to be able to deliberate in a democratic society. Hospers (1990) notes that the knowledge of how to do certain things is not only evident in humankind but in animals as well. Thus, it follows then that in order for any education system to cultivate conscious social

reproduction, it needs to make such practical knowledge an object of thought and locate it into the broader theoretical or factual knowledge that is at the centre of the notion of universal truth as argued in the case of epistemological realism. I am cognisant of the longstanding debate between Ryle (1949), Stanley (2011) and Snowdon (2003) on whether practical knowledge does have the potential to intellectually capacitate or not. Even if I were to concede that practical knowledge does have such a potential to intellectually capacitate, it would still not suffice that there is a possibility of deliberating without strong propositional statements or theoretical knowledge. Hence, even if practical knowledge does intellectually capacitate, it remains virtually impossible to deliberate without knowledge-*that* or theoretical knowledge about the world. This means that propositional knowledge is mandatory in the cultivation of conscious social reproduction.

More to the above, knowledge about indigenous people as proposed in this chapter should not be thought of as being synonymous with Hountondji's (1997) notion of endogenous knowledge. According to Hountondji (1997), endogenous knowledge refers to knowledge that "evokes the origin of the kind of knowledge identified as an internal product drawn from a given cultural background, as opposed to any other category of knowledge which would be imported from elsewhere" (p. 17). In simple terms, the proposed approach differs significantly from endogenous knowledge since it is underpinned by truth rather than a particular cultural background. More so, through the idea of school knowledge being made an object of thought, the knowledge envisaged by the proposed meta-evaluative framework seeks to provide an opportunity for learners to critique and engage the cultural background on which endogenous knowledge relies. Equally so, I do not aim to offer a synthesis of the false dichotomy which is assumed to exist between IK as a factual knowledge and western scientific knowledge which has been questioned by scholars such as Horsthemke (2004b) and Agrawal (1995). Instead, I argue for the centring of universal truth in the production of what is considered to be *knowledge that* or factual knowledge which seeks to delineate the identities and histories of indigenous people. The question of who should produce knowledge about Africa, Africans or for Africa has been a subject of contestation (see Hountondji 1997). However, this study is not concerned with such

debate. Instead, I am more concerned with the truth that drives such *knowledge about* indigenous people because if it is not true then it cannot be considered knowledge even if it is produced by the indigenous people themselves. What further sets this approach apart from Hountondji's (1997) notion of endogenous knowledge is that I am not concerned with pragmatic concerns which are heavily dictated by our contingent needs and interests (such as re-centring or centring Africa or Africans). My focus is mainly on epistemic concerns which revolve around the notions of truth, rationality and knowledge. This is not to suggest that pragmatic concerns do not matter or are not problematic. However, given the nature of the arguments perused and pursued in this dissertation, at this juncture, a discussion on such pragmatic concerns has no impact on the nature of conscious social reproduction. I argued elsewhere that education will forever have economic interests tied to it. Nonetheless, the validity of knowledge (which is at the centre of this thesis) is independent of such contingent needs and interests (Boghossian, 2006). Thus, the

> current research into the incorporation of Xhosa beadwork into a mathematics learning programme showed, inter alia, that only a very limited number of learners were able to identify with this practice and hence incorporate and assimilate it meaningfully into their learning experience. To many learners the practice of beadwork was foreign and old-fashioned, a practice that only their grandparents indulged in. This begs the question whether ethnomathematics is, indeed, a more appropriate way of doing mathematics. There appears to be little empirical evidence for giving an affirmative answer to this question (Horsthemke & Schäfer, 2007 p. 5).

What emanates from this quote above is that the inclusion of IK or African traditional knowledge under the guise of making education relevant to the learner who is assumed to be isolated fails to understand that indigenous traditions do not exist in isolation from other traditions. More so, they are subject to changing times. Consequently, the plausible reason for the inclusion of indigenous *knowledge-how* or African traditional knowledge (including factual knowledge about indigenous people) is that such knowledge can be used as "a means for providing contextual, cultural and historical meaning to mathematics, ethnomathematics may be very useful, but to claim more than this is questionable" (Horsthemke & Schäfer, 2007, p.

5). In order to make content (including both factual knowledge about indigenous/communities and African traditional knowledge) relevant to the lives of learners, I thus accept the following premise:

> *Context-sensitive* realist account [which] acknowledges that people do not have the same cognitive resources, skills and opportunities. They do not all act or operate in the absence of time constraints. Their situations are characterised by different levels of expertise, by different opportunities to access and gather information, by different levels of cognitive maturity and training and by considerable differences in time constraints (Horthemske 2010, p. 93).

This means that teachers should be cognisant of the fact that not all learners have access to the same resources. It is noteworthy that a lack of resources including cognitive resources does not affect the nature of mind-independent truth. Instead, it affects the manner in which the teacher yields knowledge or transmits it. In short, because of contextual variables, learners cannot be expected to reason at the same level. For example, a learner who happens to attend a good, highly resourced urban school cannot be expected to reason at the same level as that of a learner who went to a poorly resourced township school. This is not to say that disadvantaged learners are incapable of reasoning at a principal level. Nonetheless, such is a question of pedagogy (which can be linked to resources) and not of epistemology. Notable examples of the kind of knowledge that is endorsed by this approach are provided below:

- The case of Mapungubwe where archaeological evidence was used to prove that the pre-colonial state engaged in things such as trading with the Arabs, China and India. This kind of factual knowledge can without a doubt be used in economics, history, economic and management science where learners can be asked to investigate the history of trading by indigenous people;
- The archaeological evidence found in Mapungubwe which includes gold and clay objects can be used as an example of how indigenous people engaged in the Visual Arts; and

- The case of Bokoni shows "terraced settlements [which] represent a significant example of agricultural innovation and one that was unique in pre-colonial South Africa" (Delius, Maggs & Schoeman, 2012, p. 409).

5.3 FINAL REMARKS

In this chapter, I argued that what emanates from the so-called indigenous knowledge included in the different curriculum statements is factually true knowledge that happens to be about indigenous people or communities. I further contended that the ramification of insisting on this false dichotomy between the supposed IK and western scientific knowledge is that it leads to a false sense of identity and, in turn, hinders conscious social reproduction. It is against this background that I proposed the new meta-evaluative framework which is rooted in the view that propositionally true knowledge cannot only be true to a certain group. As a result, the future curriculum should rather include propositionally true knowledge which is about the indigenous communities and people. Furthermore, the inclusion of African traditional knowledge in the curriculum as suggested by Horsthemke (2004b) should be done in such a way that is not void of theoretical knowledge of such practices in order for it not to hinder conscious social reproduction as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) in her theory of democratic education. Consequently, the novelty of this study lies not only in integrating debates in political philosophy (democratic education) and epistemology (IKS) but in providing an elucidation that seeks not to hinder conscious social reproduction and the true identities of indigenous peoples and communities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

What knowledge is envisaged by Amy Gutmann (1987) in her theory of democratic education? In this dissertation, it is clear that Gutmann's theory of democratic education directly (and indirectly) favours factual knowledge as a tool that can be utilised to cultivate conscious social reproduction. A key point that I made in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis is that democracies do need democratic education despite the fact that democratic societies have the freedom to implement any education system of their choice. Nonetheless, I argue, in line with Gutmann (1987), that democratic societies are also ideologically obliged to implement democratic education. This line of argument is enunciated in the following manner:

- In Chapter 2, I traced the notion of democracy from the times of Athens to show how individuals were thought to be influencing decisions that shaped their everyday lives.
- I also looked at instrumental arguments for and against democracy to show that at the centre of democracy is individual freedom.
- Schumpeter's conception of democracy and the notion of polyarchy were also used to show that individual freedom (arguably) can be attained even when there is no direct participation (as in the case of Athens) of each citizen within modern democratic societies.
- In Chapter 2, I also explored the notion of majoritarian democracy and consociationalism to show how individual freedom is at times both endangered and protected in post-apartheid South Africa.

In light of the above, it can be extrapolated that the arguments for and against democracy are often directed at freedom which human beings ought to possess in democratic societies. In simple terms, those that argue for democracy (e.g. Mill, 1861) are often of the view that individual freedom and participation make perfect sense as opposed to what happens in cases of monarchy and oligarchy. More so, through the debates on the nature of South African democracy, it can be deduced that such

deliberations are centred on the issue of individual freedom. For instance, Connors (1996) and Lijphart (1998) both engaged in a direct argument on whether the South African post-1994 constitution was consociational or majoritarian. In other words, the debate was centred on the idea of power-sharing which questions how individual freedom can be protected in a democratic society. To put it bluntly, power-sharing in a consociational sense allows citizens of diverse groups to be represented and protected while majoritarian democracy allows the interests of those who are in the majority to prevail. As a result, individual freedom and interests of those who happen to be a minority are sometimes compromised. It is against this background that in Chapter 2, I argued (in line with Gutmann, 1987) that democratic education is desirable since it aims at conscious social reproduction. Simply put, the ability to critically deliberate as an intellectual skill is necessary for any human being in a democratic society since it allows them to choose the life they may want to lead. Thus, it should be inculcated in future citizens who ought to actively participate in democratic societies and help maintain democracy.

In Chapter 3, a key point that I made is that democratic education seeks to cultivate conscious social reproduction. The main focus of this chapter was democratic education and knowledge (including IKS). In this chapter, I sought to investigate what kind of knowledge is favoured by Gutmann's (1987) theory of democratic education, and it became clear that factual knowledge is what seems to be favoured in the context of the theory of democratic education. Subsequently, I note that such factual knowledge does or at least can aid conscious social reproduction. However, as delineated previously, it is not clear as to whether Gutmann's (1987) notion of factual knowledge is relative, constructed, or universally true. In illustrating the nature of such ambiguity, I showed through the debates on IKS that scholars such as Green (2008) argue that facts can be relative. Consequently, factual knowledge is, in this instance, thought to be relative. It is of note that the integration of IKS was meant to show that factual knowledge remains a contested matter.

Chapter 4 mainly focused on a meta-theoretical framework. In so doing, I first engaged with the notion of scepticism which is the view that we can never know (or

completely) anything about the world. I then critically discussed epistemological relativism which was followed by a detailed scrutiny of epistemological constructivism. In this chapter, I indicated that I am in favour of epistemological realism. The impetus for the meta-theoretical framework was to show that (1) the debates in indigenous knowledge are not isolated from the debates in epistemology which have been taking place for centuries; and (2) to actually illustrate how and why epistemological relativism and constructivism (which have direct implications for the debates on the existence of IK as factual knowledge) are untenable. It follows then that the consequences of teaching IK as factual will not unfortunately lead to conscious social reproduction. More so, the teaching of IK as factual knowledge stands to be detrimental to the future of South African democracy.

In Chapter 5, I deliberately chose first to engage with specific examples of what is thought to be IK in different curriculum statements, namely, the RNCS, NCS, and CAPS. What is presumed to be propositional IK is, in actual fact, universally true factual knowledge about indigenous people. On this basis, I argued that such epistemic misrepresentation can lead to a false sense of identity. Therefore, the integration of the so-called IK into the school curriculum needs to be rethought. In simple terms, IK can only make practical sense and not theoretical sense. I also showed how the emphasis on IKS as factual knowledge can be disadvantageous to the most pivotal feature of democratic education which is conscious social reproduction.

In what ways do democratic education and IK converge and diverge? In Chapter 4, I discussed what makes knowledge a justified true belief. Moreover, I showed why factual knowledge cannot be relative or constructed. I further argued that IK falls short of justification as factual knowledge that is relative or constructed. Therefore, it arguably fails to cultivate conscious social reproduction. Furthermore, conscious social reproduction aims to produce citizens who are not only conscious of the nature of democracy but also capable of deliberating on ways in which it can be shaped. In short, IK as factual knowledge fails to cultivate conscious social reproduction. Thus, it does not converge with democratic education as envisaged by Gutmann (1987) due to its assumption about the nature of truth. I reiterate that IK does to a limited extent

converge with democratic education. To be precise, IK converges when it is defined as *knowledge-how* or practical knowledge. This is in line with Horsthemke's (2004b) categorisation of IK as practical knowledge.

Where to from here in terms of content in the South African school's curriculum? In Chapter 5, I argued for a new realist rejoinder which seeks to not devalue the contribution made by indigenous people or communities. Given that IK cannot exist as a theoretical or factual knowledge, I then embrace a universally true factual knowledge that is rooted in the true identities of indigenous people. In other words, instead of factual IK, I argue that factual knowledge that is mainly about indigenous people be centred on truth, as is evident in the case of Mapungubwe and Bokoni. In addition, I articulated that universally true knowledge about indigenous people or communities should be included within the school curriculum to give historical meaning to the content that is taught. Furthermore, such knowledge should be included in order to aid in imparting a true sense of identity within the communities of indigenous people.

What are the research prospects emanating from this thesis? A number of issues that need further research are evident in this thesis:

- First, future researchers who wish to look into the convergence and divergence of democratic education and IKS should explore ways in which the so-called IK can be theorised and in turn feed into the universally true knowledge about indigenous people, communities, and practices.
- Then, future researchers can look into other tangible examples or instances of what I have dubbed as factual knowledge about indigenous people, practices or communities. This would be done in addition to the two examples of Mapungubwe and Bokoni which were briefly touched on in Chapter 5.
- Last, researchers who are interested in the relationship between democratic education and IKS can also investigate realist pedagogies and ways in which they can be used to teach IK as practical knowledge while fostering conscious social reproduction in the midst of incorporating theoretical aspects or *knowledge-that*.

A REFLECTIVE PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

Chang and Chao are both intrigued by issues in epistemology and political philosophy and they hold strong views about the direction in which each of these spheres of philosophy should take in education.

Chang: Chao, now that you are accustomed to issues in epistemology (IKS) and political philosophy (democratic education), do you think that it is fair for Gift to argue that Indigenous Knowledge Systems as factual knowledge cannot cultivate conscious social reproduction? I mean even his own argument showed that the notion of truth remains a contested matter.

Chao: The very same criteria that you just implicitly used in judging the fact that the idea of truth is still contested, is the basis for Gift's argument against indigenous knowledge as factual knowledge. I mean if the idea of relative truth is tenable as believed by the proponents of indigenous knowledge systems, then they should accept that according to the standards used by Gift their notion of relative truth is untenable.

Chang: Well, it seems like I *can't make heads or tails* of your utterances. Be specific, please!

Chao: *(cheeky)* what I am saying to you, Chang is that you cannot have your cake and eat it. To be precise, you cannot claim that the truth is relative and go on to cast judgement on the incorrectness of other people's arguments.

Chang: I now get you. So, do you think that factual or propositional knowledge can cultivate a sovereign being? Is there even such a thing as a sovereign being?

Chao: Sorry to interrupt you, but it seems like you ask deep philosophical questions for someone like you who doesn't even bother to read!

Chang: Are you implying that my concerns aren't worthy of any intellectual engagement?

Chao : Well, Chang, I will give you a benefit of the doubt! My view of the notion of free will or sovereign being depends on how you define it or even perceive it.

Chang: What exactly do you mean?

Chao: If you happen to believe in determinism, then you will be sceptical of the disposition that there is such a thing as a sovereign being.

Chang: I am sceptical because I believe that we are constrained by our genetic, psychic, and even environmental variables. Hence, I believe that much of who we are or what we do is determined by our environment or structures that outweigh human agency.

Chao: That's a pessimistic view, Chang! Are you saying that human beings are incapable of changing the conditions that shape them? If so, then you will have to explain to me as to 1) why is it widely agreed and evidenced that different cultures changed over the years 2) why the environment that you are referring to has also changed significantly since ancient times and this includes the nature of the societal structures that you are boldly citing in your argument. Also, why is it that during the course of human existence, we have seen some individuals changing the world in unimaginable ways? If there was no free will, clearly all of us would be products of our environment and the world wouldn't have changed that much.

Chang: I must admit that as things stand, I am not equipped to engage with you but I will revisit your argument after reading widely. So, to avoid shooting from the hip, I think we should end the conversation now.

Chao: Thank you, Chang! Do the right thing!

"Our duty as educationists is to search for the best possible education which democratic societies can provide in order to intellectually capacitate future *demos*"

(Gift Sonkqayi)

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