Leadership in Transition: Primary School Principals’
Perceptions of Leadership in a Context of School-Based
Management in Israel

Thesis submitted for the degree of
PhD
at the University of Leicester

by

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July 2007
ABSTRACT

Leadership in Transition: Primary School Principals' Perceptions of Leadership in a Context of School-Based Management in Israel

Submitted by: Beverley Topaz

This thesis seeks to increase understanding as to how primary school principals in Israel perceive the impact of school-based management on their leadership practices. The argument underpinning the thesis is that school principals represent the interface between policy makers and policy implementation and as such are the key players in educational reform. This is an interpretive qualitative study, using the collective case study approach. Fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve primary school principals, leading schools which had undergone a transition to school-based management in a large urban location in Israel. Data were analysed using both a categorical and a contextual approach in order to reach an understanding of the individual principals’ perceptions as well as viewing them as a group. The findings reveal that principals are in a transitional stage in educational leadership and are facing new challenges. These are presented through six core themes: autonomy; trust; the corrupting nature of power; unclear lines of responsibility; work overload and stress; and leadership beyond school boundaries. A conceptual framework is developed which underscores principals’ differential responses to these challenges. This study validates findings of previous studies and offers two new insights into principals’ perceptions of their leadership roles. The first is a perception of an erosion of trust across all levels of the education system. The second is a dilemma between autonomy, power and corruption. The typology developed in this thesis to represent principals’ differential responses to school-based management provides a broad conceptual framework to underpin further research into principals’ perceptions of their leadership roles.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude first and foremost to my supervisor Dr. Howard Stevenson who kept his promise not to send me on wild goose chases, supported and encouraged me. His comments were always constructive and enabled me to refine my ideas and articulate them coherently. I thank him for being both a mentor and a friend.

I am indebted to my husband Eldad and my son Chen who ungrudgingly gave me the time and space to devote to my studies.

My heartfelt gratitude is also expressed to my friend and colleague Rivi Carmel who undertook this journey with me. She has my deepest appreciation for the time spent together in the UK and in Israel using each other as sounding boards and providing emotional support and insightful input when most needed.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues at the Kibbutzim College of Education who readily agreed to serve as expert judges and carefully and critically examined the core categories and so generously shared their knowledge.

Lastly, I would like to express my esteem for the principals who so willingly gave of their very precious time and knowledge. Without them this thesis would not exist.
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GLOSSARY


GEMS – Growth and Effectiveness Measures for Schools – This refers to national exams conducted in Israel in grades 5 and 8 to assess student achievement in the core subjects and school climate. The GEMS measure indicators such as parental satisfaction with school management, levels of violence in schools and teachers’ attitudes towards pupils.

LEA – Local Education Authority

LMS – Local Management of Schools

MOE – Ministry of Education in Israel

NCSL – National College for School Leadership

NPO – Non Profit Organisation

SBM – School-based management

SES – Social Economic Status - This refers to the socio economic background of the pupils in a school. The measure used to define SES used by the Ministry of Education in Israel is based on the percentage of pupils defined as disadvantaged. A pupil is defined as disadvantaged according to the level of education of the father, ethnicity, number of years in the country and number of siblings. The higher the SES number, the more disadvantaged the pupils are. A school with a SES of 1.72 would indicate a very high socio economic background whereas a school with a SES of 6.12 would indicate a very low socio economic background.

SMT – School management team
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis aims to increase understanding as to how primary school principals in Israel perceive the impact of school-based management (SBM) on their practices as school leaders. The argument underpinning this thesis is that SBM represents a major policy initiative in Israel and those in charge of implementing this policy, the principals, deserve to have their voices heard. The “role most affected by decentralisation is that of the principal. No other person will encounter more changes, more need to adjust and more potential to make a difference” (Whitaker, 2003, pp. 39-40). There is an ever-increasing gap between policy makers and policy receivers (Bowe et al., 1992), where the voice of those implementing policy is not often heard. The aim of this study is to examine how principals, both the interpreters and implementers of educational policy, perceive their roles in what appears to be a transitional period of educational leadership within the Israeli context.

Rationale for the topic

SBM is a key policy development in very many countries, and has become a central feature of the global orthodoxy in education policy (Bell and Stevenson, 2006). Proponents argue that it is the basis of nothing less than a systemic culture change in which schools are transformed from bureaucratic and monolithic institutions into innovative and ‘market-responsive’ organisations (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992, 1998). At the heart of this change, as both policy mediator and change-agent is the school Principal. Both the scale and the scope of the consequences for school leaders who are charged with implementing educational policy cannot be understated. This thesis seeks to increase an understanding how school leaders wrestle with these changes as the system seeks to develop from a centralised bureaucracy to one based upon decentralised and autonomous units. Specifically it seeks to understand these processes within the context of contemporary Israel. SBM may have assumed a global orthodoxy, but policy emerges and develops very differently in different cultural contexts. This thesis recognises the need to reflect cultural context and seeks
to explore the specificities of a transition to SBM within the unique circumstances of modern-day Israel.

The specificity of the Israeli context is further developed in the following chapter. It became apparent to the researcher as an English Language Inspector for the Ministry of Education in Israel, who interacts with all stakeholders in the education system, that there was a dissonance between the rhetoric emanating from the Central Office of the Ministry of Education, the texts of policy documents, and what was occurring in practice in the school sites. The school principals have been identified as the key players in education as they are the ones who through their interpretations of policy actually shape education. Situated at the critical juncture between policy and practice, principals are deemed to be a worthy focus for this study. They are also the ones less heard in the educational system; the intent of this researcher is to make their voices heard.

The terms principal and principalship are used in this study as these are widely understood internationally and are the terms used in Israel. However, the terms headteacher and headship have been retained in UK references in order to be consistent with the original source.

The study is limited to primary school principals because, unlike their secondary school colleagues, Israel's some 1,800 primary schools historically have been run by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and have been subject to tight controls with regard to both administration and curriculum implementation. The country's approximately 600 upper-secondary schools, on the other hand, have always enjoyed some measure of autonomy in these areas (Volansky, 2003). The shift from a heavily centralised system to one of SBM is expected to have a much larger impact on the role of the primary school principal than on the role of principals in secondary schools.
Specifically, the objectives of this research are to:

Examine the attitudes and perceptions of primary school principals in a context of SBM in Israel;
Explore how principals perceive the appropriateness of educational policy reforms imported into Israel;
Find out how principals perceive SBM is working within a largely centralised system;
Enlighten stakeholders as to the changing role of principals as perceived by them in facilitating SBM.

Theoretical framework
The thesis touches on the domains of school leadership and educational policy in the form of SBM. It stands apart from these domains in so far as it lies in a domain of its own, role perception of principals, a relatively under-researched area in the Israeli context. The principals in this study are viewed as representing the interface between the schools they lead and the external policy environment. Their interpretations of educational policy are affected by their values, the socio economic status (SES) of their schools, available resources, relations with key stakeholders (Bowe et al., 1992; Bell and Stevenson, 2006) and their perceptions of their position within the educational hierarchy. This thesis is based on original research conducted in Israel. The research is supported by literature mainly from the UK and the USA, as this is the literature which underpins the thinking of Israeli educational leadership and policy makers.

Methodological overview
Defining the study in terms of principals' perception of their role from the point of view of the actors frames it within a methodological paradigm of qualitative-phenomenological-interpretive research.

The research paradigm underpinning this study is that of interpretivism. Interpretive-qualitative researchers appreciate the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts and their role in constructing the reality of experience (Stake, 1995). Emphasis is placed
on sensitivity to context, that is, the understanding of a phenomenon in all its complexities and within its particular situation and environment. Every effort has been made in this study to acknowledge and account for the broader contextualised conditions within which primary school principals in Israel operate.

This is a qualitative collective case study. The product of collective case studies is a thick holistic description which enables the achievement of a level of understanding and interpretation which is not possible through conventional experimental design (Merriam, 1998). Collective case study compares several single narrative cases and presents them collectively (Shkedi, 2004a). One of the main features of multiple case study is that each case is portrayed with its unique features and context. Understanding how educational policy is perceived through the eyes of the key players in the field, the principals and their responses to policy directives can add insights as to how policy is interpreted and implemented.

The research population is typical of the mainstream secular Jewish population in a major urban location in Israel. Information revealed by the participants is of a highly personal nature and has the potential to have career ramifications for them. This was addressed by preserving the privacy of the principals and consequently pseudonyms have been given to all principals who participated in the study. Therefore, it was decided to give a fictitious name to the city, henceforth to be called Spring Heights, as well as providing pseudonyms to the key stakeholders in the city mentioned by respondents. The names of national, public figures have been left unchanged. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to provide in-depth description of the location and to clearly define the case boundaries in order to allow readers to decide if the context is applicable to their own thereby following Merriam’s (1988) advice on affording reader generalisability.

Fifteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve principals in order to reveal the respondents’ perceptions, thoughts and desires concerning their roles as principals. The interviews were viewed as a “data-generating” method rather than a “data-gathering” method (Freebody, 2003, p. 137), taking into account the interactional nature of interviews.
The findings were analysed, presented and discussed in an attempt to provide both a broad picture of principals' perceptions of their roles and in-depth individual profiles. The analysis is both descriptive and interpretive in nature. The findings in relation to the research questions are presented and the six core categories as emerged from the analysis are discussed. A conceptual framework representing principals' responses to the policy environment is developed and conclusions are drawn.

Overview of the thesis
The research proposal for the thesis was prepared during 2003. The interviews were carried out over a period of twenty one months between January 2004 and October 2005. The initial data analysis was performed simultaneously to the fieldwork and then more intensively during 2006. The fieldwork was conducted while the Sharon Government, the Likud was in power and during the final analysis stages Ehud Olmert leading the newly formed Kadima party took over in May 2006. During the fieldwork Limor Livnat, a member of the Likud party, was the Minister of Education. During this period much of the public discourse on education was devoted to the recommendations of National Task Force for the Advancement of Education (NTFAE, 2004, 2005) which suggested, among other recommendations, far reaching changes in the roles of principals. After the national elections in March 2006, Livnat was replaced by Yuli Tamir, a member of the Labour party, who has shelved the recommendations of the NTFAE and entered into negotiations with the teachers' unions. Writing up the thesis was undertaken between October 2006 and July 2007.

Chapter 2 - Contextualisation - is a historical account and a contextualisation of the Israeli education system. An emphasis is put on the tensions between a centralised education system and trends towards devolution and decentralisation reforms.

In Chapter 3 - Literature Review - the reader will find some of the pertinent literature on SBM, the educational policy which frames the context of this research; global trends are presented as is the case for and against decentralisation reforms and how they impact principals. The concept of role is discussed and typologies of principals' responses to reforms presented.
In Chapter 4 - Research Methodology - the researcher describes and justifies the research approach taken in this study and the stance of the researcher.

Chapter 5 - Presentation of Findings - includes preliminary analysis of the findings and the research findings in relation to the research questions are presented.

Chapter 6 - Analysis, Synthesis and Discussion - presents a picture of leadership in transition and the challenges principals face through the six core themes which emerged from the analysis. The findings are subjected to greater scrutiny and a conceptual framework is developed to illustrate the range of principals' responses to SBM.

The final chapter 7 - Implications, Recommendations and Conclusions - considers the implications of the findings and provides a retrospective evaluation of the research and its contribution to the field of educational management. New directions for further research are identified.

The central question of this research is as follows:

How do primary school principals perceive leadership in a context of SBM in Israel?

The study and especially the data-generating process were guided by the following specific research questions:

1. What are principals’ perceptions of the reasons for the introduction of SBM into the Israeli education system?
2. In what ways, if any, do principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy?
3. To what extent do principals feel they have the requisite competencies (knowledge, skills, values, etc.) for the changes in their role brought about by SBM?
4. What experiences contribute to the development of leadership capacities required for SBM?
5. In what ways, if any, do principals believe their role will change in the future?
Conclusion

Above all, this is research of peoples’ perceptions of their role within their workplace and how they perceive their actions to be framed by the policy environment. It is a study of change at a time when change is substantial and significant. Systemic cultures are being re-engineered and traditional notions of professionalism and professional identity are being challenged. In this study the principals’ occupational identity is seen to be entwined with their personal identity, thereby reinforcing the concept that education can be typified by the passion of those who serve it. It is hoped that this portrayal of their role perceptions will enable their distinctive profiles to emerge as well as areas of commonality within the group. Clear recommendations will be provided for policy makers in the Israeli context as well as for policy makers in similar contexts. The following chapter presents the context of the study in the Israeli setting.
CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUALISATION

Introduction

This chapter first presents the historical, political and constitutional context of the research in the Israeli setting. It then goes on to describe the tensions in educational governance in Israel between a historical centralised system and decentralisation trends. The Israeli model of SBM is then presented. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the importance of context in educational research.

2.1 Centralisation and Decentralisation

The independence of the State of Israel was orchestrated by the leaders of the Jewish population of Palestine pre 1948 whose values were those of Zionism – Jewish nationalism articulated by the socialist beliefs of many of the leaders (Yonai, 1991). Prior to independence in May 1948 the country was under British Mandate. During the British Mandate, from 1922 to 1948, education was divided among many ideological streams.

During 1949 -1953 the population of Israel more than doubled as new immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe and from the Arab speaking countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Volansky (1996) writes about the establishment of a centralised education system. When the State was declared, in 1948:

...central government had almost no authority whatsoever. The dominant reality was in complete opposition to any kind of centralised ideology. This brought about a gradual comprehensive centrally driven process whereby central discipline – in terms of values, administration and pedagogy – would be imposed on all aspects of the educational enterprise (Volansky, 1996, p. 2, my translation).

The leaders of the young State believed that without a powerful centralised system of public education there would be few achievements in education (Yonai, 1991;
Volansky, 1996). Less than a year after the declaration of independence, in 1949, the Compulsory Education Law (Gibton, 1997) was passed by the Israeli parliament, which made school attendance both free and compulsory.

Volansky (1996) argues that behind this law lay two main ideals. The first was to ensure that all children irrespective of their parents’ economic status would attend school and the second was to enable the various streams of education to continue to exist but within a central framework. He argues that the view that education is the main means for consolidating Israel’s largely immigrant population into one nation gave legitimacy to the ethos of equality which has been the driving force of the education system since independence. Volansky maintains that the passing of the 1949 Compulsory Education Law enabled the Ministry of Education (MOE) to become more powerful in relation to the existing educational streams. It also established a centralist culture that would become more entrenched over time.

The 1949 law brought other stakeholders into the educational scene. Parents were obliged to send their children to school and local authorities were obliged to maintain schools. Volansky (1996) notes that in order to enforce the law, the MOE set up a network of enforcement agents through pedagogical, organisational and financial structures.

At this stage although the setting for a central education system was being established, education was still in the hands of the various conflicting streams. Each stream had its own ideology, governance and political custodian and was under separate government offices which did not have a uniform vision of the educational agenda for the new Jewish State (Yonai, 1991; Volansky, 1996).

The State Education Act was passed in 1953 (Gibton, 1997) and paved the way for the removal of most of the different streams, placing the responsibility for the establishment and execution of a national curriculum that would express common social and cultural values on the Minister of Education. State education was divided into two separate streams under the jurisdiction of the MOE: state schools and state religious schools.
Teachers in primary schools and in junior high schools became civil servants employed by the State. The upper-secondary school system has traditionally enjoyed more freedom as the teachers are not public servants but employees of corporations and local education authorities (LEAs). The 1956 Amendment Act of Knesset (Ministry of Justice, 1956) placed the inspectorate within the hierarchy of the MOE and the official duties of the school inspectors were set out within the law. There are to date eight District Offices of the MOE each with a Chief District Inspector, a large administrative staff and a pedagogical team of inspectors. The debate surrounding autonomy for principals can be seen to have its roots in this Amendment Act which stipulates no less than ten areas in which school inspectors are obliged to operate including pupil tardiness, absenteeism, teaching methods and the evaluation of principals, clearly positioning the principals below the inspectorate. This law remains unchanged till today.

Since the early 1970’s there have been on-going debates concerning school autonomy in the education system in Israel. On the one hand there is a perceived need of successive governments to keep centrality in education. On the other hand, the needs of learners and teachers were seen to be constrained by a powerful central system.

In 1973 the then Minister of Education, Yigal Alon wrote:

In a centrally controlled education system even dedicated, committed teachers are liable to become tired, to loose interest and evade the personal responsibility involved in education. Teachers will not shake off fatigue, indifference and bitterness if they are not autonomous in certain fields (cited in Inbar, 1987, p. 38, my translation).

Since the 1970s the MOE has been issuing directives which are geared towards enabling teachers and principals to have more autonomy. These directives are issued by the Director General of the MOE and, although legally binding, they are not accompanied by statutory backing (Gibton et al., 2000). The first of these directives was the ‘Educational Initiative’ in 1973 whereby 25% of school hours was placed in
the hands of principals. Inbar (1987) discusses the discrepancy between theory and practice:

> The inherent tension between the centralised system and the need for autonomy comes to the forefront here. The Ministry makes no less than 8 specific conditions pre-requisite for use of flexible hours and educational projects. Moreover, the Ministry ensured that these were scrutinised by inspectors who were appointed to supervise the very elements that were supposed to bring about greater autonomy (pp. 56-57, my translation).

Thus, although the MOE seemed to be aware of the need for school autonomy, in fact, inspectors working within the Ministry were the ones who were allocated more power. Heavy budget cutbacks between 1979-1985 (Inbar, 1987; Goldring, 1992) reversed the pedagogic autonomy that had been given to schools as principals no longer had the ability to implement programmes for elective subjects. Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s a swing is witnessed between a concern for school autonomy on the one hand and centrality on the other.

In 1984 the then Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer published a new definition of school autonomy in a Director General’s Bulletin. Autonomy now meant that principals and not the inspectors would decide how to make cuts in school hours. During 1981 – 86 the total number of teaching hours was reduced by 28.5 per cent (Goldring, 1992). As this autonomy was perceived by principals as enabling them to decide how to best manage dwindling educational resources, it lacked the likelihood of leading to professional independence. Inbar (1987) sums this up in these words,

> In those years' school autonomy flowed in a single direction: toward budget cuts. Autonomy was perceived by principals as enabling them to decide what to do away with. It was devoid of any real potential (p. 65, my translation).

The perceived need for centralisation in education was expressed by successive Labour governments until 1977. This stemmed from the ‘melting pot’ philosophy which aimed at turning the multicultural Israeli society into a new Israeli nation, the
notion of nationhood and statehood being of paramount importance to the leaders of
the country (Yonai, 1991). Professor Anita Shapiro (1998) points out that a national
identity was established in the centralised school system. One must bear in mind that
Israel is a multi-cultural and multi-religious state located in the volatile Middle East,
with unresolved territorial disputes with its neighbours. The Jewish majority is
divided between religious and secular groups as well as political left-right wing
divisions. There are also divisions within the Jewish population based on ethnic
origins and socio economic divisions. Further fragmentation is due to large scale
immigration over the past two decades from the ex Soviet Union and Ethiopia. The
Arab minority too has disparate factions between Christian, Moslem, Druze and
Bedouin populations (Gibton et al., 2000). This has led to the firm belief that a strong
sense of national identity is of paramount importance to Israel’s security and a
centralised education system has been entrusted with this task (Gaziel, 1994).

Consequently, the ‘melting pot’ philosophy has had the upper hand in determining
educational policy and practice in Israel. However, since the early 1990s, some
Israeli educators have questioned the advantages of centralisation in Israeli
education. The obvious flaw in Israel’s highly centralised system is that principals
have little freedom to initiate reforms, share decision-making, reward successful
teachers and sanction unsuccessful teachers. Moreover, principals in Israel are often
bombarded by conflicting policy guidelines and programmes prepared by different
divisions within the MOE (Volansky and Bar Elli, 1995/6; Gibton et al., 2000).
Granot (2002) lists no less than thirty MOE inspectors with whom each principal has
working relations, notwithstanding heads of departments from the LEAs, colleges
and universities. Granot counts at least twenty different new educational initiatives
that a principal is presented with in the same academic year, making a convincing
case for granting principals more autonomy.
2.2 School-Based Management in Israel

In the early 1990s a swing towards another form of devolution, which would grant principals financial and administrative autonomy, was witnessed: SBM. In 1992 the Volansky steering committee was set up by the Minister of Education Aloni. The committee advocated moving from the traditional, bureaucratic model and shifting power away from the MOE and LEAs to the schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993) through a transition to SBM.

However, the committee made it clear that

...a self managing school is not an independent school free to chart its course, but one which acts within the framework of national goals and where available, the priorities of local authorities and responds to the needs of the students and the community (Volansky and Habinsky, 1998, p. 8, emphasis added, my translation)

This contrasts greatly with the kind of change made in the UK in 1988 as a result of the Education Reform Act (DES, 1988), where power was shifted away from the LEAs and placed in the hands of the school site giving school boards the option of bypassing the LEA entirely.

The main recommendations were:

1) The school will be funded according to a ‘pupil basket of services’, which would include most of the budget items and would be equitable and made public. 2) The school will operate as a closed financial system. 3) Self-managed schools will define clear goals. 4) The school will operate a system for feedback and evaluation. 5) Authority concerning personnel will be delegated to the school. 6) The role of the inspector ...will focus on consulting, support and direction for the school on the ways and means by which its goals can be achieved (Volansky, 2003, p. 223).

These recommendations sparked a bitter public debate (Volansky and Bar-Elli, 1995/6). The recommendations regarding a diverse school-based governing body and
giving the principals the authority to dismiss teachers were rejected due to intense public opposition and opposition of the teachers’ unions. It was claimed that SBM would lead to privatisation and inequity and would challenge the egalitarian values of the Jewish secular education stream (Oplatka, 2002, 2006). In addition, the teachers’ unions objected, seeing the formation of school governing bodies as a means of diminishing the status of the principal and undermining the teachers’ professional authority (Volansky and Bar Eli, 1995/6).

In spite of the opposition, in 1996, the MOE launched a trial project in nine primary schools. In 1997, the programme was extended to 35 schools throughout Israel and it was decided that all officially recognised schools in Jerusalem would gradually move to SBM. The following year, the Minister of Education Yitschak Levy declared that all primary schools would become SBM schools within the next seven years. The prerequisites were that the LEA would request to join the programme, sign a contract with the MOE agreeing that all schools would gradually transfer to SBM and budgets for schools would be channelled via the MOE to the LEAs and through them to the schools. There are approximately 673 primary schools, just over one third of all primary schools and 40 secondary schools throughout the country, in 45 out of 258 municipal cities that are in various phases of transition to SBM (Volansky, 2003). The aim to have completed the transition country wide by the year 2005 was never reached, perhaps due to the competing tensions regarding school governance which is discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 Tensions between centrality and decentralisation

Avi Habinsky, an educational consultant on SBM from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, was brought to Jerusalem for a one year consultancy. In an internal MOE paper, Habinsky (1998) points out that decentralisation in Israel is doomed to fail if centralist forces continue to work as before. His recommendations for SBM in Israel are clear:

Broadening of areas of responsibility of a school, without the appropriate change in the concept of the entire education system, including the locus of decision-making
and the distribution of funds in addition to a change in the functions of inspectors, will not bring about any change (p. 8, my translation).

Ilana Zailer, then the Director of the Department of Primary Education, MOE asks,

Can we bridge the gap between centralised government, ideological and political issues and schools?...progress depends largely on us and the head teachers. It depends on...their desire to stand up to the bureaucratic system of a centralised government (Zailer, 1999, cited in Friedman, 1999, p. 5).

She concludes:

My main concern is bridging the gap between wonderful rhetoric and practice...We are part of a political system which imposes certain things on us which have to be dealt with in a sensible way... many of us including myself believe in teachers only half-heartedly. Therefore, we have hundreds of bureaucratic mechanisms which control and measure schools, test children and assess teachers (Zailer, 1999, cited in Friedman, 1999, p. 35).

The tensions between centralisation forces and the drive towards autonomy for principals and teachers are evident in this account which may be seen as yet another way to justify stalling any significant move away from centrality.

The transition to SBM was accompanied by formative evaluation during the first two years by Friedman, Barma and Toren (1997) and Friedman and Barma (1998). It was found that the changes were perceived by principals as a change in administration, organisation and also in their responsibilities. They expressed the need for additional professional development in the fields of budgeting, costing and financial management. Their traditional role as experts in pedagogy was no longer deemed sufficient. This change in role perception was of course not equally welcomed. Friedman and Barma wrote a detailed account of the experimental project of SBM in 127 schools in the city of Jerusalem. They pointed out that

Were it to be fully implemented, the scheme would have further involved a change in the legal status of the School Inspection Act of 1956 and change in the working
conditions and employment of teachers under the Civil Service Act of 1961 (Friedman and Barma, 1998, p.6, my translation).

This points to the limited nature of SBM as introduced in Israel. The 1956 Law of Inspection places inspectors in charge of principals. Inspectors place principals and teachers in schools and have the mandate to transfer them or to fire them. Principals do not hire or fire their teaching personnel. All contact between the various bodies of the MOE and the principal is through the District School Inspector. Despite the transition to SBM, there have been no changes to the legal structure of school governance since 1956.

In their account, Friedman and Barma (1998) describe the resistance to SBM on the part of Jerusalem City MOE Inspectors. The Jerusalem Chief District Inspector expressed opposition to SBM as it was not “inspector driven” (p. 26). The inspectors were unwilling to hand over their role of educational leadership to the LEA and “considered themselves guardians of national funds” (p. 26).

Further evidence for the resistance of MOE inspectors to SBM is provided by Nir and Eyal (2003), who conclude that inspectors may “prove to be restraining factors and obstacles for the implementation of SBM in a centralised education system” (p. 547). Clearly, SBM is seen by many inspectors as a threat to their power and a threat to their future livelihoods. In Israel, as elsewhere, power politics inevitably come into play in any significant educational change, making change itself more difficult to bring about (Ball, 1994). These findings suggest that in order for principals to take on new roles as expected under SBM, the traditional role of the inspectorate needs to change which would require amendments to the 1956 Law of Inspection.

A review of both the formal role of the inspector as defined by law and internal MOE documents, suggests that there is limited confidence in the principal’s ability to perform a leadership role in the educational institution. The belief in traditional, hierarchical lines of authority is still prevalent; the formal role definition of school inspectors and consequently that of principals has not been redefined, despite the
introduction of SBM which proposed to increase school level authority and autonomy.

There is a clear paradox in the rhetoric emanating from the MOE and the situation de jure. By law the principal is hierarchically below the inspector and dependent on the inspectorate for finances, human resources and curriculum. It would appear that the administrative workload that is now placed on principals is greater together with the demand for greater accountability but without giving them genuine autonomy.

2.2.2 Ministry backtracking

So long as the SBM programme was experimental, its impact on MOE budgets was minimal. According to Volansky (2003) once more than a third of the primary schools transferred to SBM it became clear to the various officials within the MOE that this meant a severe reduction in their authority. This created internal pressure within the MOE and between the MOE and principals. The MOE reduced the scope of formula based allocations in order to allow the District Offices to retain authority (Volansky, 2003). The apparent difficulty within the MOE in relinquishing authority and control over budgets created a crisis of faith with principals, who had large portions of their budgets allocated to them under SBM withdrawn. This is paradoxical as the central body which had initiated SBM, seemed to be retracting. Principals can no longer allocate hours for in-service training and days for advisory teachers which had been transferred to the schools under SBM, have returned to the District Offices. This according to Volansky (2003) paralleled the syndrome witnessed in the 1980’s which put an end to ideas of school autonomy then.

An additional perhaps unexpected outcome of SBM as implemented in Israel has been a more significant role of the LEAs in education, as an increase in municipal funding for education has led to local authorities having a greater say in the way education is run (Gibton et al., 1998, 2000; Nir and Eyal, 2003 and Yair, 2004). This has led Gibton et al. to aptly describe the Israeli education system since the late 1990s as a rather “chaotic and unstable power struggle” (1998, p.11) causing schools to become the battle ground for different bodies competing with each other for
influence at the school level and placing the principal in an unenviable situation of placating different stakeholders.

2.3 Attempts to Address the Tensions

A significant development which some saw as having the potential to address these tensions was the publication of the report of The National Task Force for the Advancement of Education commonly referred to as the Dovrat Report (NTFAE, 2004, 2005) which recommended far-reaching structural changes on the administrative level and advocated legislative measures to provide statutory backing to these recommendations.

Under mounting public criticism of the results of Israeli students in international examinations, the Minister of Education, Limor Livnat, announced on September the 21st 2003 the establishment of a new committee under the chairmanship of Shlomo Dovrat charged with recommending a thorough reform of Israel’s education system. Livnat promised that the committee would seek out “what is rotten in the education system” (Sa’ar, 2003, p. 2). On May 16th 2004, an interim report was published and its recommendations were adopted by the cabinet. Education is viewed as “the cornerstone of society, the basis for culture and national unity and the most crucial underpinning of the national economy” (NTFAE, 2004).

The report points to numerous flaws in the structure and administration of the education system:

There is no clear definition of objectives, responsibilities and authority. The schools, which have to do the bulk of the educational work, have little authority. There are administrative mechanisms which, aside from hampering the system's administrative ability, are causing a waste of resources (NTFAE, 2004, p. 4, original emphasis).

Two of the ten principles of the report relate directly to the independence of schools. The first is the improvement of the principals’ status and the enhancement of their
independence. They should, according to the report, be given the necessary responsibility, authority and autonomy in terms of pedagogy, budgets and administration. The second principle, which relates to autonomy for principals, is that of administrative decentralisation:

The school faculty and administration should have authority vis-à-vis everyone in the school and should assume responsibility for everything that happens there, including complete control of the school’s resources (NTFAE, 2004, p. 4).

The main recommendations as outlined in the interim report and fleshed out in the final report are underpinned by these principles. The school is described as the focal point of educational activity and principals “should be given as many powers and resources as possible” (NTFAE, 2004, p. 9). Additional explanation is provided clearly stating that principals would be able to choose their personnel and have flexibility in utilising budgets.

A large portion of the report is devoted to strengthening both the status and the professionalism of principals. The principal is described as the spearhead of educational work. The report states that the transfer of authority and responsibility to the school places great responsibility on the principal and necessitates redefining the principals’ job description and areas of authority. The recommendation is that principals be trained to handle these new functions, their salaries increased to reflect this responsibility and in order to attract high-quality people to the profession. The MOE is charged with establishing standards for principals and the UK National College for School Leadership (NCSL) is given as an example of the standard setting which needs to be done. It is specifically stated that emphasis should be placed on the non-pedagogical aspects of principalship. The principal is patently viewed as the most important figure in efforts to change the education system (NTFAE, 2005).

The most pertinent and perhaps one of the most contentious recommendations, closing the District Offices, thereby dismissing school inspectors and granting principals new responsibilities and authority, are congruent with the ideologies of SBM which have not been implemented in Israel. The teachers' unions joined forces
with the heads of local authorities who opposed all recommendations pertaining to increasing principals’ autonomy in regard to hiring and firing teachers and thereby changing the contractual status of teachers. The unions were against the transfer of teachers from the government sector to the municipalities where they would lose their job security and the heads of the LEA’s were unwilling to take more people onto their pay role.

The stage seemed to be set for a conflict between agents wishing to instil change and those wishing to maintain the status quo as negotiations between the teachers’ unions and the MOE reached a deadlock. In retrospect, the effort seems hardly worthwhile as national elections in March 2006 brought about a change in government and a new Minister of Education, Professor Yuli Tamir. Tamir has publicly criticised the previous administration for entering a confrontation with the teachers and teachers’ unions and for besmirching the teaching profession. She has promised to negotiate with the unions in order to reach an understanding as to both the depth and nature of reforms that should be implemented (Tamir, 2006).

2.4 Research Conducted in Israel

The unstable nature of educational governance in Israel is evident in research findings as well. Research conducted in Israel by Gibton et al. (2000) in order to explore the role of legislation in dealing with the conflicts and tensions concomitant with decentralisation policies, concludes that decentralisation policies in Israel express contradictory orientations creating both risks and opportunities for principals. Three main themes emerge from their research:

1. Principals point to the uncertainty of the school’s new role in the educational hierarchy – it is unclear to whom the principal should answer.
2. Government policy contradicts decentralisation processes.
3. The school’s new role in a decentralised system and the principal’s changing role as community and moral leaders.
Their findings show that the Israeli school system is going through “turbulent times” (Gibton et al., 2000, p. 24) and they conclude that principals doubt the sincerity of policy makers’ commitment to decentralisation and autonomy:

The principals sense that the authorities are abandoning the schools, passing down to the principal and staff the entire burden of achieving educational outcomes in a complicated and rapidly changing socio-political arena…. So principals conclude that autonomy means less power for the school, the staff and themselves to initiate change and design local policy and more accountability (Gibton et al., 2000, p. 25).

Although Gibton et al. focused on the principals’ views regarding decentralisation, their research was conducted on ‘autonomous schools’ which participated in a government initiated experiment in the 1980s and not on schools that have undergone the formal transition to SBM. Nevertheless, their findings support claims that decentralisation reforms have far-reaching consequences for the role of school leadership. Their recommendation is for legal regulation concerning school decentralisation in Israel as a means to stabilise the system.

2.5 School-Based Management in Israel as a Misnomer

At this point it would be of use to place the transition to SBM squarely within the present Israeli context. David Nevo, formerly the head of the Division of Assessment and Evaluation in the MOE in Israel, describes the Israeli experience of educational policy as similar to that of “children who copy on tests, but cheat badly” (Nevo, 2004). He asserts that Israeli policy makers copy policy but do not learn from the experience of others, nor do they adapt policies to the Israeli context.

The rhetoric of SBM in Israel has ostensibly not matched reality as the MOE is seemingly reluctant to relinquish control over schools (Nir and Eyal, 2003). There is also the prevalent belief despite the introduction of SBM “that even when increasing the independence of educational institutions, there is a need for the supervision of the Inspector” (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 1984, my translation).
The position paper on SBM drawn up by the MOE states that the principal will be at
the top of the hierarchical pyramid and the central and district offices of the MOE
will act as consultants, facilitators and appraisers. The principal will be held
accountable for both academic and social achievements. The role of the principal in
SBM in Israel is clearly set out; the principal is to create the optimal conditions for
the staff to work effectively and to oversee their professional development. The
principal is charged with creating a change in the organisational culture of the
school. This is to be done through building a clear school vision, defining objectives,
developing effective processes, the efficient use of resources, the 'right' form of
shared-decision-making, intelligent use of feedback, taking responsibility for
outcomes, the distribution of information about school achievements and being
responsive to the different stakeholders involved in the school. The position paper
ends with an affirmation as to the magnitude of the principal’s role:

Just as in the business sector where the quality of management is essential to
survival and success, so too in education, the quality of management is essential to
the survival of the school as a public organisation and is the essence for success
(Ministry of Education Culture and Sports, 1996, my translation).

In the contract signed by both principals and the LEAs new roles for principals were
defined by the MOE:

Principals will have a more clearly defined job description in terms of authority and
responsibility.
They will have additional managerial roles and not only pedagogy.
They will need to expend less energy getting resources, as the allocation of funding
will be transparent and known in advance.
The principal will become a facilitator (Ministry of Education Culture and Sports,
1996, my translation).

However, the limitations of the principal’s autonomy were also defined:

The principal will work within the framework of the National Curriculum.
All procedures will be carried out according to the Director General’s Directives.
All labour agreements still hold fast.
The allocation of hours per subject will be followed as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.
The principals will be subject to financial regulations as prescribed by law (Ministry of Education Culture and Sports, 1996, my translation).

These limitations seem to confine the new role of principals to managing ‘housekeeping’ money and leave little room for pedagogical autonomy; in fact there seems to be little autonomy at all. Nevertheless, a major change is that principals can now generate additional sources of revenue by operating after school activities, renting classrooms and so on. This was forbidden prior to SBM when principals were “passive resource receivers” (Goldring, 1992, p. 53), even parental payments for class parties and school trips were regulated by the central government. All financial transactions were previously channelled through either the MOE (teachers’ salaries) or the LEA (school maintenance). Today, principals are not only permitted to collect monies, but are expected to generate revenue and market school initiatives in order to attract financing from external sources other than the national education budget. Nevertheless, all additional resources and the manner in which they are to be used must be reported to and approved by the LEA. School autonomy in Israel at present, seems to be somewhat of a misnomer.

Ministry statistics relating to SBM as posted on the internet site of the Division of Planning reveal that there is a large scale movement towards school autonomy in Israel, but in reality this is yet to be achieved. Inspectors are still going about their day to day jobs without any change in their official job description. Principals are required to work harder, take on additional roles, be more accountable and yet are still dependent on the inspectorate. Whether or not the gap between rhetoric and reality in SBM will be narrowed in Israel remains to be seen.

A deeper understanding of the pitfalls facing school leaders undergoing transition, a clearer analysis of their needs and perceptions and in particular of the kinds of changes principals and other stakeholders need to make may ensure that the move
from centralisation to devolution in the Israeli education system will be more than just rhetoric.

2.6 Cultural Context Shapes the Way That SBM Is Implemented

Global trends associated with decentralisation reforms seem to be a cross-cultural phenomenon, which will be presented in Chapter Three. However, one must bear in mind that leadership is context bound. The way educational leaders perceive their roles is influenced by the norms and values within the society the school serves. Expectations of the community, together with macro- and micro- political demands all form the culture within which educational leaders interpret their roles and functions (Moos and Dempster, 1998).

Globalisation of education policy is discussed by Dimmock and Walker (2000a) who caution against the phenomenon of “policy cloning” (p.11). They warn that policies designed in the Anglo-American world may not apply to other societies. Dimmock and Walker’s (2000b) distinction between “power distributed” and “power concentrated” (p. 154) cultures is of use in explaining the perceived need for a centralised education system in maintaining a collective Israeli identity. Israel can be characterised as a power concentrated, “group orientated” (p. 154) culture allowing for less variation in educational policy at a local level. Countries import policy blueprints without considering if they are appropriate to their cultural context (Dimmock and Walker, 2000a, 2000b; Gronn, 2003). Cultural, demographic, economic, political and social differences between countries necessitate the contextualisation of research on education and leadership. Research studies should be explicitly bounded within geo-cultural limits, which would then allow scholars and policy makers to distinguish between how policy is shaping in different contexts and what adaptations need to be made (Dimmock and Walker, 2000b). This is echoed by Bush and Bell (2002) who warn against the import of ready made solutions; “Global problems require local responses” (Bush and Bell, 2002, p. 13).
When one considers the research findings relating to principals’ perceptions of their changing role in countries as diverse as Australia (Cranston, 2002), the USA (Tanner and Stone, 1998) and the UK (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996), it is clear that principals and primary school principals in particular are straining under the burden of their new roles in this era of new accountabilities. Principals are the “gatekeepers” (Wallace, 1990, p. 9) of educational innovation and in view of the fact that the success of the implementation of SBM depends largely on the role of the principal, it is surprising that there seems to be scant research conducted on principals’ perception of how SBM as implemented in Israel has influenced their roles. In practice they have had to take on more responsibilities but without receiving any tangible rewards. More research of the kind conducted by Gibton et al., (2000), but carried out in schools officially defined as SBM schools, is needed in order to gain a greater understanding of how principals leading SBM schools perceive their new role.

Moreover, it is difficult and ill advised to generalise from research undertaken in other countries as SBM takes on different forms in different countries, has different underlying motivations and the locus of control has shifted in different directions. Findings from other countries shed light on the issues that arise from devolution of authority to the school level but should be examined in a critical way.

Policy makers in Israel have continued to advocate the need to further increase principals’ responsibilities, autonomy and accountability (NTFAE, 2005) and to go beyond the administrative decentralisation of SBM without examining if those in charge of implementing policy decisions have adjusted to the changes in management culture. Before continuing to expand their roles, it would seem wise to pause and ask the key players what their perceptions of the impact of SBM on their leadership practices are.
Conclusion

This chapter has presented the historical, political and constitutional context of the research. The importance of contextualisation of research on educational leadership is well documented in the literature (Dimmock and Walker, 2000a, 2000b; Bush and Bell, 2002; Gronn, 2003). Educational research should be clearly bounded in order to allow policy makers to distinguish how policy is shaping in different contexts and to enable readers to decide how applicable findings are to their own contexts. The next chapter provides an overview of the literature on SBM as educational policy in other countries and its impact on the role of principals. The rather limited nature of SBM as implemented in Israel is highlighted through this brief international overview.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature, both conceptual and empirical relating to the subject of this study, namely, of primary school principals’ perceptions of their changing roles in the context of SBM in Israel. SBM has the potential to influence the role of school principals as they represent the interface between educational policy as set by policy makers and the individual school institution (OECD, 2001; Bell and Stevenson, 2006). In order to explore principals’ perceptions of the nature of the transformation of their roles and how their experiences are shaped by their particular context of school reform in a large urban location in Israel which is still grappling with the transition to SBM from a centralist education system, it is important to establish clearly what is meant by SBM. This chapter endeavours to define some of the key concepts that pertain to the theoretical framework of this research and is structured around eight main sections.

First, in section 3.1, SBM as a global trend is discussed. The past two decades have been characterised by attempts in various parts of the world to restructure and reform education by devolving education systems and creating varying degrees of autonomy. The rationale and the philosophies underpinning such reforms are presented. The difficulty in defining SBM is examined, a definition as pertaining to this study is reached and the similarities and differences in how this policy is implemented are highlighted.

Section 3.2 presents the case for SBM. Key concepts associated with SBM such as grass roots decision-making, transparency, choice, efficiency and better student outcomes are discussed.

As this is a contested educational reform the case against SBM is presented in section 3.3. Issues such as the commodification of education, inequity, political motivations and the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality are raised.
Section 3.4 gives an overview of the historical and international perspectives. Where and when SBM developed and the form it has taken in various countries is outlined in order to distinguish between how policy is adapted in different cultural settings and to highlight the importance of the contextualisation of educational research.

In section 3.5 the implications of SBM for school leadership are discussed. The theoretical debate is established between those who believe that the delegation of responsibility and authority to principals has led to the creation of autonomous leaders and those who believe it has led to the creation of automatons, whose role has been restricted by having to meet externally imposed targets. This section explores the implications decentralisation reforms have on the role of principals and in particular primary school principals who are the focus of this study. Evidence is presented from both the conceptual literature and empirical research findings to show the shift in role principals are facing under decentralisation reforms. The findings are grouped according to the core themes found in the literature. The literature review concentrates mainly, though not entirely; on evidence from the United States and the U.K. as Israeli policy makers tend to use these countries as models in forming educational policy and they are considered to be ‘leading edge’ countries in educational reform.

Then, in section 3.6, recent trends in educational leadership and management theory are presented as evidence that current reforms have led to the recognition by governments and policy makers that the role of school leadership has changed and attention needs to be given to the training provided to school leaders. This is deemed relevant as this study explores the extent to which principals feel they have the requisite competencies required to make the transition to their new roles.

Section 3.7 defines the concept of role as used in this study and presents alternative models or typologies of headteachers’ responses to decentralisation reforms which are used to develop a conceptual framework in this research.

The main research questions are restated in section 3.8 in order to illustrate how they have been generated from the literature.
3.1 SBM as a Global Phenomenon

Reforms in education have been implemented in dispersed places such as Canada (Brown, 1990), the USA (Herman and Herman, 1993), Australia and New Zealand (Caldwell, 1993), European countries (Meuret and Scheerens, 1995), the UK (Levacic, 1995), Mainland China, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong (Cheng and Townsend, 2000) and since 1995 in Israel (Volansky and Bar-Elli, 1995/6). Among these reforms, some form of SBM, is arguably the dominant international trend (Cheng, 2003).

This trend towards decentralisation of education systems seems to be motivated in part by a resetting of priorities for government expenditure. It has become increasingly difficult worldwide for governments to finance public services and there has been a downsizing of public spending in areas such as education, health and transportation (Whitty et al., 1998; Fidler, 2002). Decentralisation reforms appear to provide an answer to the need to control government spending and still provide quality education (Smyth, 1993). A widespread trend in countries undergoing educational reform is the downsizing of the central bureaucracies and transferring funds directly to schools (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992).

This is coupled with a growing concern, recognised by many OECD members (Caldwell, 1993) to improve the quality of education in order to enable countries to be internationally competitive. Education systems are expected to equip citizens with the required knowledge and skills to compete in global economies (Davies, 1997).

An additional motivation for decentralisation reforms is increased public demands for accountability from providers and producers of education and rising expectations of public education (Demaine, 1993; West-Burnham, 1997). This is reflected in a new understanding of public management which is moving away from a bureaucratic approach towards a performance-driven public sector which has to show greater awareness of the nature of service provided (OECD, 2001). In many countries decentralisation has been introduced together with greater accountability for school leaders manifested through increased central or state government control over what is
taught, the curriculum and external standardised testing and inspection (OECD, 2001). This has set up a tension between autonomy and accountability and these pressures for accountability redefine principals’ roles even further (Whitaker, 2003).

A basic assumption underpinning SBM is that the transfer of resources and decision-making to the school level has the potential to transform the education system. The premise is that those closest to the community are best equipped to make informed decisions as to how resources should be utilised. The argument is that if resources are diverted to areas of need, this will ultimately lead to better pedagogy, better teaching and improved student learning outcomes (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). This trend of greater expectations of schools to increase productivity clearly has the potential to impact on the role of principalship.

3.1.1 What is SBM? A plethora of terminology
One of the difficulties in defining SBM lies in the use of terminology. Other terms used are school-site autonomy, decentralised management, site-based management, self-government, self-determination and local management of schools. These terms can mean different things in different contexts. Even the wider term devolution has different interpretations as pointed out by Levacic (2002) who distinguishes between devolution, where decision-making is transferred to a lower level permanently and deregulation where this decision-making prerogative can be reclaimed. According to Whitty et al. (1998) the narrower term SBM is problematic too as for some it indicates the decentralisation of school control, for others it refers to a process of shared decision-making in schools and yet for others it is a means of including parents in school decisions. There is no single name for the phenomenon of contemporary educational reforms which will convey the same meaning in every context and to every audience (Levacic, 1995).

Despite the centrality of SBM in educational reform, there is little agreement on what SBM is as the decentralisation of decision-making varies across contexts (Abu-Duhou, 1999; Ortiz and Ogawa, 2000). Ogawa and White (1994) discuss this difficulty in defining the concept SBM which, although widely used, refers to different aspects for different people. As Murphy and Beck (1995) have pointed out,
SBM takes on different forms not only in different countries but even within countries. These are, according to Murphy and Beck, distinguished by where the locus of decision-making power lies; basic assumptions underpinning SBM; the decision areas addressed; and the role and membership of the site council. Although the establishment of the site council or board of governors is seen in some contexts as an essential component of decentralisation reform efforts (Malen et al., 1990), in others such as Israel, this is non-existent. Bolam (1993) describes SBM as a context bound concept where the key variables are the task areas over which autonomy is exercised, the level at which autonomy is exercised, the degree of autonomy exercised and the extent to which it is constrained by external controls and accountability measures. He points out that the ways in which these variables operate appear to be a function of political and professional ideology and not based purely on research evidence.

Malen et al. (1990) discuss the ambiguous nature of SBM and claim that it is a concept that in fact “defies definition” (Malen et al., 1990, p. 298) and that it is a generic term used to describe rather diverse activities. Their extensive review of school documents revealed that in some cases there is no clear delineation of authority in the key areas of budget, personnel and programme; there are marked differences in what authority is delegated and how it is distributed.

In David’s (1989) review of the United States literature on SBM two major features are identified, the first being the increase of school autonomy over financial resources and the second, participatory decision-making with teachers and at times parents and other community members. The underlying assumptions of SBM could be deduced to the principle of subsidiarity meaning that decisions are best when taken at the lowest possible level and ownership, meaning that those involved in decision-making process are more motivated to implement policies (Levačić, 1995). The concept of parental choice is in some contexts linked to the term quasi-market which is often used to depict attempts to introduce market forces into education. This is articulated by the change in funding for schools whereby “money follows the pupils” (Whitty, et al., 1998, p. 30). Levačić (1995) distinguishes quasi markets from free markets in that they retain elements of government intervention. This is seen as a
form of public sector reorganisation where there is a separation of the purchasers of public services from the providers of such services; the intent is to make costs more transparent, to encourage competition and increase accountability to parents often described as clients.

Caldwell and Spinks (1998) define a self-managing school as

...a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralised a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities. Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time, assessment, information and finance (p. 5).

They also distinguish between self-management and other widely used terms such as self-government and self-determination as according to Caldwell and Spinks these imply the lack of a centrally determined framework for the management of schools (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992).

This decentralisation is administrative rather than political, with decisions at the school level being made within a framework of local, state or national policies and guidelines. The school remains accountable to a central authority for the manner in which resources are allocated (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992, p. 4).

Their definition seems to emphasise the decentralisation of resource allocation more than the decentralisation of decision-making processes in order to empower teachers which characterises the US literature (Levaćić, 1995). Authority is not decentralised for its own sake according to Caldwell and Spinks, (1992) but responsibility and accountability to centrally determined frameworks is essential. Their definition of SBM seems closer to the characteristics of Local Management of Schools (LMS) as seen in the UK (Levaćić, 1995).

Levaćić (1995) sets out a classificatory framework to demonstrate the different forms SBM can take. The three key elements according to Levaćić are stakeholders to
whom decision-making is decentralised, management domains which can be
decentralised and forms of regulation and accountability measures. In different forms
of SBM these three key elements can have different manifestations.

Despite differences in social and political contexts, striking parallels in the
educational reforms adopted in English speaking countries have been noted (Levačič,
1995; OECD, 2001). For example in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the
UK and the USA, decentralisation reforms have been introduced together with
greater central government control over curriculum and meeting measured outcomes.

Volansky (2003) describes what he sees as the common denominator in countries
implementing educational reform: a separation of central authority from
responsibilities delegated to schools. There is, according to Volansky, government
authority and involvement in three main areas:

1. defining curricula and objectives;
2. defining budgetary criteria to reduce educational gaps;
3. defining standards and assessing achievement.

According to Volansky’s definition (2003), the State defines the ‘what’ and the
schools decide on the ‘how’ reflecting what he calls an integrated management
approach. This view of educational reform is not automatically accepted by all as
meeting the criteria for decentralisation as it can be interpreted as leaving the
principals to ‘manage’ education as prescribed by external agencies.

In this study, the term SBM is used as an umbrella term unless referring to a specific
context. This is the term used by Ami Volansky the initiator of SBM in Israel
although the direct translation from the Hebrew terminology used in MOE
publications is Self-Management. Perhaps the decision of the Israeli MOE to use a
term which is not a direct translation is not a naïve one but is intended to convey the
sense that the reform would enable schools to be self managing, thus implying
perhaps greater autonomy for those at the school site.
For the purpose of this study, SBM can be broadly defined as a form of educational management in which the school becomes the focus of decision-making. SBM places more power, in the form of control over resources, authority to define educational priorities and accountability for student achievements in the hands of those at the school level, specifically in the hands of the principal.

SBM poses a perplexing problem for educational policy makers. On the one hand, research on policy change emphasises the need to combine top-down with bottom-up approaches, when implementing large-scale system wide changes (Firestone and Corbett, 1988). On the other hand, as pointed out by Gibton et al. (1998), when other system-wide changes do not meet expectations, they can be replaced, but powers that have been delegated to others, namely principals, are rather difficult to reclaim. This is refuted by Brown (1992), who claims that when one or more of three key beliefs that decentralisation is based on - variability is good, schools know best and schools are trustworthy - are eroded, recentralisation is probable. This purports to a climate of uncertainty and insecurity for school leaders undergoing role transitions.

The next section will set the stage for presenting the controversial nature of SBM. First the case for the reform is presented.

3.2 The Case for SBM

The justifications for this approach to education are several and quite persuasive (Gaziel, 1998). Advocates of decentralisation reforms in education trace the origins of the theory behind SBM to the Principle of Subsidiarity, a concept first given formal expression in an encyclical by Pope Pius XI (Pope Pius XI, 1931). It was meant to counter the tendency of larger units in society to centralise all authority and power and thus deprive smaller units of any real autonomy. The implications that this has for the current trend of decentralisation in education are clear; decisions should be made at the lowest possible level and in education this has been identified as the school site. This is in keeping with those who believe in the communities’ right to govern education (Coons and Sugarman, 1978). The assumption is that SBM will lead to better quality state education as schools will be more responsive to parents’
and children's needs and therefore, more effective in meeting them. Proponents of SBM envisage that granting decision-making powers to principals and others at the school level will ultimately lead to better student achievement as resources will be directed to areas of need (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1998; Cheng, 1996; Odden and Busch, 1998).

Decentralisation reforms are often justified by claims that private schools have superior academic outcomes due to their autonomy (Chubb and Moe, 1990). Proponents of SBM believing that the transfer of authority and increased autonomy to the school site will lead to more effective schooling. They point to findings of research conducted on effective schools which show that schools that share a collective educational vision, implement a monitoring system for assessing goals, define objectives, are run by a shared and supportive management style, encourage initiative and individual responsibility and make decisions in real time lead to higher scholastic achievement (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1992; Cheng, 1996).

The education profession's argument for decentralisation is that teachers' professional autonomy and morale will be enhanced through greater participation in decision-making as bureaucratic levels of control over schools do not encourage a sense of commitment (Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985). It is believed that as professional responsibility replaces bureaucratic regulation, school staff will become more accountable for pupils' achievements (Nir and Bogler, 2003).

This belief in increased levels of commitment through SBM is derived in part from theories in corporate management, which indicate that employees perform best when they are involved in the decision-making process and are committed to the success of the organisation (Argyris, 1982; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Srivasta and Barrent, 1988). This point of view is echoed in an OECD Report (2001), which proclaims that decentralisation requires a process of shared decision-making and an acceptance that schools can no longer be run by principals as closed institutions but rather as partnerships with a broad range of community involvement including both business and parents. This clearly expands the responsibilities of principals who are expected
to interact with a large number of stakeholders both within and beyond the school potentially establishing greater areas of conflict.

Thus, a main assumption underlying SBM is that educational decisions should be made by the people within schools rather than by national politicians or officials situated far from the individual school site. SBM is therefore linked to managerial efficiency (Jones, 1995) as schools with greater autonomy are expected to be more effective as principals will be able to exercise greater flexibility in the use of their resources and will be able to choose professional development suited to the particular needs of the school community.

Others see SBM as a social tool in order to achieve equity (Giroux, 1992) and view the market model as having "educational integrity" (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992, p. 195). The linking of SBM and parental choice to create quasi-markets is seen as a means to benefit previously disadvantaged communities. Advocates of quasi-market policies in education have argued that disadvantaged communities will gain as they have been ill served by bureaucratic forms of school management (Moe, 1994; Pollard, 1995). Parental choice is seen as the most suitable way of enabling schools to respond to market forces.

This is supported by Bush and Bell (2002), who claim that despite the views of critics, there is a strong case for the devolution of powers to the school site so that decisions will no longer be made in central government offices distanced from teachers and pupils but rather at the local level so schools would be more responsive to their communities. SBM seems to appeal to groups who had been left out of class based politics and education. Community based welfare as opposed to bureaucratically controlled welfare is viewed positively by some minority ethnic groups. Leading advocates of quasi-market systems of public education claim they will be of benefit to the urban poor (Moe 1994; Pollard 1995).

Moreover, Gibton (2004) argues that there is no reason to be nostalgic about the bureau-professionalism model of educational governance. He claims that despite the rhetoric of equity and individual well being, central bureaucracies, served only the
people who worked there and created an education system which has led to segregation, discrimination and inequities.

The economic argument for decentralisation is that decentralised units will foster competition leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness (Gaziel, 1998). Reforms have emerged partly in response to a perceived crisis within public education systems and have been accompanied by allegations of inefficiency and unproductiveness of bureaucratically controlled systems (Grace, 1991; Whitty et al., 1998; Levačić, 2002). Increased competition between schools can be seen as providing the incentive to schools to increase productivity. SBM is then seen to be more efficient in that principals will be motivated to attain higher educational standards and will be given the managerial flexibility to do so.

In the organisational sphere the claim is that centralised education systems are too burdensome and reduce schools' abilities to achieve educational objectives. Political pressure for quick implementation of programmes and conflicting policies issued by different units within large bureaucratic systems of education are seen by proponents of SBM to have created a situation in which policy decisions have pushed the needs of pupils away from the centre making it difficult for schools to respond to external pressures (OECD, 1989; Hill and Bonan, 1991; Volansky, 2003). Centralised State supervision of education has been perceived as ineffective and has been the target of criticism in many Western countries as their economic dominance has been challenged by the Pacific Rim countries:

In the USA, better educational productivity has become a national imperative because of the challenge we face in international competitiveness and the demands upon our national economy and workforce (Boyd, 1997, p.7).

Cheng (1996) compares traditional external control management to SBM as reflecting differences in management theories and assumptions about education used by central authorities to manage schools. He sees SBM as more in keeping with the “principle of equifinality” (p. 46, original italics), a modern management theory which assumes that there are different ways to achieve goals and emphasises the
need for flexibility due to the complexity of the educational enterprise. Cheng criticises the impracticality of scientific management approaches and theories of bureaucracy as suitable management structures for schooling, asserting instead that “...the principle of equifinality encourages decentralisation to let schools have ample space to move, develop and work out their unique strategies to teach and manage schools effectively” (Cheng, 1996, p. 46). This is contrasted with the perception of a bureaucratic system of educational management which imposes a ‘one size fits all’ policy. Highly centralised systems are seen to result in inertia, inefficiency and long delays in decision-making. English (1989) calls SBM “an excellent antidote to bureaucracy” (p. 2). SBM has also been termed as a proposal to “debureaucratise system control” of education (Sackney and Dibski, 1994, p. 105).

Moreover, SBM has been presented as an important advancement and application of human knowledge to educational management (Cheng, 1996, 2003). This is based on modern management theories that pay attention to human factors on organisational effectiveness. This perspective acknowledges that people are an important resource in an organisation and SBM aims at creating an environment where people within the school can initiate, participate and develop their potential as they will be more involved in decision-making. Cheng (1996) claims that it is impossible to enhance the quality of education without the initiative and the creativity of school members.

To summarise, the advocates’ view of SBM sees it as a means to create more responsive decision-making processes which in turn will lead to better achievements and greater accountability on the part of school staff. Bypassing central bureaucracies is expected to lead to greater economic efficiency and more effective, quicker responses to school needs. The link between SBM and the inclusion of parental choice through the creation of quasi-markets is thought to advance social equity. Furthermore, SBM is seen to be the most effective application of human capital.

The implications of these reforms on the role of the principal are immense. The principal “becomes the key player” (Sakney and Dibski, 1994, p. 106) who is expected to be in tune with the needs of the community, raise and allocate resources
to best answer these needs efficiently and effectively. The principal is required to involve staff, parents and the community in decision-making processes and is expected to be responsible for marketing the school, be more accountable and show better student achievements.

The apparent paradox of heavily centralised education systems promoting a shift towards decentralisation and advocating forms of autonomy warrants a critical perspective. The next section presents the case against SBM.

3.3 The Case against SBM

Whitty et al. (1998) state that

...much of the school management and administration literature is based on the assumption that delegating power to schools is a move in the right direction. Much of the sociological writing, on the other hand, is underpinned by a conviction that current reforms of devolution represent a step in the wrong direction (pp. 7-8).

Some see SBM as a governance reform, others see it as a political reform and yet others see it as an administrative reform. There are often underlying motives and stated aims may be covering less admirable aims (Smyth, 1993). The need for scepticism concerning the motives of educational policy is considered to be a necessary feature of critical policy analysis (Whitty et al., 1998). Whitty et al., (1998) warn readers of the danger of positions of hostility leading to exaggeration; this is sage advice to bear in mind in relation to the following section. One should take into consideration that the move towards decentralisation of education systems has not occurred in a vacuum. The rhetoric about democracy and the need for more grass roots decision-making is transpiring simultaneously with the demand that schools raise educational standards in order for countries to be more competitive in the global market. The past two decades have seen increased criticism worldwide of the ability of education systems to cope with rapid growth and weightier challenges (Bush, 1999; Volansky and Friedman, 2003). Countries have become more aware of international comparisons and international indicators such as testing in mathematics
and science, referred to as “test-score Olympics” (Shuttleworth, 2003, p. 23), have been adopted as a basis for evaluating the quality of education (NTFAE, 2005). Simultaneously, there is a demand for governments to decrease public spending by cutting down on bureaucratic systems due to global economic constraints attributable in part to the emergence of economic competition from South East Asian countries (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

Smyth (1993) maintains that the move towards self-managing schools must be questioned:

...why would the powerful educational mandarins want to blow their collective brains out in this way by seeming to give away power? That is, unless things are not what they seem and they are up to something (Smyth, 1993, p. 1).

He states that the evidence presented against SBM,

...shows a deliberate process of subterfuge, distortion, concealment and wilful neglect as the state seeks to retreat in a rather undignified fashion from its historical responsibility for providing quality public education (Smyth, 1993, p. 2).

According to Smyth (1993), SBM appears to make schools more self-determining with teachers who are more empowered, collaborative and reflective, yet at the same time there are “moves to make schools more ‘rigorous’, ‘disciplined’ and ‘scholarly’” (Smyth, 1993, p. 3). Implementation of centrally determined policies has been handed over to the school level along with strict requirements of reporting and accountability. Policy-makers are setting guidelines and frameworks for the measured outcomes of schools’ performance and at the same time are perceived to have abdicated responsibility for implementation. In such contexts SBM becomes no more than schools managing fewer financial resources within tighter centralist policies over curriculum, evaluation and standards. Smyth (1993) refers to the contradiction between the rhetoric about democracy in SBM reforms and the reality of an economic imperative that demands more central control. He maintains that there has been rhetoric of devolution in a context of centralism. The flaw he says is
in the limited nature of decentralisation reforms, as school-based decision-making is permitted only according to approved formats within government policy and frameworks.

SBM seems to be promising more democratic community involvement, more parental choice, better managed and more effective schools. However, according to Codd (1993), the reality is somewhat different.

...schools have become independent, self managing units, competing with each other for staff and resources, where teachers are to be rewarded according to what they produce and where children are to be regularly assessed in relation to nationally specified learning objectives (Codd, 1993. p. 154).

Anderson and Dixon (1993) assert SBM creates an “...Alice in Wonderland world where language is turned on its head” (1993, p. 56). According to Anderson and Dixon, the self-managing school is not about teacher empowerment, choice, grassroots democracy or parent participation but the reverse, it is they say “a cruel hoax” (1993. p. 4). They concur with Weiler (1990), who argues that SBM has two hidden functions. The first is to serve as a layer of insulation between the State and other levels of the system and thereby serving as an effective way to manage conflict in an era of cutbacks. The second, according to Weiler, is to provide legitimacy by appearing to be sensitive to local needs.

This critical view of decentralisation reforms and the discrepancy between the rhetoric of empowerment and the reality of centralisation of testing and evaluation is succinctly summed up by Hargreaves and Reynolds (1989), who assert that, “The rhetoric is consumer choice and diversity. The reality is product standardisation. Kentucky Fried Schooling!” (p. 10).

Similarly, Watkins (1993) too, questions the motives underlying decentralisation reforms and maintains that there is an attempt to displace the stress of the economic crisis down to the level of the individual schools hiding behind the smokescreen of apparent freedom and choice. He sees decentralisation reforms as part of a strategy to
subject schools to centralised control in order to meet the demands of the business sector while leaving schools to “sort out the problems” (Watkins, 1993, p. 139).

The link between educational policy and national, social and economic goals is made also by Demaine (1993, p. 16) and Shuttleworth (2003). They show the link between neo-conservative politics, Thatcherism in the UK and Reaganomics in the USA and SBM as an educational reform. According to neo-conservatism, the traditional centralised education system has suffered from ‘provider capture’- educators and education officials have run the system to suit themselves and not the needs of the children and the nation. Schools are seen by neo-conservatives as sites where pupils can be trained to contribute to the nation’s economic and industrial development. The belief is that an educational market would allow for parental choice leading in turn to competition which would result in ‘better’ schools, better in that they would be more in keeping with the needs of the labour market. Education is thus seen as a commodity.

This apparent contradiction between rhetoric and praxis is also discussed by Demaine (1993), who claims that the emphasis is on power and control and not empowerment – participation, he claims, seems reduced to parental choice. He refers to reforms in England where LMS has been presented as leading to a shift from direct to more participative forms of control. Although these ideas seem democratic, they are, he suggests, a way of enabling central educational authorities to increase rather than decrease control over schools, through an emphasis on accountability, standards appraisal, assessment and evaluation. Demaine describes this as a move to divest the state of its responsibility for public education.

This view of the political agenda underlying SBM, is reinforced by Ball (1993), who calls SBM “the self-management of decline” (p. 7), in which the state can still steer at a distance but have the option of blaming parents by claiming that they abused their autonomy. Ball implies that SBM deflects pressure on the state to provide resources, to a local argument over decision- making and setting priorities and away from the fact that governments have reduced budgets for education.
Angus (1993) criticises the political naivety of Caldwell and Spinks (1988, 1992) and claims that SBM is being used as a conservative managerial device. Caldwell and Spinks, he says, ignore social, cultural and economic influences on education. They accept that decentralisation is administrative and fail to analyse the political foundations of educational policy and do not address issues of equity rising out of SBM.

Angus (1993) further criticises Caldwell and Spinks (1988, 1992) for not addressing the cultural contexts of education and for marketing their approach as applicable to any context. He also censures them for expecting teachers, principals and parents to 'participate' according to 'appropriate' rules, policies and processes. They are expected, he says, to fit the roles as defined and described by Caldwell and Spinks. He is troubled by their uncritical acceptance of budget cuts in education and at their emphasis on the processes of financial management at the expense of more significant issues, as he sees them, such as teaching and pedagogy. Their model's emphasis on budgets and financial management is in keeping, he says, with the cost-accounting and market approaches to education. Like Ball (1993), he sees their approach as flawed in its separation of policy and implementation, its advocacy of a particular style of hierarchical leadership and the assumption of limited and controlled forms of participation.

The critics of SBM see it as creating a cultural shift away from education towards management and entrepreneurialism. Opponents of SBM feel that educators tend to lose sight of what is being managed and have ended up with an industrial management model instead of a professional education model. They see it possessing only the rhetoric of decentralisation but the behaviour of centralisation — central setting of goals, targets, instruments of surveillance and fixing resources. Participation seems to be restricted to whatever the central authority allows (Smyth, 1993).

Furthermore, SBM is seen as leading to increased competition between schools, creating unequally funded schools which will lead to social inequity as those who have financial resources will be able to buy better education (Walford, 1993;
Watkins, 1993). This is related to arguments concerning social capital; those possessing both the financial resources and the cultural capital will be able to exercise choice, whereas others will not (Anderson and Dixon, 1993). This is echoed by Smyth, (1993) who declares that although advocates of SBM present equity as being its basic policy goal, the result is the exact opposite:

It promotes inequality as those who have the financial and cultural capital are able to flee by buying a better education and the rest remain trapped in some kind of educational ghetto (1993, p. 8).

One cannot ignore the strength of the language used by Smyth in his scathing criticism of not only SBM but of Caldwell and Spinks (1988; 1992) who he describes as

...arrogantly self-assured of the ‘rightness’ of what they are doing and the efficacy of their own narrow minded ideas that they are prepared to go to the extreme of closing off public debate by steamrolling them in without proper public discussion (1993, p. 9).

This is refuted by Caldwell and Spinks (1998) who state that their initiatives were well published before implementation and have been embraced by all spectrums of the political divide.

Gewirtz et al. (1995) compare two types of discourse of school management, the welfarism or bureau-professionalism as opposed to the New Public Managerialism which is connected to the discourse on current models of headship in restructured systems of education. They present a rather uncritical view of the welfare or bureau-professionalism model as being committed to the well being of individuals and the creation of a more equitable society.

Bottery (1992) is more guarded in his criticism of decentralisation. He argues that bureaucracy has its “uses but it also has its abuses” (Bottery, 1992, p. 33) and cautions against throwing the baby out with the bath water. Education as public
education does require a measure of bureaucracy. He points to two contradictory aims of education, the development of the individual and the training of individuals for the job market. Bottery says that

...some bureaucratisation is an inevitable part of the organisation of education systems, it is still a matter of political and ethical choice as to what extent the activities of individuals are constrained by bounding such activities with rules and regulations (Bottery, 1992, p. 52).

Moreover, he argues that LMS in the U.K. in advocating a quasi-market in education, places schools in competition with parents which leads to a confrontational relationship and not a partnership (p. 110). Bottery, like Ball (1994), cautions that legislation almost never has the intended effect, because if those who are implementing policy are not consulted, they feel a lesser sense of ownership.

Critics of SBM also argue that despite claims that it will lead to improved student learning outcomes, there is no clear empirical evidence linking SBM to school effectiveness. The early literature sought to establish a connection between SBM and increased student achievement but found that no such evidence existed (Ogawa and White, 1994). Later research reinforced these findings (Leithwood and Menzies, 1998; Whitty et al., 1998). Even Caldwell and Spinks (1998) conclude that “there is no doubt that evidence of a direct cause-and-effect relationship between self-management and improved outcomes is minimal” (1998, p. 66). This does not, however, lead them to conclude that SBM is not the appropriate method to achieve better educational outcomes. They argue instead that the potential of SBM to improve student attainment is hindered by problems in implementation and specifically point to the role that principals play in determining the impact of SBM in their schools.

Critics claim that SBM on its own does not contribute to teachers’ empowerment and participation in decision-making but that the role of the principal becomes a key issue. The degree of involvement could then depend on the leadership style of the principal (Sakney and Dibski, 1994). Conley (1991) claims that teachers’ desires to
participate in decision-making vary among teachers and decision-making domains. Teachers, according to Conley, tend to express greater desire to participate in decisions relating to instruction and express reluctance to participate in administrative and management decisions. This was further explored by Smylie (1992) who found that teachers' willingness to participate was influenced primarily by their relationship with their principal. The delegation of budgets to schools has led to an even wider gap between management and staff and opportunities for professional development for teachers appear to have been threatened rather than enhanced (Whitty et al., 1998). Critics of SBM argue that the leadership style used by principals may undermine the perceived advantage of SBM as a means of encouraging greater teacher commitment.

There are those who argue that it is too soon to evaluate the success or failure of SBM. Davies and Ellison (2000) contend that one cannot assess the failure or success of autonomy or market-forces in education as neither market forces nor extensive autonomy have in fact been introduced. According to their view, schools, unlike business organisations do not have the freedom to decide what kind of business to be in, as this is determined by national legislation. They cannot decide "how to organise and operate the production process or service delivery of the organisation" (Hentschke and Davies, 1997, p. 29). This is determined by centrally determined curriculum and assessment frameworks. The major advance they see is in the autonomy to choose how to generate revenue. They conclude by asserting that it "... is not our contention that site-based management has failed but that it has never been tried" (Davies and Ellison, 2000, p. 6). The implication of their argument is that unless governments transfer all levels of autonomy to schools, then meaningful autonomy will not occur. What we are witnessing according to Davies and Ellison is a degree of managerialism that decentralises administration but does not promote autonomous decision-making. However, they advocate an extension of decentralisation and not a return to a centralised form of educational governance.

To sum up, critics claim that there is only the rhetoric of autonomy, choice and participation as fewer resources coupled with tighter performance standards have led to greater accountability on the part of principals leaving them with little room for
initiative and flexibility. School leaders are perceived to have become more constrained as they are expected to conform to externally prescribed targets. The impact of decentralisation reforms on the role of school leaders is perceived to have led to an increased workload with principals taking on more managerial functions, greater responsibility for student outcomes without the required resources to meet these increased demands and to have widened the gap between principals and teachers. It is evident that critics see the effects of SBM on principals contrasting greatly with the view of supporters of SBM.

Although the extent and the nature of globalisation of educational reforms are contested, there is, according to Whitty et al. (1998), little doubt that countries are responding to similar pressures and introducing education reform policies which “look remarkably alike” (p. 6). One should bear in mind that although current trends of decentralisation in education indicate global trends, education systems are firmly embedded in national contexts which differ from each other in particular structures and assumptions. The following section is a brief summary of the nature of decentralisation reforms in four countries.

3.4 Historical and International Perspectives

SBM takes on different forms in different countries and also within countries, with the locus of power shifting in different directions. These distinctive trends have been discussed in detail by Bullock and Thomas (1997), Caldwell and Spinks (1998), Whitty et al. (1998) and Volansky and Friedman (2003). Educational reform in Israel has been influenced in varying degrees by developments in England, Australia, Canada and the USA. This is evident in the translation and distribution of the booklets *The School Restructuring Movement in the USA*, by Papagiannis, Easton and Owens (1998) and *Decentralisation and Accountability in Public Education*, by Hill and Bonan (1991) from the USA. Delegations were sent to Oxford in the UK and Edmonton in Canada. Keynote speakers at the conference held in Ramat Gan, Israel in 2001 on SBM were Michael Strembitsky from Canada, Brian Caldwell from Australia, Rosalind Levačić from the UK and Michael Kirst from the USA.
Nevertheless, it is clear that although the rhetoric of SBM in Israel imitates that of other countries, in practice the reforms as implemented are quite different.

**England**

In England, the desire of central government to become more involved in school education can be traced to the 1970s when media attention focused on the perceived failings of state schools (Whitty et al., 1998; Levačić, 2003). A comprehensive review of educational policy in England from 1960 to the late 1990s has been undertaken by Bell (1999). He identified 1988 to 1996 as the market phase which was heralded in by the 1988 ERA (DES, 1988). A series of Education Acts passed in the 1980s and early 1990s were underpinned by five key themes, quality, diversity, choice, autonomy and accountability (Bell, 1999; Rutherford, 2005). In England these reforms were intended to increase competition between schools thereby driving up standards (Rutherford, 2005). These acts were intended to increase parental involvement and to lessen the hold of LEAs on schooling (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). Following the ERA of 1988 schools were given the choice to opt out of their local authority and more control seemed to have shifted to the centre with the establishment of a national curriculum, OfSTED inspections and testing and publication of results in what is known as ‘league tables’ (Bowe et al., 1992). Quality was seen in terms of efficient use of resources and teacher and pupil performance. Diversity was attended to through Grant Maintained Schools which could apply for a change in status and LEA maintained schools had their budgets devolved to them. Choice was addressed by open enrolment affording parents greater choice of schooling. Autonomy was seen as the opportunity for schools to opt out of the LEA.

However, with this autonomy came greater accountability. Principals were placed at the centre of the inspection process (Bell, 1999). According to Rutherford (2005), greater pressure on principals to manage these external changes increased as they were “seen as principally accountable for any success or failure of their schools” (2005, p. 280). The pivotal role of the principal in raising standards was expressed succinctly by Woodhead, the then Chief Inspector of Schools:
It is the leadership provided by the headteacher which is the critical factor in raising standards of pupil achievement...headteachers must have a clear vision of the curriculum...the strength of personality and interpersonal tact needed to engage with teachers in raising standards; the administrative drive to plan programmes of improvement and see that they were carried through (Woodhead, 1996, pp. 10-11, cited in Bell, 1999, p. 211).

School leaders were now both freer and more constrained. The OfSTED inspections and the National Curriculum imposed constraints on principals whereas LMS created more room for manoeuvre (Bell, 1999).

Bell defines the next stage from 1997 as the excellence phase. Although the New Labour Party did not abandon the policies of the former government, the emphasis changed in that educational policies were now seen to be a means to overcome social disadvantage and to improve economic performance. The stress became on “...taking excellence wherever it is found and spreading it widely...” (Blair, 1998, p. 30). Principals retained autonomy but the responsibility to deliver excellence rests on them. The improvement of standards is to be achieved through the use of targeted funding and performance targets rather than on the operation of the market place (Rutherford, 2005). The language emanating from the UK at present is less about competition between schools and more about collaboration between schools (Southworth, 2006).

Other developments which have the potential to further impact principals’ roles have been government publications which propose widening the roles of school leaders beyond school boundaries in order to safeguard children. These regulations have been laid out in Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) and in Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools (DfES, 2004a) and have dramatic implications on the roles of principals. In October 2005 the Blair government issued a white paper on education (DfES, 2005) which proposes granting further autonomy to schools and to parents. This involves both school choice in selecting pupils and parental choice in the selection of schools. The issue of school autonomy is not, therefore, a dated topic but very relevant to current times.
Australia

In Australia devolution has been a leading feature of government reform in education since the 1970s, when many powers were delegated to individual states. Although the reforms differ in emphasis across the country, as each of the six states and the Northern Territory have responsibility for their system of education, they share common features (Bullock and Thomas, 1997; Whitty et al., 1998). The initial reforms were made in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia, followed by Tasmania. In the 1980s changes were made in Victoria and in the Northern Territory. New South Wales implemented its first decentralisation programme in 1989, however, resistance to further change in the early 1990s stalled additional moves (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). Victoria is considered to be the leading proponent of devolution in Australia (Angus, 1993; Bullock and Thomas, 1997; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). Under the Victorian Schools of the Future project (DSE, 1993) each school is governed by a school council which recruits the principal who is responsible for staff and all resources. As in other contexts, Victoria has developed a curriculum and standards framework (Whitty et al., 1998). Bullock and Thomas (1997) suggest that principals in Australia have been granted control over operational costs but their accountability has been shifted in that they share decision-making with the school councils.

The role of the principal in these reforms has been identified as pivotal (Blackmore et al., 1996). Concern over the shifting role and increased accountabilities of school leaders is still a current and contentious issue. The Australian Primary Principals Association has expressed concern about inadequate resources provided to schools branded as underperforming and suggested that granting principals more autonomy to make decisions with regard to a school’s performance would be more beneficial than the adoption of the UK inspection model of evaluating schools and strongly oppose the use of ‘threats’ to lead to improvement. The Association also expressed its apprehension about granting principals more flexibility over staffing as it would create “...additional responsibilities for principals away from their core business” (APPA, 2006, p. 4).
Canada

One of the most notable initiatives in SBM in North America has been in Canada in the Edmonton Public School District. This began in the late 1970s as a seven school pilot project and was expanded in the early 1980s to all schools in the District. The early focus was on school-based budgeting and principals gained significant authority for decisions within their schools. Since 1995, all 206 principals have reported directly to the Superintendent, the Chief Executive Officer of the public education system in Edmonton. There is a clearly defined framework for setting district priorities and mechanisms of accountability with assessments standards playing a key role. The position of principals, following 1995, has changed markedly. Edmonton uses an administrative control model (Murphy and Beck, 1995) where the principal has the final authority concerning school matters and other stakeholders act in an advisory capacity. Staffing and organisation for instruction are decided at the school level. Autonomy comes with the expectation that the principal will prepare budget documents with the involvement of staff, parents and students (Phillips, 1998). Decision-making is decentralised, but rests with the principal as the school council serves only as an advisory body. According to Habinsky, (1998) the principal is the most crucial leadership position in the Edmonton school district.

A review of *The Framework for Involvement in Site Based Decision-making* published in May 2000 provides evidence of the issues with which the stakeholders were still grappling more than twenty years after the introduction of SBM. No less than fourteen guidelines were provided for principals on how to best involve other stakeholders in decision-making processes. The following statement made by participants, “Don’t involve us if the decision has already been made” (Edmonton Public Schools, 2000, p. 2) is a clear reflection that a smooth transition to a shared decision-making climate has not been completed and principals are still struggling to define their roles and positions within the educational hierarchy.

The United States of America

It is difficult to generalise the initiatives in the United States as they have taken on many forms. Each of the fifty states has its own department of education which delegates the operation of schools to local school districts. Three waves of reform have been identified in the literature and are seen to have risen out of a need to be
more competitive in the international market (Bullock and Thomas, 1997; Volansky and Friedman, 2003). The first wave was initiated by *Nation at Risk* in 1983, the second wave in 1986 and was associated with documents such as *Tomorrow's Teachers* and *A Nation Prepared* which related to teacher preparation, roles and responsibilities and site-based management. The third wave, after 1990, was a drive for systematic reform, state and national curriculum, standards frameworks and parental choice (Boyd, 1994, cited in Bullock and Thomas, 1997).

The localised nature of educational reforms in the USA is reflected in the charter school initiative (Whitty et al., 1998). Charter school legislation is adopted on a state by state basis and there is, therefore, a great degree of variability both in interpretation and in implementation. The charter is drawn up between stakeholders who wish to operate a school and the charter-granting authority, usually a school district or state. Charter schools are granted decision-making autonomy over areas such as budget, staffing and curriculum and in return are held accountable for standards of performance.

An important feature of the restructuring in the USA was SBM. SBM has decentralised control over budget, personnel and curriculum from district offices to school sites and has been accompanied by many states setting standards for academic performance and curriculum content (Shuttleworth, 2003). However, differences in states are evident both in the extent of decentralisation and the forms of autonomy granted to schools. The most notable reform efforts have been those in Chicago in the 1990s with regard to the empowerment of school councils consisting of principals and parents. Rarely did this involve a centrally determined framework like that which has emerged in Britain and Victoria (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998).

However, a further development in educational reform was introduced in January 2002 when President Bush signed the “No Child Left Behind Act” (US Department of Education, 2002) which introduced stronger accountability measures for states, districts and schools. The act was aimed at changing the role of federal government in education whereby improved achievement would be rewarded and failure would be penalised. Annual assessments were introduced for reading and maths in grades 3
and 8. Parents have been given the right to choose schools on the basis of these measures. The rationale being that parents

... armed with data, are the best forces of accountability in education. Parents, armed with options and choice, can assure that their children get the best, most effective education possible (US Department of Education, 2002).

The Act has not been uncontested and has been criticised by the US National Education Association for creating a testing culture which has had detrimental affects on pupils and learning (NEA, 2006). The impact of these developments for principals can be seen as increasing their accountability, widening their responsibilities and may have severe career repercussions as they will be evaluated according to their pupils’ performances. Principals in the U.S.A point to the “politicalisation [sic] of education” and claim they have become “the easiest target...to cure society’s ills” (Farkas et al., 2003, p. 15).

As can been seen from this review various decentralisation measures have been taken in different countries, which have tried to devolve some measure of authority, responsibility and accountability to the school level while simultaneously maintaining or strengthening centrally determined frameworks. Curriculum and standards frameworks and accountability measures have been introduced where they had not existed previously. In the UK and Australia, the LEA’s control over education has been reduced or even in some contexts eliminated. In Israel, the context of this research, the shift appears to be going in the opposite direction, the central government seems to be relinquishing control over the operational and administrative aspects of schooling and transferring greater authority over resources to the LEA’s and through them to the schools.

The degree of autonomy afforded principals in various contexts differs too. At present, in some states in the USA, certain territories in Australia and throughout Israel, principals cannot decide which teachers to employ and which to fire, although in the UK principals through their school boards do have the autonomy to hire and fire staff. The selection of pupils and parental choice is applied in varying degrees in
different contexts as well. Schools in Israel cannot select pupils and parents cannot choose schools for primary school pupils as they are assigned to schools by the LEA. Yet in some countries parental choice is seen as a prominent aspect of decentralisation reforms.

Although SBM has been shown to be a contested education policy, what is clearly uncontested is that it has caused a dramatic change in the nature of principals’ work: greater autonomy has been granted simultaneously with increased accountability and wider responsibilities. The implications of SBM on the roles of principals as evident in research findings and the conceptual literature are presented in the following section.

3.5 Implications of SBM for the Role of Principals

3.5.1 The principal as the key player in SBM

Inherent in SBM is the expectation that the role of the principal will change; the principal has been identified as the key individual in determining the success of schools in SBM (Tanner and Stone, 1998). Wohlstetter and Briggs (1994) acknowledged that

... schools where SBM worked had principals who played a key role in dispersing power, in promoting school wide commitment to learning, in expecting all teachers to participate in the work of the school, in collecting information about student learning and in distributing rewards (p. 24).

According to Delaney’s study of SBM in Edmonton, Canada, “... the school principal is the primary factor contributing to a successful relationship between school-based management and school improvement” (Delaney, 1997. p. 107, original emphasis). The SBM literature is consistent in describing the principal as the “key player in the decentralisation and restructuring process” (Herman and Herman, 1993, cited in Delaney, 1997, p. 92). Educational reform literature stresses the relationship between the need for effective leadership and school improvement and research evidence has supported the importance of the role of the principal in achieving and
maintaining better student outcomes (Hallinger and Heck, 1998; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; West et al., 2000; Hopkins, 2001; Wallace, 2002). According to the US Public Agenda Report, “Most superintendents believe that a good principal is the key to a successful school” (Farkas et al., 2003, p. 37). Interestingly, in the same report, principals were less convinced than superintendents (41% versus 62%) of their abilities to turn a failing school into a successful school. This view is supported by Barker (2005), who claims that principals do not significantly affect student outcomes. Nevertheless, the prevailing belief is that educational leadership matters (Harris, 2004).

Restructuring of education has led to profound changes in the role of all key personnel in education. However, the role most affected by decentralisation reforms has been that of the principals who now serve as ‘boundary spanners’ (Goldring, 1990) or buffers (Goldring, 1993) between central office or district superiors and parents, the consumers. They are required to meet the demands of centrally prescribed objectives as well as cope with the day to day running of their schools (Whitty et al., 1998). Ortiz and Ogawa (2000) recognise the effect of SBM as placing principals at a “critical juncture” (p. 489) as they are the ones responsible and accountable for decisions made at the school site. Studies that examine principals in restructured systems have emphasised the role transitions that principals are expected to make as well as the type of leadership they are expected to provide. Principals are seen to be struggling to redefine their roles, they are required to let go of some traditional aspects of their roles and to learn others, confront ambiguities and conflicts in their new relationships with stakeholders, attempt to hold on to their traditional educational values and implement new decision-making structures within their schools (Ortiz and Ogawa, 2000). A rather unfortunate but perhaps apt description of the position of principals in restructured systems is that of being “piggies in the middle” (Wallace, 2003, p. 9). Another dramatic image is provided by Tucker and Codding (2002):
Why would anyone want the job of principal? Many school principals we know have the look these days of the proverbial deer caught in the headlights. Almost overnight, it seems, they have been caught in the high beams of the burgeoning accountability movement (p. 1).

Principals are accountable in ways they had never been before, with school performance affecting their livelihoods making delegation a risky business (Gunter, 2001). The question which must be posed is: Has the move to SBM and the resulting change in management roles led to the principal being a more autonomous, empowered and liberated leader or is the principal now trapped like a deer in the headlights? As Whitty et al. (1998) say, “It is difficult…to represent headteachers as the ‘winners’ of restructuring” (p. 62). The state has granted greater autonomy to the school site but this goes hand in hand with shifting responsibility and blame for failure. Perhaps Lyons and Algozzine (2006) are right in saying that the job of principal has become “…nearly undoable as the limits of power settle far above the individuals charged with change” (p. 10).

There is a clear tension set up between two opposing sets of belief relating to the effects of SBM on the role of the principal. There are those who see the devolution of responsibilities and authority to the school level as forming a principal who is more autonomous. This autonomous principal has been given the freedom to decide how to allocate resources, the opportunity to act as a change agent, be entrepreneurial, take initiatives and has been emancipated from centrally driven government directives.

On the other hand, there are those who see SBM as creating an automaton principal who is required to operate within a centrally determined, structured framework, whose performance is measured, who needs to show efficiency and effectiveness and is expected to meet the rigid inspection regime and appraisal of government inspection. The only freedom the principal is granted is to decide how to meet externally prescribed targets.
3.5.2 Evidence that school leadership is a profession under stress

The literature, both conceptual and empirical, shows that decentralisation has increased the workload and accountability of principals (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988) in several areas contributing to increased stress (Whitaker, 2003). Fullan (2001) discusses the role of the principal as a role that demands more than is reasonably possible:

With the move toward the self-management of schools, the principal appears to have the worst of both worlds. The old world is still around with expectations to run a smooth school and to be responsive to all; simultaneously the new world rains down on schools with disconnected demands, expecting that at the end of the day the school should be constantly showing better test results and ideally become a learning organisation (Fullan, 2001, pp. 138-139).

This perception of an impossible role is echoed in a report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation:

...the role of principal has swelled to include a staggering array of professional tasks and competencies. Principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives. In addition, principals are expected to serve the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions and state and federal agencies. As a result, many scholars and practitioners argue that the job requirements far exceed the reasonable capacities of any one person (Davis et al., 2005, p. 3).

Research conducted by Bowe et al., (1992) examined the impact of government policies including LMS on teachers and principals in the UK. They state,
For better or worse, in most schools the Head remains the ‘critical reality definer’. The Head is the primary mediator and interpreter of change and thus has significant influence over the institutional pace of change (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 173).

They conclude that the principals in their study convey a sense of frustration, doubt and concern about the management of change. The lack of clarity and inadequate information produce an air of desperation with regard to decision-making and long term planning. The solution seems to be management and more management where the language of management and rationality seem to provide a “cure against the threat of chaos” (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 179).

Later research supports the findings that principals in SBM schools experience a certain amount of stress over their roles (Robertson and Briggs, 1995; Jackson, 1995; Chaplain, 2001; Flintham, 2003). On the one hand, they feel more exposed to blame for failures than they were under a more centralised system. On the other hand, they feel less in control as they are expected to empower others and facilitate shared decision-making procedures. Cooper and Kelly (1993), in a national study of UK headteachers, concluded that primary school principals were experiencing higher levels of stress than their secondary school colleagues. They identified work overload and relationship with staff as the two main sources of stress. Cooper and Kelly attributed these higher levels of stress to their lack of support staff, their relatively small size and their perceived low status. A marked increase in administrative load is evident in research on fifty schools in England and in Wales, conducted by Webb and Vulliamy (1996), which sought to examine the changing role of the primary school principal. They identified five major areas where the roles of principals had changed and consequently, their workload intensified: the management of change with its concurrent deluge of documents, handling internal and external disturbances such as theft which in the past had been dealt with by the LEA, time spent with parents and providing community services, providing curriculum leadership and monitoring the teaching of others. Webb and Vulliamy (1996) conclude that “it seems unrealistic to expect primary headteachers both to develop the new post-ERA managerial knowledge and skills and to maintain their teaching expertise” (p. 312). While the principals in this
research welcomed the greater control granted them by LMS they viewed this as having great implications on their roles, as one put it, "We have become businessmen - there's no two ways about it - that means the curriculum is just part of my job now" (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996, p. 304). All of the participants in this study spoke of the increased administrative burden and the auxiliary staff's supporting role. The principals reported spending a considerable amount of time outside their schools attending courses and meetings relating to the National Curriculum and OfSTED inspections. These additional tasks and lack of time to fulfil them were perceived as creating higher stress levels.

These findings are supported by Tanner and Stone (1998), who conducted research on primary school principals leading SBM schools from various regions across the US. They reported that many principals are "paranoid" (p. 12) about their changing role and responsibilities under SBM. As one panel member stated, "In a sense the buck has passed from the central staff office to the school office" (p. 12).

Later research conducted by Jones (1999a) in a study on 12 primary school headteachers in a Welsh valley supports these previous findings and identifies managing changes due to LMS and the National Curriculum as well as changes in their relationships with key stakeholders as the two major sources of role change leading to increased workload and higher stress levels. They all perceived that their roles had changed significantly with the move to LMS and they "were more pressurised, stressed and more accountable" (Jones, 1999a, p. 450).

Work overload and handling relationships with stakeholders as chief causes of stress for primary school principals was evident also in Chaplain's (2001) study of 36 headteachers in UK primary schools. A new premise from Chaplain's research is the connection between stress and job satisfaction. Stress according to Chaplain can be seen as a motivator, although 55 percent of the heads in this study reported experiencing stress on very high levels on a regular basis, 33 percent of them indicated high levels of job satisfaction. The remaining 22 percent, who experienced both high stress levels and low job satisfaction, are those who reported a sense of dissatisfaction with their own personal performance, which indicates a low level of
self-efficacy. Chaplain cautions that what is perceived as a source of stress at one point in time can at another point be perceived as exciting and challenging. This is important as it relates to the dynamic nature of principals' work and how they perceive their roles. What is true at the time of reporting may not be true at other times.

3.5.3 Increased workload has led to unrealistic demands on principals

The emerging picture from research is that principalship today is "a profession under stress" (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 59). From a survey administered to 1,543 principals and assistant principals in the state of Virginia, DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran concluded that policy makers should recognise the extensive responsibilities that principals now hold together with the excessive demands on their time. They suggested that policy makers define the role of principals more narrowly and not insist that they become 'superleaders' (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 59). The implications are that one person cannot do the job effectively and that policy makers need to be convinced that principals cannot “do more and be more” (p. 59). This highlights the gap between policy makers and principals as policy implementers.

Unrealistic demands on the school leaders according to Evans (1996), “decreases school leaders' sense of efficiency and heightens their feelings of isolation, insecurity and inadequacy” (cited in Fullan, 2003, p. 156). Fullan (2003) relates not only to the increased demands but also to the ambiguous messages principals receive. Principals are expected to take control and be innovative, but are also exhorted to follow central directives and involve others in decision-making, yet they are the ones who are solely accountable. Farkas et al., (2003) summing up their survey of more than 1000 superintendents and 925 principals of schools across the USA, describe the role of the principal as similar to that of a juggler, “one with too few arms and too many balls in the air” (p. 18). Principals in this survey are not against increased accountability but rather are against the lack of resources to “deliver the goods” (p. 38). They complain about inadequately funded government mandates, the inability to remove failing teachers and they question the appropriateness of scores
on standardised tests used as the measure to judge a school’s and by extension a principal’s performance.

Expectations for principals have been described as unrealistic and the concept of distributed leadership has been advocated as a means to share responsibilities (Cooley and Shen, 2003). The term “work intensification” is used by Gronn (2003, p. 65) to describe the phenomenon of work that becomes harder and harder to perform. It refers not only to an overload of tasks but also to the feeling of being on a ‘never-ending treadmill’ when one is constantly aware of the tasks that need to be performed and deadlines which need to be met. The work of most of the principals Gronn (2003) interviewed was characterised by long hours, endless demands, a punishing pace and continual frustration. Demands of accountability requirements were seen as exacerbating the already overloaded responsibilities of school leaders. Gronn (2003) notes the scant research conducted on school management teams (SMTs) as a form of shared or distributed leadership and as a response to work intensification. The conclusion is that they serve to empower staff only in so far as the team members work together to achieve the goals of marketisation. He cites research done by Wallace and Huckman in 1999 in UK primary schools, whose findings indicated that heads saw SMTs as a tool for communication and keeping in touch with developments in the school and actually served to enhance heads’ control and authority. They concluded that while fulfilling all leadership tasks alone for heads of large primary schools is no longer a viable option, the formation of SMTs is not a straightforward solution to school management either (Gronn, 2003). Distributed leadership does not seem to be the antidote to work intensification.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence that additional resources, even in the form of an extra “pair of hands” (Farkas et al., 2003, p. 19) can make a marked difference to the stress levels principals experience. As one U.S. principal said,

> Probably one of the nicest things I had happen to me this past year, was [that] my district finally gave me one position to do nothing but deal with all the stuff that hits you all the time, [all the stuff] that bogs you down (Farkas et al., 2003, p. 19).
Unfortunately, the overwhelming impression is that a lack of funding and resources will continue to characterise the educational scene in many countries due to pressures to decrease public spending (Stevenson, 2006).

Not only are principals under pressure due to their positioning at the interface between new system level demands and traditional although still relevant school level demands but they also face a new set of tensions. These tensions appear to be connected to the transitions principals are attempting to make from their traditional roles to their new management roles under decentralisation reforms. Some of these tensions are presented next.

3.5.4 Tensions faced by principals in the current educational climate

**The chief executive role versus the leading professional role**

Research shows that there are a series of tensions now present in the work of principals. The first being the tension between their role as chief executive and that of educational leader or the leading professional, the exemplar of professional practice (Pollard et al., 1994; Grace, 1995; Dimmock, 1996; Southworth, 1998; Jones, 1999a, 1999b). Grace describes this change:

> A process of ideological transformation is occurring in contemporary English society in which education is regarded as a commodity; the schools as a value-adding production unit; the headteacher as chief executive and managing director; the parents as consumers;.... Contemporary headteachers are therefore expected to ‘market the school’, ‘deliver the curriculum’ and to ‘satisfy the customers’ (Grace 1995. p. 21).

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1992) state clearly, though uncritically, that as governments have introduced greater consumer choice and control elements of the market place into education, “...the underlying dynamic is that schooling is shifting from a public service driven by professionals towards a market-driven service, fuelled by purchasers and customers” (p. 1). This positioning of schools in a market place, albeit a quasi-market (Levačić, 2002) or a modified market (Murgatroyd and
Morgan, 1992) has implications on the role of the principal and has led to a perceived set of tensions within their role. This is apparent in several studies conducted in Chicago by Hess (1990), Ford (1992) and Bennett et al. (1992). Principals in these studies reported to be spending less time on roles which relate to teaching and learning and more time on budgetary considerations. Accounts of an increased management role leading to less time for instructional leadership have been provided by several USA studies (Murphy, 1994; Williams and Portin, 1997; Whitaker, 1998; Portin, 2000) and by Australian scholars (Odden, 1995; Blackmore et al., 1996; Cranston, 2002). In Cranston’s (2002) longitudinal study of six primary principals in Queensland Australia, the major tensions were maintaining “a balance between leadership and management” (p. 4) and evidence was found that the role conflict was greater for principals of smaller primary schools who identified a clear shift from educational leader to managerial roles.

Open enrolment in the UK has led to the expectation that principals will increase numbers of pupils registering to their schools and as such have taken on the role of marketing managers. Principals spend time marketing their schools which entails showing visitors around the school, acting as ‘tour guides’, answering queries from prospective parents and preparing and publishing glossy brochures and engaging in public relations (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996). Such activities, although necessary for the survival of the school, have largely removed principals from teaching related activities.

Day et al. (2000), in their case study of twelve UK headteachers, six leading primary schools, identified this tension as the tension of “leadership versus management” (p. 135). They reported that although the heads in their study were able to distinguish between these two roles, managing organisational activities and leadership; building and maintaining a sense of vision, they acknowledge that this had been achieved at a high personal and professional sacrifice.

Similarly, Bell and Rowley (2002) claim that the principals in their UK study were able to make a distinction between the role of chief executive and that of the leading professional. Prior to 1999, school leaders in the aforementioned study made a clear
distinction between their chief executive functions and activities relating to teaching, learning and curriculum. They tended to retain their chief executive functions and delegated their professional powers. However, by 2000, the participants in Bell and Rowley's study also expressed concerns about their ability to cope with these two aspects of their role. On the one hand, they felt that they had to increase their leading professional role in order to meet the standards set by government policy on literacy and numeracy strategies and have been required to become experts in all areas of the curriculum. On the other hand, the demands of new government initiatives have increased their chief executive functions. In order to cope with their increase in responsibilities and the "excessive amounts of documentation that have accompanied government reforms" (Bell and Rowley, 2002, p. 205) they now appeared to delegate their chief executive work to their SMT and focus more on their leading professional role. They claimed to be more involved in the curriculum and how it is taught. However, they too like the heads in previous studies reported a more autocratic style of leadership due to work intensification since 1997 and consequently felt a decrease in job satisfaction. They felt it was becoming increasingly more difficult to balance the two aspects of the jobs and perceived the resulting stress and workloads as unnecessary.

The tensions originating from the increased demands of their chief executive or management role and that of educational leadership, or leadership role, lead to an additional set of tensions identified by principals, the tension between finding the time to both manage the school and to nurture the professional development of their staff.

**Staff development versus school maintenance**

This tension between the development of staff and the daily maintenance of the school was recognised by the heads in the study conducted by Day et al. (2000) as a dilemma between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership can be defined as ensuring that targets are defined and met and that the structures and systems to support these goals are running smoothly - transactional leaders motivate followers by exchanging rewards for given services (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership on the other hand is concerned with empowering staff,
building on their self esteem and their commitment to a new vision for the school. Transformational leaders create a high level of commitment that develops from strong emotional relationships between the leaders and the led (Burns, 1978). This dilemma was apparently not easy to resolve. Principals report being pulled in different directions and postponing school development issues due to the urgency of maintenance tasks. The trend of UK-based research since 1988 highlights the increase in managerial duties at the expense of teaching-related and staff development activities (Webb, 1994; Grace, 1995; Southworth, 1995, 1998; Pascal and Ribbins, 1998; Jones, 1999a; Day et al., 2000).

The load of externally prescribed demands often took precedence over internal school matters and principals reported the need to prioritise and be selective in their responses to the needs of their teaching staff. Most of the school leaders in both Southworth’s study (1998) and that of Day et al. (2000) acknowledge that this tension would increase as greater accountability demands and new policy initiatives were introduced. This can be seen as the source of the third set of tensions identified in the research literature, managing internal versus external change.

**Internal versus external change**

A third set of tensions has been created by the need to manage external pressures for change and their staff which has to implement these changes. As the “gatekeepers” (Wallace, 1990, p. 9) of change principals are also the ones who interpret policy documents and are expected to ensure the implementation of these changes. School leaders are now placed in the position of reacting to a never ending flow of initiatives instead of being proactive and leading the school towards their own vision.

Goldring and Rallis (1993) assert that decentralisation results in principals reporting growing role ambiguity as they now have to contend with rapidly changing external environments. They describe the school leader today as “the flag bearer and bridger [who] links the school to the external environment” (p. 138). Prior to decentralisation reforms, principals could place almost all of their energies on monitoring internal school activities as schools were administered as relatively closed environments (Goldring, 1992). Principals today must serve as mediators between schools and a
variety of stakeholders who may have different expectations. Similar findings were presented by Bush, Coleman and Glover (1993), followed by Levačić’s (1995) study in the UK. Levačić describes one of the new roles of principals following LMS as that of acting as a “buffer” (p. 127) between the school and the “turbulence of the external environment” (p. 127). Weindling (1992) and Southworth (1998) both report that in England school leaders now have to relate to a wider set of stakeholders and note that parents are more demanding and are perceived as more difficult to deal with partly due to the demands to provide them with more information about both curriculum and assessment.

The change in principals’ role in the USA parallels those in other countries as all schools in the USA now have a form of school council or committee (Whitaker, 2003). This requires them to work more closely with community agencies in order to obtain resources and to develop market strategies to promote their schools. The conclusion is that SBM transforms the principals’ role radically. Principals in their new role must operate not only as effective business managers but also as moral agents and social advocates within their communities (Murphy and Beck, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1995; Gibton et al., 2000) taking on a wider role which traditionally was performed by other agencies.

An additional role, which Webb and Vulliamy (1996) call the “invisible and unacknowledged” (p. 307) aspect of the principals’ job that seems to have increased as a result of decentralisation reforms, is that of the principal as a social worker. Principals of primary schools in particular find themselves acting as social workers and are expected to counsel parents on issues unrelated to their children. Prior to decentralisation reforms, some LEA’s had employed social workers who attended to these needs which are now considered to be an additional aspect of the roles principals are exhorted to perform. This was also evident in research of Jones (1999a; 1999b), who suggests that the school leader taking on the role of social worker within the community may be more pronounced in schools situated in socially deprived areas. Moreover, principals are explicitly encouraged by policy makers to take on leadership roles beyond the boundaries of their schools (Dimmock et al, 2005).
Principals are often cited in the literature as feeling the need to protect their staffs from the full impact of changes (Bowe et al., 1992; Southworth, 1995; Day et al., 2000) as well as to project confidence that they have some degree of control over the process of change. As one of the heads in the Day et al., (2000) study succinctly sums up: “We are in a culture of managing change and accountability. The pressure is from outside but I have to manage the pressure inside” (p. 139). External pressures often lead to internal issues being ignored or not sufficiently attended to.

The widened responsibilities, role ambiguity, rapid pace of change, the contradictory and incomplete nature of policy documents and the need to implement innovations immediately lead to another set of tensions, the adoption of an autocratic leadership style versus a more collegial style of leadership which would promote teacher autonomy.

**Autocracy versus autonomy**

Principals report a tension between autocracy and autonomy (Day et al., 2000) as they are exhorted by leadership theory and policy documents to adopt transformational forms of leadership (Southworth, 1999) and create structures to facilitate shared decision-making. This was not easily resolved due to pressures to make decisions quickly at critical times.

Paradoxically, the attempt to devolve authority and responsibility to the school site as a way of empowering those at the school level, one of the key notions underpinning decentralisation reforms, has led to an even more top-down mode of decision-making. Bowe et al. (1992) report that the heads in their study were aware of the need to ensure staff commitment to changes. Yet, participation was seen as a problem as the pace of change seems to exclude participation in decision-making and decisions are made with the involvement of staff being more of a summative one. The flood of documentation aimed at principals appears to reinforce their executive position and disqualifies teachers from true participation (Bowe et al., 1992; Day et al., 2000).
The separation of policy setting from implementation and execution is thus further reinforced. This deluge of documentation aimed at school leaders is also mentioned in the OECD Report of 2001, in which it is suggested that principals need time and space and less circulars and regulations. As principals face constant pressure to make decisions quickly they choose when to consult with others and when not to (Bowe et al., 1992).

Similarly, Whitty et al. (1998) assert that the devolution of decision-making to the school level has resulted in a concentration of power at the top. In smaller schools, typically primary schools, this power is usually in the hands of the principal, whereas in larger schools there has been the formation of a SMT which has led to a greater gap between the manager and the managed in primary schools.

The manner in which principals respond to concepts of staff participation in decision-making processes seems to be dependent on a variety of factors such as culture and context. In traditionally hierarchical cultures, principals seem to be going through the motions of involving teachers but this is not seen as true participation (Granstrom, 1996). Of particular interest is the observation made by Cranston (2002) that some principals were attempting to delegate decision-making and empower teachers whereas teachers were reluctant to take on greater responsibilities. Schools situated in a stable market, may retain elements of ‘professional’ management while those in weaker market positions have to resort to the business ethics of new managerialism (Gewirtz et al., 1995) as the need to be competitive and make quick decisions may prevent principals from engaging staff in genuine participative decision-making.

The need to meet the seemingly unremitting demands of central government agencies and make quick decisions has created an organisational culture that is hierarchical, competitive, individualistic and highly task-oriented (Odden, 1995; Blackmore et al., 1996; Webb and Vulliamy, 1996). These relentless demands have led to an additional set of tensions for principals, that of keeping a balance between their private and professional life.
Personal time versus professional time

The fifth set of tensions identified in the research literature is that between personal time versus professional tasks. The principals in the study of Day et al. (2000) all acknowledge the excessive demands on their personal time and the sacrifices they have made. The picture of principals experiencing less job satisfaction is evident in a later study conducted by Rutherford (2005) on primary school principals' changing roles between 1988-2003. Rutherford identified an initial period of excitement among principals following the 1988 ERA as they felt they would be more in control of their destiny. This was followed by a sense of increasing disillusionment. They agreed that since 1997, the election of the Labour Government, the pace of change had intensified and they had to meet the requirements of even more routine administration in order to supply data to both the LEA and the Government. They expressed frustration with the amount of paper work which they felt was repetitive and endless. Rutherford (2005) tentatively (due to the small size of the sample) concludes that principals are struggling to balance the two aspects of their roles, leading educational professionals with that of managing directors or chief executives. The pace of government initiated reforms appears to be incessant, demanding and exhausting. The participants in Rutherford’s study, similar to the principals in the US (Farkas et al., 2003), do not contest the aims of the reforms; rather the ill-thought out and changing nature of the reforms coupled with the lack of provision of funding to see them through. The pressures associated with headship seem to have taken the ‘joy’ out of the job coupled with the toll on their private lives. As stated clearly by a U.S principal, “It’s become a 24/7 job and you have no life...I need to stop and smell the roses...I don’t even get to see them, never mind smell them” (Farkas et al., 2003, pp. 15-16).
Personal values versus values of the business world

A sixth set of tensions has been identified as originating in the conflict between personal values and external values imposed on school leaders. The values of operating within a quasi-market place clearly raised tensions for heads who found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the language of business (Day et al., 2000).

Bowe et al. (1992) call this a cultural resistance to the new discourse of education as business and a clash of interests between marketing and educational activities. They identified responses such as “resistance, accommodation, subterfuge and conformity” (p. 13) when there appeared to be a mismatch between the values of principals implementing policy and the values embedded in policy texts. In later research, this value clash was identified by Day et al. (2000) as causing considerable dilemmas for the heads in their study as they did not want to be seen as simply reacting to changes, adopting the role of a “subcontractor” (p. 156) carrying out government directives, nor did they wish to be perceived as “subversive” (Day et al., 2000, p. 156), as dissidents working against their superiors.

Gewirtz and Ball (2000) suggest that the concept of leadership has shifted away from authentic leadership based on educational values and a strong personal and professional commitment, towards contrived leadership. The implication is that traditional notions of headship have been undermined by the necessity of conforming to market values and externally imposed reforms. This is reinforced by Gewirtz (2002), who argues that principals may be forced to rethink their traditional values when responding to market pressures.

Moore et al. (2002), similarly, raise the notion that principals may find themselves opposed on ideological or philosophical grounds to an aspect of national policy. They suggest that there might be a contradiction between the culture of pedagogy and a management ethos. They explore the ways in which principals “negotiate, accommodate, resist and mediate mandated policy locally and the impact that such responses may have on pre-existing educational values and visions” (Moore et al., 2002, p. 176). They offer an optimistic view of principals responding in accommodatory or pragmatic ways to government policies as opposed to accepting
them or approving of them. Moore et al. conclude that principals can accede to managerialist functions without bringing about a fundamental change in their underlying educational philosophy. One principal in their study called this “jumping through the hoops” (p. 180), hinting that public policy remains distanced from the realities of school life. Moore et al. argue that principals’ visions are rooted in educational discourse rather than managerial discourse and have origins in ideological positions strongly held over a period of many years. They suggest that a conscious, creative response to reforms or the development of “strategic pragmatism” (p. 185) has the potential to maintain locally valued educational beliefs.

This issue of values in school leadership is also addressed by Gold et al. (2003). They, too, claim that school leaders can mediate or filter national policies by relating them to their own value systems. They did not see a simple shift from welfarism to new managerialism. They do however, point out that it is unclear whether the current emphasis on outcomes and performance targets will enable principals to continue to apply transformational and instructional models of leadership which are underpinned by their personal values.

This is refuted by Wright (2003), in his rejoinder to Gold et al. (2003). He claims that the principals in the aforementioned study were in fact practicing “Bastard Leadership’ very nicely” (Wright, 2003, p. 140). Bastard Leadership is defined by Wright as a new form of managerialism where headteachers are simply conduits of government policy with the morals and values underpinning leadership “removed from” (Wright, 2001, p.280) school leaders. Wright says that the values referred to by Gold et al. are actually “second order” (Wright, 2003. p. 141. original emphasis) values like teamwork. The tension between the discourse of the NCSL and the centrally prescribed demands of OfSTED, will he says, promote Bastard Leadership as no principal will defy the demands of OfSTED. Wright (2003) claims that principals are unable to challenge first order values which are determined externally and are reinforced by control mechanisms. This view of principalship designed in such a way that school leaders are no more than conduits of government policy and have little agency to mediate the external policy agenda and promote their values as educational leaders is shared by Thrupp (2005) and Hatcher (2005).
Empirical studies and commentators are divided in their views as to how much leeway principals have to develop and implement policy agendas underpinned by their educational ideals and values. These values may conflict with those of the new managerialism of policy texts and the power of external structures, sanctions and accountability measures may be so overwhelming thereby restricting individual agency.

3.5.5 Principals’ reluctance to return to a pre-SBM era

Surprisingly, although the evidence paints a rather grim picture of principals functioning under great duress and stress, there does not seem to be a wish to return to a pre-SBM era. Levačič (1995) researched the impact of LMS on eleven schools and found that despite the headteachers’ negative comments on time spent on issues which are not directly connected to education, they felt that they had been empowered by the policy changes and had no desire to return to a pre LMS era. This apparent empowerment stemming from the ability to manage finances is consistent in findings of studies conducted by Mortimore and Mortimore (1991), Jones (1999a) and Cranston (2002).

The above studies highlight the intensification of the principals’ workload and the changed relationship with stakeholders. Moreover, they seem to emphasise the principals’ role as a chief executive, managing externally driven change, at the expense of being directly involved in teaching and curriculum development. Nonetheless, none expressed a desire to turn back the clock. There is however evidence that, although principals may not desire to return to a pre-SBM era, school systems are finding it difficult to recruit new candidates for principalship.

3.5.6 A culture of disengagement

An additional and worrying trend in current educational leadership is a “culture of disengagement” as identified by Gronn (2003, p. 51) which is the increasing difficulty education systems are experiencing in recruiting suitable candidates for leadership roles. In the USA, the intensification of work, rising standards for principals and demands for accountability are all seen as factors resulting in increased vacancies. Similarly, the principals in Flintham’s study (2003)
attributed their reasons for leaving principalship to high levels of stress which coincided with accelerated changes within the education system. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) asserted that approximately 40% of the principals in the USA would retire by 2008. Many principals are retiring at a younger age claiming that the job with its expanded job description is simply not tenable. National surveys conducted in the USA show that fewer people want the job and this has resulted in some school districts employing uncertified candidates and in Chicago professionals from fields other than education have been recruited for school leadership positions (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The irony of this is clear, at the same time as there are licensure requirements for principals and unified standards for effective school leadership; the shortage of suitable candidates has led to the employment of principals who have no formal qualifications for the position. Similarly, in both the UK (Stevenson, 2006) and in Australia (Quong, 2006) there are predictions of a long term crisis in principal supply. Walker and Qian (2006) attribute some of the reasons for the apparent shortage of principals in Western countries to the dramatic role changes principals have undergone; their workloads are greater, work days longer, accountabilities widened and the expectations of the public and central governments have increased.

3.6 Increased Attention to Principalship Training Programmes

One of the indications of the redefinition of the headteacher's role is, as Grace (1993) points out, “the growth of education management studies” (Grace, 1993, p. 353 ). The expansion of education management courses is evident throughout the western world as an additional indicator that traditional principals possessing a pedagogical education and classroom experience are no longer considered sufficiently equipped for their new role as managers of educational institutions within a decentralised system (Whitty et al., 1998). School leadership appears to be in a transitional phase from traditional notions of principalship to a new managerial culture.

The challenges presented by educational reforms have led to the recognition that increased attention should be given to headship training. In the UK national standards for headship have been set (DfES, 2004b) and in 2000 the NCSL was
established (Bush, 2004) All this activity concentrated on headship training reflects the recognition by the British government that headship matters. In the rationale for the prospectus for the college this is clearly stated:

> The evidence...has consistently shown the pivotal role of effective leadership in securing high quality provision and...effective leadership is a key to both continuous improvement and major system transformation (NCSL, 2001 p. 5).

Specialist training for principals is well established in the UK (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006), the USA, Australia and New Zealand (Whitty, et al., 1989; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1992). In an Australian study conducted by Cranston (2002) on primary school principals in Queensland, principals report the need for further professional development training coupled with the view that they did not have the time to participate in such training. Surprisingly, Cranston concludes that professional training should be built into the accountabilities of principals. This is a surprising conclusion since he clearly identifies “...a set of tensions that make the job of principal more complex, more demanding and more diverse than ever before” (Cranston, 2002, p. 10). It would seem impracticable to suggest adding even more tasks to principals’ accountabilities. This concern with the lack of skills principals possess in order to implement decentralisation reforms is also reflected in the recommendations of the NTFAE (2004; 2005) in Israel that has recommended an advanced training programme for principals based on the UK model of headship training.

> Principal-training programmes shall be expanded and improved in order to give principals the tools they need to handle their increased responsibility. Emphasis shall be placed on training them for the non-pedagogical aspects of the job (NTFAE, 2004. p. 10).

It would be wise to bear in mind Crow’s (2006) concept of principalship socialisation which suggests that preparation for the new demands of principalship is far more complex than attending a training programme. Similarly, Hargreaves (2003) asserts
that a significant amount of learning to be a headteacher can only be learned while
doing the job.

3.6.1 The leadership management dichotomy
As a major objective of this study is to gain a better understanding of the changing
nature of principalship since decentralisation reforms have been introduced, a brief
overview of the key issues pertaining to leadership theory is presented.
It is clear from the interest taken by governments in the establishment of training
programmes for principals that it has been recognised that top down reforms together
with administrative and financial decentralisation, will not be sufficient to raise
students' performance, what is needed is effective school leadership. However, there
seems to be no consensus among commentators and researchers as to what form
effective leadership should take.

Day et al. (2000) explain the conceptual confusion present in leadership theory as a
result of the fact that this is recently chartered territory. Educational management,
prior to reforms, had been limited to the headteacher setting local, micro objectives
and motivating staff to accomplish them. They point to the widening gap structural
reform has created between teachers and school leaders as headteachers have moved
towards a chief executive role (Hughes 1985; Grace, 1995) and have less time to
perform their leading professional roles (Pollard et al., 1994).

Leadership and management are often seen as inseparable concepts. Management
tends to be defined as

   ensuring that tasks are completed through effective planning, organisation,
   supervision and the development of human and other resources

whereas leadership is about

   developing and sustaining a shared vision and set of values in an organisation,
   providing clear direction and most crucially motivating others and releasing their
   energies, commitment, ideas and skills (Lawlor and Sills, 1999, p. 53)
Leaders construct visions, whereas, managers implement.

Schon (1983) explains the differences thus:

Leadership and management are not synonymous terms. One can be a leader without being a manager. One can, for example, fulfill many of the symbolic, inspirational, educational and normative functions of a leader and thus represent what an organisation stands for without carrying any of the formal burdens of management. Conversely, one can manage without leading. An individual can monitor and control organisational activities, make decisions and allocate resources without fulfilling the symbolic, normative, inspirational, or educational function of leadership (p. 36).

Leadership can be seen then as a value laden concept whose interpretation by principals will be influenced by many factors such as traditional expectations, national or local requirements, beliefs, abilities, training and the contexts in which they lead (Day et al., 2000).

Bush and Bell (2002) caution against creating a dichotomy between management and leadership as “effective schools require both good leadership and good management” (Bush and Bell, 2002, p. 3, original emphasis). They define management as formulating a vision for schools based on values about the aims and purposes of education and the ability to translate this into action. Leadership they see as the embodiment and articulation of this vision and the ability to communicate it to others.

Management texts such as those by Caldwell and Spinks (1988) emphasise the leadership roles principals must perform in order to manage self-managing schools effectively and create a linkage between SBM and student outcomes. Caldwell and Spinks present 100 “strategic intentions for schools” (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998, p. 215) with an emphasis on the role the principal has in making effective links between self-management and learning outcomes. Caldwell (1999) identifies five kinds of transformational leadership, which he advocates should be combined when leading self-managing schools; cultural, strategic, educational, responsive leadership
and strategic management. He argues that these capacities arise out of the new opportunities for leaders provided by decentralisation reforms.

Gronn (2003), on the other hand, makes a clear distinction between managers and leaders. Managers, according to Gronn, perform duties and hold responsibilities as prescribed by their legal employment contracts, whereas the status of leaders is ascribed by others on the basis of their perceptions of a person’s attributes and performance. Following this definition, principals may be leaders but this is not automatically so. Gronn suggests that the increased workload principals have under restructuring reforms necessitates a greater reliance on distributed forms of leadership. However, the standards set by headship training programmes such as the NCSL are, according to Gronn, invoking a hero paradigm. The effect of this trend is to raise the expectations from individual school leaders even higher than it currently is. Gronn calls the use of mandatory standards of assessment and accreditation for school leaders, as the production of leaders by design or designer-leadership. According to Gronn (2003), inherent in standards that specify the skills, knowledge, tasks and results required of school leaders are a number of incorrect assumptions. The first being that they are “solutions in search of problems” (p. 10) in that they provide solutions to anticipated problems. The second is that of superiority, persons other than practitioners know best and the third is that they create compliance and verification; compliance with the standards and monitoring to verify that this compliance has been met. Gronn sees this as a form of customisation in the production of school leaders. It would follow then according to Gronn’s analogy that current leadership standards are encouraging less diversity and autonomy in leadership styles. This seems to go against one of the key principals underlying SBM, that diversity in education is good (Brown, 1992).

This highlights the perception that policy generators (and standards setters) have become increasingly disconnected from policy receivers (Bowe et al., 1992). The standards are seen to be a way of regulating principals’ practices and granting less authority and less room for individual agency; they appear to be an instrument by which authorities are customising their needs for leadership. This view is shared by Thrupp (2005) in his critique on the NCSL which he claims is being used as a
conduit of government policy into schools and is ignoring alternative, critical perspectives.

Gronn (2003), like West-Burnham (1997), does, however, point out that the discourse in both the USA and UK standards is prominently on leadership rather than on management or administration. Yet, the discourse of leadership standards tends to be individualistic and transformational and focuses on a hero paradigm. This emphasis on super-leadership is at odds with current organisational practice. From a theoretical perspective this contrasts with Sergiovanni’s (1984) view of the importance of spreading an organisation’s leadership capacity. From a practical point of view, ‘heroic leadership’ does not meet demands of the increased workloads of principals in SBM schools. One person, no matter how talented, cannot possible be both efficient manager and educational leader (Grubb and Flessa, 2006).

The logical conclusion must be that new managerialism in its redesign of school leadership is so pervasive that school leaders have not been liberated from bureaucracies, as advocates of SBM had espoused. Rather, they have been restricted by centrally determined prescriptions and their agency has been significantly constrained. The demands placed on principals under decentralisation reforms have become so much larger and more complex, the restrictions and sanctions they face so imposing that the opportunities school leaders have for transformative agency have been minimised (Gronn, 2003).

An additional factor which ought to be taken into account is the contextual and individual nature of school leadership. Bolam (2004) issues a ‘health warning’ with regard to the NCSL’s advocating a transformational model of leadership as he claims it is unrealistic to expect all leaders to be transformational. He refers to the contextual nature of educational leadership and suggests that “…it should also be made clear that school leaders should exercise professional judgement in deciding which prescriptive theory to adopt in their own particular circumstances” (p. 258).

To sum up, decentralisation reforms have not just changed the language of educational leadership, but there has been a shift in the nature of responsibilities assigned to principals. The managerial division seems to have turned principals into
the managers of the conditions in which teaching occurs and has distanced them from teaching. It is important to bear in mind Southworth's (1999) observation that the nature of school leadership is influenced more by policy makers and less by practitioners and academic theorists. He notes the dialectical process in which traditional notions and expectations of headship are integrated with new emphases emanating from policy makers. The role and practice of primary headship, he asserts, is influenced by principals’ prior conceptions and by external demands.

The following section relates to the concept of role perception which is central to this study. The concept of role is defined and alternative typologies of headship responses to decentralisation reforms are presented.

3.7 Definition of Role as Used in This Study

The concept of role has been discussed at length in educational literature and research and it is necessary to define what is meant by the role of the principal in this study. Hargreaves' (1972) view has been adopted that a person's role is more than that person's designated position in a society's or an organisation's hierarchy with a detailed job description which outlines responsibilities, accountabilities and tasks. It also entails responding in appropriate ways that meet the expectations of the people with whom that person interacts. This is called the role set. In this research, a principal's immediate role set would include the MOE District Inspector, the LEA, auxiliary staff, teaching staff, parents and pupils. Principals may seek to extend their role to the wider community and "make a role" rather than "take the role" offered to them (Ribbins, 1985, p. 356). According to Rutherford (2005), playing a role includes not only the actions of an individual but also the attitudes and emotions that underpin those actions. A role then is "a dynamic rather than a static concept that shapes both the individual and their actions, generally in an unconscious and unreflecting manner" (Rutherford, 2005, p. 279).

Traditionally the roles of principals and primary school principals in particular have been described as pivotal, proprietal, powerful (Southworth, 1995, 1999) and paternalistic (Coulson, 1976, 1985). Hoyle (1986), based on the work of Bacharach
and Lawler (1980), defined two types of power; authority which stems from the legal right to make decisions governing others and influence which stems from the capacity to shape decisions by informal and non-authoritative means. The four bases of power according to Hoyle (1986) are:

1. coercive: the ability to apply sanctions;
2. remunerative: the control of material resources;
3. normative: the control of symbolic rewards;
4. knowledge: access to information as a basis of power.

As one of the principles underpinning SBM is to grant more autonomy to principals and thereby more power, as defined by Hoyle (1986), it is worthwhile to examine if indeed principals perceive themselves as being more or less powerful and autonomous in relation to their role sets. It is of value to examine if they believe they have in fact been given more legal authority and can exert more influence under SBM.

It would be prudent to examine if Southworth's (2006) claim that school leaders in the 20th century were “proprietal, pivotal and powerful” (p. 20) and that headship in the 21st century is now “distributed, differentiated and diverse” (p. 20) is true for the principals in this study. The evidence Southworth provides to support this assertion seems rather limited and anecdotal in nature and highly context bound. The conditions under which principals are expected to work in the Israeli context may prevent this change taking place. Principals do not respond in a uniform manner to the tensions and challenges created by the new external policy demands, the various responses principals may adopt are presented in the next section.
3.7.1 Differential responses of principals

The manner in which principals respond to educational reforms is dependent on many variables which have been documented in the literature and various typologies have been suggested. Some of these responses are presented in the following section.

**Typologies of principals coping with change**

Grace (1995) identifies three typologies of headteachers coping with change resulting from decentralisation reforms as follows:

- Headteacher-managers are strongly managerialist in professional orientation, rejoice in their perceived empowerment and are confident about new working relations with stakeholders and the success of their schools in a new competitive culture.

- Headteacher-professionals are concerned about the loss of professional relationships and values in a new management culture. They are concerned about their distance from classroom teaching and the effect on collegial relations.

- Headteacher-resistors are unhappy in their role and seek ways to oppose and subvert aspects of reforms considered detrimental.

Day et al. (2000) classify three roles principals may adopt when externally imposed policy directives clash with either the school’s internal needs or the values of the headteacher and staff. They may adopt the role of the “subcontractor” (Day et al., 2000, p. 156) and thereby become another link in the chain of policy development to policy implementation. This limits their autonomy and decision-making and may undermine their moral authority with staff, or they can adopt the role of the “subversive” (p. 156) working against the implementation of external changes. This may taint their reputation as moral leaders with integrity as it may be accompanied by intrigue and deception. The third option is that of a “values-led contingency” (p. 166) model of headship where school leaders are neither subcontractors nor subversives but mediate external changes in a way which integrates the values within their communities.
Webb (2005) questions whether seemingly conflicting theoretical models of leadership can be combined in practice. She concludes that, although Day et al. (2000) found headteachers that were both transactional and transformative, true pedagogical leadership, which emphasises social relationships based on “…loyalty, fidelity, kinship, sense of identity, obligation, duty, responsibility and reciprocity” (Sergiovanni, 1998, p. 44) rather than on the application of rewards and penalties cannot be realised in an instructional context where the focus, nature and extent of teacher learning is prescribed.

**Personality and responses to change**

As a central theme explored in this study is in what ways, if any, principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy; it is perhaps worthwhile to examine personality types in relation to their responses to change. Kirton (1976) distinguishes between two types of personalities, the ‘adaptor’ and the ‘innovator’. The adaptor prefers to improve things while working within the given paradigm or structure and is characterised by precision, reliability, efficiency, discipline and conformity. This type adapts well to bureaucratic frameworks and to accepting norms while experiencing difficulty with situations of change.

The innovator prefers to do things differently, to challenge the existing paradigm or structure. The innovator examines problems in a unique manner, does not respect traditional frameworks, initiates changes and adapts well to them. This is not an either/or situation and the work of Sorrentino et al. (1984) adds an additional ‘type’, those who have a tolerance to ambiguity.

Another classification of principals according to types which may be useful in this study in analysing how principals respond to their changed relationships with the members of their immediate role sets is developed by Harris-Aran (2001) as ‘the dependent administrator’, the ‘juggler’ and the ‘leader’. These types relate to principals’ interactions with their role set and their perceptions of their roles within a restructured system. Although the focus of Harris-Aran’s study was school inspectors in Israel, the insights offered on principals may be helpful in the analysis of data and forming a conceptual framework. According to Harris-Aran, the dependent
administrator does not perceive oneself as the sole leader of the school and sees the principal as hierarchically under the school inspector. The juggler sees the principal as both a politician and an acrobat in dealings with the external stakeholders such as the MOE and the local LEA. The third type, the leader, is the undisputed leader of the school and uses the MOE district inspector as a rubber stamp for procedural matters.

One of the issues examined in this study is the extent to which principals feel they have the requisite competencies such as knowledge, skills and values for the changes in their role brought about by SBM. Hence the typology developed by Law et al. (2003) may be useful in understanding how primary school principals' values influence their perception of their new role. The five principal types identified are:

1. Pacifists – subscribe to “the values of harmony, tolerance and submission” (Law et al., p. 511). They tend to attempt to maintain good relationships with staff and superiors. They aspire to pleasing those in authority.

2. Progressive mentors – are inclined to implementing extensive reforms and have a commitment to empowering teachers. Both the accomplishment of tasks and building a school vision and relationships are of importance. Externally prescribed reforms are seen as opportunities for growth and not as threats.

3. Philosopher mentors – have a strong commitment to universally accepted principles of ethics. They differ from progressive mentors as their main concern is ideals and principles and not the tasks itself. They are reluctant to comply with directives which are opposed to their educational philosophies.

4. Pragmatists – see reforms as opportunities for advancing their preferred goals. They are not concerned with high ethical principles and comply with external directives and act “politically” (p. 518).

5. Eclectics – tend to avoid problems, have no fixed pattern about how they deal with problems and their perceptions change over time.
3.8 Generation of Research Questions

The literature review has highlighted the far reaching consequences of decentralisation reforms such as SBM on the role of school leadership and in, particular, on the role of primary school principals. The argument underpinning this thesis is that those in charge of implementing and interpreting policy, those held accountable for educational outputs, ought to have their voices heard. More attention needs to be focused on how these principals are adapting to the transition from a centralised to a decentralised system and the concomitant demands placed upon them by SBM. Although the research questions have been explored by others, what distinguishes this research is that it intends to examine how SBM is perceived by primary school principals in a major urban location in Israel. Findings from other Western countries have informed the formulation of the research questions and may shed light on how principals in this study perceive their role within SBM. However, it is important to stress once again Dimmock and Walker’s (1997; 2000a; 2000b) warning regarding the importation of educational policy without adapting it to the local culture.

As principals are positioned at the interface between policy setters and policy implementation, between the individual school site and the external agencies which determine educational policy (OECD, 2001), it is of significance to assess both their awareness of the policy context and their responses to policy directives. Educational leaders are not passive implementers of policy as their actions are influenced by their personal values, resources allocated to them, the power relations between stakeholders and their perceptions of externally prescribed policy (Bell and Stevenson, 2006). Policies can be seen as operational statements of values and intents which may be contested in the stages of implementation, “policy formation does not end with the legislative moment” (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 13).

As policy is received by policy implementers, in this study, as SBM is received by principals, it may be met with “resistance, accommodation, subterfuge and conformity” (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 13). This has led to the formulation of the following central question as the focus for this research:
How do primary school principals perceive their role of leadership in a context of SBM in Israel?

A key feature of leadership is making sense of educational policy (Day et al., 2000) as school leaders are not simply passive receivers of policy but exercise their influence at the school level and can be seen as “both policy implementers and policy generators” (Bell and Stevenson, 2006, p. 9). SBM is clearly a contentious educational policy. Therefore, it is vital to understand how those on the receiving end of this policy, those expected to implement policy and, as is evident in the literature, for whom the ramifications of these structural reforms have the greatest implications, interpret this policy and perceive these changes to their roles. This has led to the formulation of the first specific research question which has guided the data generating process:

1. What are principals’ perceptions of the reasons for the introduction of SBM into the Israeli education system?

The research evidence and conceptual literature has revealed dramatic role changes (Fullan, 2001; Whitaker, 2003; Lyons and Algozzine, 2006) for principals leading schools in decentralised systems, leading to the formulation of the second research question:

2. In what ways, if any, do principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy?

As principals have been depicted as the gatekeepers of innovation (Wallace, 1990) or the key players (NTFAE, 2004, 2005) charged with interpreting, presenting to their staffs and implementing SBM, it is deemed worthwhile to examine their perceptions of the policy and to explore their beliefs as to their possessing the required skills, knowledge base and values required for their new expanded roles. This is examined through the data generated from the responses to the third question:
3. To what extent do principals feel they have the requisite competencies (knowledge, skills and values) for the changes in their role brought about by SBM?

Policy makers have set standards for headship training and paid increased attention to headship training programmes (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1992; Whitty et al., 1989; Bush, 2004). This activity, directed at headship training programmes and licensure requirements coupled with the suggestion that additional training be included into principals’ accountabilities (Cranston, 2002) over and above their already swelled workload, has led the researcher to examine if indeed such training programmes contribute to principals’ leadership capacities. These concerns have led to the formulation of the fourth research question:

4. What experiences contribute to the development of leadership capacities required for SBM?

As the MOE in Israel is still grappling with the structural reform of education and the call for strengthening responsibilities, accountabilities and autonomy to principals has not subsided, (NTFAE, 2005) it seems prudent to explore not only how the present implementation of SBM is perceived by these principals, but also what they perceive the future to hold. This has led to the formulation of the last research question:

5. In what ways, if any, do principals believe their role will change in the future?

Summary and Conclusion

As educational policy is clearly not a linear process but is continuously being made and remade during the interpretation of policy texts and their implementation at individual school sites (Bowe et al., 1992) it is of importance to investigate whether principals in Israel are aware of the values underpinning SBM as well as the economic, social and political factors which led to this policy being adopted in Israel. As the literature review has shown, decentralisation reforms are not uncontested,
therefore, it is of significance to explore whether Israeli principals challenge or embrace these reforms.

Furthermore, SBM as implemented in Israel has taken on a different, more modest form to that implemented in other countries. Consequently, it is of importance to examine if principals believe they have the power to influence policy decisions and have been given the agency to implement their own initiatives and have become more autonomous or if they have feel they have been restricted and confined by the external policy environment.

Educational policy is never value free (Bell and Stevenson, 2006) and change has both winners and losers, the values of school leaders' influence how they respond to these role changes and how they position themselves between the external offices mandating change and the internal pressures emanating from within their more immediate role sets.

This study aims to throw light on Israeli primary school principals' perceptions of policy implementation and to increase understanding as to how these school leaders positioned at the interface between policy and practice behave in a new policy environment and thus contribute to the existing body of knowledge of the changing nature of school leadership. The next chapter will discuss the methodology used in this study.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter begins by restating the study's objectives and research questions as they emerged from the literature review. It then discusses the nature of educational research. The theoretical paradigmatic context of the methodological framework and the research strategy is presented by outlining the considerations in choice of research tools and research design. It then reviews sampling considerations and the process whereby the research instruments were refined. This is followed by an explanation of the methods of data analysis and discussion of the concepts of validity, trustworthiness, generalisability and limitations of the study. Finally ethical considerations are discussed.

4.1 The Research Aim

The aim of this study is to increase understanding about how primary school principals in Israel perceive the impact of SBM on their practices as school leaders. In Israel there is a historically heavily centralised education system promoting a shift to SBM. The argument underpinning this thesis is that those in charge of implementing this policy, the principals, deserve to have their voices heard. There appears to be an ever-increasing gap between policy makers and “policy receivers” (Bowen et al, 1992, p. 6), where the voice of those charged with implementing and interpreting educational policy is seldom heard. This study aims to give voice to the principals, the implementers of educational policy, within the Israeli context.
Additional objectives of this research are to:

Examine the attitudes and perceptions of primary school principals in a context of SBM in Israel.
Explore how principals perceive the appropriateness of educational policy reforms imported into Israel.
Find out how principals' perceive SBM is working within a largely centralised system.
Enlighten stakeholders as to the changing role of principals as perceived by them in facilitating SBM

The central research question of this study is as follows:

How do primary school principals perceive leadership in a context of SBM in Israel?

The study and especially the data-gathering process were guided by the following questions:

1. What are principals’ perceptions of the reasons for the introduction of SBM into the Israeli education system?
2. In what ways, if any, do principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy?
3. To what extent do principals feel they have the requisite competencies (knowledge, skills and values) for the changes in their role brought about by SBM?
4. What experiences contribute to the development of leadership capacities required for SBM?
5. In what ways, if any, do principals believe their role will change in the future?
4.2 The Nature of Educational Research

Educational research is an approach to inquiry that is rooted in a number of often competing research traditions and widely conflicting views as to the ways in which we view the education world. These different views extend to the purposes and desired outcomes of educational research. Bassey (1999) defines educational research as:

Critical inquiry aimed at informing educational judgments and decisions in order to improve educational action. This is the kind of value-laden research that should have immediate relevance to teachers and policy makers and is itself educational because of its stated intention to 'inform' (Bassey, 1999, p. 39).

It follows then that educational research is not simply research about education, but research which has an explicit, articulated educational purpose (Nixon and Sikes, 2003). Pring (2000) claims that the nature of educational research has been redefined through the use of metaphors from management which embody the values of efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly, says Pring, the current discourse of educational management and research is preoccupied with ends to be objectively measured. Educational research should, according to Pring, address the practice of educating and “the problems as they are perceived by those who are engaged in it” (Pring, 2000, p. 30). Though Pring refers mainly to teachers and learners as being the desired focus for educational research, his viewpoint that the focus for educational research should be those engaged in education has been adopted in this study. In undertaking this research, a major goal has been to develop insights which would be of significance for principals and would address issues that they acknowledged and dealt with. As such, the principals of primary schools as key players in the education system have been selected as a worthy focus for this study.
4.3 General Approach/The Paradigm

This research aims to give voice to the principals implementing government policy and thereby develop a theory as to principals' perceptions of the changes in their roles and their relationships with other stakeholders within the education system in Israel. Most notably their relationships with the MOE as represented by the Central Office, the District inspectorate, the LEA, teachers and support staff, parents and the community in which the school is situated are examined.

Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasise that it is important for researchers to make their biases explicit and to state their preferences clearly. Within this context, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) stress the importance of understanding and internalising the philosophical stance of the researcher – claiming that it is this which ultimately shapes the research.

The concept of paradigms is useful in understanding the set of assumptions a researcher holds which shape the way problems are approached, the methods used to collect and analyse data, the questions they choose to ask and the very nature of their investigation. Broadly speaking, positivism and interpretivism are the two overarching perspectives that shape research. There are three basic questions researchers need to ask as they endeavour to understand how we come to know what we know (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Shkedi 2004a; 2005).

1. The **ontological** question: What is the nature of reality?
2. The **epistemological** question: What is the relationship of the knower to the known?
3. The **methodological** question: What are the ways of finding out knowledge?

The first paradigmatic research question is related to the branch of philosophy concerned with issues of one's perceptions about the essence of being (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). The way one understands reality affects the way we do research.
Adherents to the positivist paradigm, the school of philosophy developed by August Comte in the 1830s, address the **ontological** question by asserting that there is an objective reality and the aim of positivist inquiry would be to describe this observable and objective reality as accurately as possible. Interpretivism differs from the positivist tradition in that it attempts to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people and emphasises the interpretative understanding of human interaction. What underpins this tradition is the belief that reality is not waiting out there to be discovered but it is a construct in which people understand reality in different ways (Morrison, 2003, p. 17). So, ontologically, interpretivism denies the existence of an objective reality, asserting instead that “realities are social constructs of the mind and that there exists as many constructions as there are individuals (although clearly many constructions will be shared)” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 43).

The **epistemological** question is addressed by positivists as by stating that it is possible to separate the self from the phenomenon being investigated (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Interpretivists on the other hand, assert that it is impossible to maintain an objective self and separate the researcher from those being investigated. “The viewer then is part of what is viewed rather than separate from it. What a viewer sees shapes what he or she will define, measure and analyse” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524).

The third paradigm question is often called the **methodological** question. If one assumes a scientific ontology and an objective epistemology, it would follow logically to adopt a positivistic-quantitative methodology. Having assumed a relativist or interpretivist ontology, believing that realities are socially constructed, in this study the principals’ perceptions of their roles constructs this reality and an interactive epistemology, the researcher in this study tries to understand both the social context and the “minds of the participants” (Sciarrà, 1999, p. 43), the use of a qualitative methodology in this study would seem more appropriate.
4.4 Qualitative Methodology

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) make a clear distinction between quantitative and qualitative research, placing the former in the “positivist tradition” and the latter in the realm of “phenomenological approach to inquiry” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 6). They point out that researchers who adopt this approach to qualitative research seek to focus “on understanding the meaning events have for persons being studied” (1994, p. 5). While Taylor and Bogdan explain:

> Qualitative methods are humanistic... When we reduce people’s words and acts to statistical equations, we lose sight of the human side of social life. When we study people qualitatively we get to know them personally and experience what they experience in their daily struggles in society. We learn about the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing his destiny in a world too often at variance with his hopes and ideals (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 6).

This clear distinction between the two paradigms is rather simplistic and there is a tendency in educational research to take the combined approach and link qualitative to quantitative data. The issue of paradigm shifts is discussed in Miles and Huberman (1994), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and in Morrison (2003). However, the purpose of this research, the examination of principals’ role perceptions, would not be enhanced by using such a combined approach.

These philosophical issues enter into this argument as, when asking the question “How do principals perceive their roles?” the researcher is implying a separation of ‘perception’ from ‘is’ – this is in itself a philosophical issue reflecting the stance of this researcher; role perception of school leadership cannot be considered an objective reality to be observed and measured. A further philosophical issue that underpins this research is that, ultimately, this representation can only be the researcher’s own representation of the experience and perception of those researched. This cannot be compared with the actual world. At the very least, this study aims to provide a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of principals’ perceptions of their
leadership roles in primary schools in Israel. At best, it will have developed a theory
about their perceptions of how SBM has impacted their roles. Flawed though it might
be, the resulting thesis will have contributed to the researcher’s personal concept of
perceptions of educational leadership and will contribute to other educators in the
Israeli context and in other contexts who may find this thesis of an instructive nature.
The perceptions of principals are by no means of concern only to the individual
principal but as will be demonstrated, principals interact with a wide body of
stakeholders and hold an enormously influential position within the educational
system.

The approach to qualitative research in this study has been further influenced by
Guba and Lincoln (1989), who have written:

‘Truth’ is a matter of consensus among informed and sophisticated
constructors, not of correspondence with an objective reality.

Facts have no meaning except within some value framework; hence there
cannot be an “objective” assessment of any proposition.

Interventions are not stable; when they are introduced into a particular
context they will be at least as affected (changed) by that context as they are
likely to affect the context.

Evaluators are subjective partners with stakeholders in the literal creation of
the data (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 44).

Burgess (1985) further outlines theoretical characteristics of qualitative studies. In
his discussion, he brings up additional issues which underpin the theoretical
orientation of the present study.

The researcher works in a natural setting. The main research instrument is the
researcher who attempts to obtain a participant’s account of the situation under
study.
The research is concerned with social processes and with meaning. The theoretical orientation is principally derived from symbolic interactionism whereby studies are conducted with a view to understanding the way in which participants perceive situations (Burgess, 1985, p. 9).

These principles are discussed in the following sections.

4.5 Case Study Approach

There are many different approaches to qualitative research. This researcher has chosen the case study as an appropriate approach as "it is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 21), in this case, the study of primary school principals leading schools in a restructured education system. The case study allows the researcher to seek insight, discovery and interpretation as opposed to hypothesis testing. The characteristics suggested by Merriam as being essential properties of the qualitative case study make this approach a suitable one for this study. Namely, its particularistic nature as this research aims to focus on a specific group of principals, primary school principals, functioning within the confines of a specific framework, SBM in a specific city in Israel. The second property identified by Merriam, the descriptive nature of the data produced in that the end product is a rich "thick" description of the phenomenon. The third property is heuristic in that they illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation; this is of course the intention in this study, to gain insights into leadership roles. Bassey (2003) proposes a similar definition of educational case studies; it differs in the addition of the stipulation that it is an enquiry into "interesting aspects of an educational activity..." (p. 109, original emphasis) and that it should "inform the judgements and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers" (p. 109). The philosophical assumptions of the case study are drawn from qualitative research as it is inductive, focusing on process, understanding and interpretation rather than experimental research paradigms. The generation of a new theory of leadership roles rather than the verification of a predetermined hypothesis is the intent of this researcher's undertaking.
4.5.1 Strengths and limitations of case study

All research approaches have strengths and limitations and the key ones are addressed here. The strength of the case study is that it is anchored in real life situations and presents "a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon" (Merriam, 1988, p. 32). It can offer insights which expand the reader's perceptions. These can be seen as hypotheses, which can advance a field's knowledge base. Consequently, it is a particularly appealing design for educational research and can be useful in informing educational policy. Case studies reveal how people interact within the contexts of situations and settings. However, as Merriam aptly points out, the strengths of the approach also point to its weaknesses. The product might be seen as too lengthy and detailed for policy makers to read and use, however, the amount of description and detail is left up to the researcher's discretion. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1981) warn that readers can be seduced into thinking that they are accounts of the larger picture "when in fact they are but a part - a slice of life" (p. 377). An additional factor to be considered is the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and data analysis. As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) observe, case study research "is one of the few modes of scientific study that admit the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame" (p. 95). It is essential then that the researcher is aware of and explicit about his or her biases. This limitation can also be seen as strength if the researcher adopts Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion that the methods used "are credible, dependable and replicable in qualitative terms" (p. 2, original emphasis). Further issues relating to the limitations involving reliability, validity and generalisability are discussed later in this chapter.
4.6 The Collection and Representation of Data

In this thesis the researcher continued to participate in the daily inspectorial activity of the Greater Spring Heights District while conducting this research. The principals interviewed were contacted at home in the evenings and not during the course of their working day. This was done in order to avoid the impression that they were being contacted by their superior which would suggest that they were obligated to concede to the request to be interviewed. It was clearly stated that they were being approached in regard to a personal matter, the researcher’s studies and not one which was work related.

The research questions were identified after a comprehensive literature search and discussions with experts in the field of educational leadership. The interview schedule was designed based on the research questions. These were discussed at length with colleagues in the MOE in Israel and academics at the University of Leicester in order to ensure that the data generated would enable the researcher to answer the research questions and were checked for interviewer bias. Three pilot interviews were conducted, the questions were then revised and reworded, some added and others deleted. For example, one of the questions asked in the pilot interviews, “Do you have the requisite competencies for the changes in your role?” was reworded as it did not produce a range of responses. Clearly, people found it difficult to admit lacking the required skills to perform their job. This was reworded to, “What knowledge, skills and values are required for principals in school based management?” In the pilot interviews principals were not asked about the implications of the NTFAE as their recommendations had not yet been published. During the fieldwork, the interim report was published with recommendations for changing principals’ job descriptions and affording them greater autonomy. This was then added to the interview questions. The assemblage of the research and the interview questions are discussed at greater length below. In the coming paragraphs more theoretical issues related to the collection and representation of data are addressed.
4.6.1 Interviews

For the purpose of this research it was decided to rely on interviews because they are facilitative and effective in accessing and subsequently interpreting information that pertains to peoples' thoughts, feelings and perceptions. The researcher agrees with Patton's (1980) observation that the interview is the best way to find out "what is in and on someone else's mind" (p. 196). As the intent was to find out how principals feel their roles to have changed since the introduction of SBM and to what extent their relationship with other stakeholders has changed, matters which are both personal and sensitive; interviews offered the best opportunity for accessing the information required. The type and style of interviewing adopted evolved through a combination of reading and reflecting on the research literature and practical experience. A brief history of the interview as a tool for social researchers is described by Fontana and Frey (2000). They describe the interview as no longer limited to social science researchers and refer to the number of scholars that have called the United States "the interview society" (p. 646). They describe the interview as a routine occurrence, a part of every day life. Although the interview is a pervasive part of our lives one must not ignore the contextual, societal and interpersonal factors which come into play (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Silverman, 2002). The suggestion offered by Freebody (2003) to regard interviews as a "data generating method" (p. 137) rather than a "data-gathering" activity seems appropriate when taking into account their interactional nature.

The potential of interviewing in educational research has been confirmed by numerous scholars (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Atkinson, 1990; Hammersley, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

Cohen et al. (2000) point to the great number of types of interviews. They suggest the researcher see this range as being set along a continuum, differing in the openness of their purpose, the degree of structure, the extent to whether they are exploratory or hypothesis testing and whether they seek description or interpretation and to the extent they are focused on cognitive processes or emotional processes. The issue they claim is of
...‘fitness for purpose’; ...the more one wishes to acquire unique, non-standardised, personalised information about how individuals view the world, the more one veers towards qualitative, open-ended, unstructured interviewing (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 270).

As the objective of this research is to explore principals’ role perception, the choice of interviews is especially fitting. This researcher has adopted Kvale’s (1996) metaphor of the interviewer as a traveller. This metaphor refers to a constructivist understanding of knowledge in which the “interview is literally an *inter* view, an inter-change of views between two persons...” (p. 14, original emphasis), knowledge is then “constructed *inter* the views of the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 15, original emphasis).

**The use of semi-structured in-depth interviews**

This researcher chose to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews which were structured around a set of key issues that the literature had identified as related to the role of primary school principals within SBM. The use of an open-interview strategy enabled the researcher to better expose the respondents’ personal perspectives, deeper thoughts, emotions and desires (Bromley, 1986; Patton, 1990). This less structured approach led to interviews that were more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. This allowed for the respondents’ views to unfold rather than the predetermined views of the researcher. However, the researcher was careful not to let the interviewee determine the content of the interview. Prompts were used to allow the researcher to distinguish among what is important or unimportant to principals (Drever, 1995). Probes were used to encourage the interviewees to describe their perceptions in detail and to enable to researcher to seek further clarification.

A combination of strategies were used for interviewing in order to provide maximum validity and reliability as these terms are used by Hammersley (1992). Strategies used involved combining a prompt-protocol for semi-structured interviews to ensure some comparability, while enabling interviewees to freely express their beliefs on
issues which they deemed significant. The same protocol was used in each interview in order to provide a base line from which interpretations could later be established. All interviews were recorded with the interviewees’ permission and translated and transcribed onto computerised text files which later formed part of the data set. While electronically recording the interviews, notes were taken in a notebook wherein the researcher jotted down comments pertaining to non verbal interactions such as when an interviewee raised eyebrows, pounded on the table, smiled and so on. These notes were continually referred back to during the transcription stage of the data. The importance of paying close attention to non-verbal cues such as pauses and body language is discussed at length by Cohen et al. (2000), Silverman (2002) and Walford (2001).

The tape-recording itself is not an accurate record of a conversation . . . a tape-recording only records the audio part of the conversation. It is often necessary to be able to see what is going on to interpret the words. The physical context in which the interview takes place and the complex body language between the participants are all lost. The tape transcription takes us one step further away from the original event. The pace, accent, accentuation, tone and melody of the speech are all lost – even the most thorough transcription cannot capture them all. The conversation is reduced to symbols on a page (Walford, 2001, p. 94).

It is of importance to note that the researcher used discretion during the course of each interview. In some, not all the questions were asked, while in others, it was deemed that interviewees were forwarding important personal accounts which anticipated the actual prompt questions. The respondents were keen to provide examples and anecdotal accounts in order to explain their viewpoints. They were not goaded with questions or cut short in their responses, but rather were encouraged to talk, share thoughts and allow their feelings to show. The researcher encouraged introspection with the use of eye contact, nodding, the use of fillers such as “yes” and “ah hah” and specific prompts such as “Can you tell me more about...?” The schedules were designed as a framework upon which to build the interviews and not in order to approach the interviews with preconceived ideas as to school leadership. The intention of the researcher was to listen and learn.
The interview schedule and the research questions

The interviews first focused on background questions relating to the principals’ age, academic qualifications and length of service in the education system. Information was also gathered on variables such as school size and the social-economic status (SES) of the school. The SES of a school in Israel refers to the socio-economic background of the pupils in a school. A pupil is defined as disadvantaged according to the level of education of the father, ethnicity, number of years in the country and number of siblings. This was done to set the respondents at ease and also to later examine if these factors influenced their perceptions of their roles (The complete interview schedule can be found in appendix I).

Question 1 and the subsequent prompts relate to the first research question and were intended to gather information pertaining to principals’ perceptions on the wider issues of education policy in Israel as well as to ascertain if they had changed their views of SBM since its initial inception.

Questions 2, 6, 8 and 9, together with the subsequent prompts, focus on role changes since the introduction of SBM as well as changes in relationships with other stakeholders, the second research question. Issues such as school ownership and hierarchy which were found to be relevant in research conducted by Gibton et al., (2000) were also raised.

Question 3 relates to the third research question and covers the competencies such as knowledge, skills and values necessary for principals leading SBM schools.

Question 4 and the accompanying prompts connect to the fourth research question which explores the nature of experiences, both past and present, formal and informal which contribute to the development of leadership capacities.

Questions 5 and 7 and the subsequent prompts all relate to research question 5 that examines principals’ attitudes towards recommendations of policy makers for the future.
Question 10 assessed the respondents’ view on the worthiness of the study.

The last two questions - 11 and 12 - were asked in order to ensure that the most salient issues as perceived by the respondents had been covered and to obtain the names of other possible candidates for future interviews.

**Selection of the Interview Sample**

The fieldwork for the thesis was carried out over a period of 21 months, from January 2004 to October 2005. Consequently, the fieldwork proceeded concurrently with carrying out the researcher’s normal duties as an English inspector. The significance of this is discussed in the section on researcher relations with respondents.

The first sampling decision was to select the city of Spring Heights (a fictitious name) as a city typical of the mainstream, secular Jewish population in urban Israel. This is the largest city in the Greater Spring Heights District and has over 60 primary schools, all of which have moved to SBM. It is geographically large enough to include differential socio-economic groups and as such can be seen to be representative of mainstream, secular, Jewish education in Israel. The second sampling decision was to focus on primary school principals currently leading SBM schools, who led schools prior to the introduction of SBM in the city of Spring Heights and so have a basis for comparison as to how, if at all, their leadership roles have changed. The decision to focus on primary school principals was made as, traditionally, principals of secondary schools have always enjoyed more autonomy than their colleagues since many secondary schools are owned by private networks or fall under the jurisdiction of the LEA.

The principals chosen to provide the first body of data were selected according to the procedures of purposive sampling as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 201) in order to provide as much range and variation as possible. The first three principals interviewed were identified by the researcher through consultations with other stakeholders within the city of Spring Heights. The Head of the Primary School
Education Department in the LEA was asked to suggest the names of three principals who fit the criteria for this research and who she felt would have clear opinions on their role as a principal. The same was asked of three general inspectors working for the MOE in the city of Spring Heights. On receiving names of three principals from at least three stakeholders the interviewing process proceeded. As the aim of purposive sampling is not to generalise, each respondent was then asked to provide the name of a colleague who they believed held views which differed from their own. This was done in order to provide maximum variation (Dimmock and Walker, 1997). The 12 principals interviewed represented the total population of those who fitted the sampling criteria and were willing to be interviewed.
4.7 Researcher Relations with Respondents

This researcher can in some ways be viewed as an insider researcher as although not herself a primary school principal, the researcher is in fact a member of the inspectorate of the MOE in the same district, the same workplace, as the principals studied. My position as a researcher is a complex one. Polanyi’s (1958) theory of tacit knowledge underpins my position, as I believe that my tacit knowledge of the domain of educational leadership is substantial and will doubtless shape the report I communicate. I have accumulated this tacit knowledge in my own workplace – I come to this study with the knowledge and experience gathered on a daily basis over 26 years of teaching and advisory teaching combined with the last 11 years of working as an inspector for the MOE. My working life has contributed inside knowledge and perspective to my role as a researcher. Life history methodology is an accepted method of documentation of social phenomena (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995). Another researcher would have told a different story and this narrative, like all qualitative research, is essentially subjective, with the researcher’s voice – whether stated or not – omnipresent.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) build on this concept in their coining of the human-as-instrument concept. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explain this:

Human-as-instrument simply means that it is the person with all of her or his skills, experience, background and knowledge as well as biases which is the primary, if not the exclusive source of all data collection and analysis (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.46)

4.7.1 Insider research - some problems and solutions

Problems inherent in the researcher as an insider are noted at different levels. In the domain of ethics the researcher may become privy to sensitive information as a result of conducting the research. This has the potential to jeopardise the participants in their workplace and/or hamper the process of the research undertaken. The status of the researcher as an inspector and her position held in relation to principals must be taken into account. It is of importance to note that the researcher is an inspector for
English Language Studies in the Greater Spring Heights District, a district comprising over 17 cities, of the MOE in Israel and as such is not directly responsible for the hiring and firing of principals. This narrows the hierarchical status between interviewees and the researcher and should ensure that they would speak more freely than if speaking to a general inspector of schools who is superior to them in the educational hierarchy. However, in order to lessen the risk of jeopardising the participants’ career prospects and to ensure that the participants speak freely, no principals without tenure were interviewed. As the researcher is a member of the evaluation committee for new principals this would heighten the risk that information they devolve could have career ramifications for them.

While there can never be true objectivity in data interpretation, (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Stronach and Maclure, 1997; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), an insider researcher will possess a more reliable ‘lie detector’ and will be in a good position, if systematic and rigorous, to provide at the very least a rich approximation of the reality the researcher is trying to portray. In this dissertation none of the interviews were conducted from the stance of the first-hand participant as principals, although working in the same district as the researcher, do not belong to the researcher’s immediate work group. This has two advantages:

1. It cuts down a good deal of researcher influence and informant bias.
2. It enabled the researcher to gain perspectives on school leadership from a vantage point other than her own as an inspector.

Although the voice of the researcher is present throughout the thesis, attempts have been made to minimise this. Nonetheless it should be acknowledged as an important research tool. More importantly the respondents, who have provided the data and whose voices the researcher has aimed to make heard, should be introduced to the reader. A table providing background information on the principals, their years of administrative experience, number of principalships and information about their schools is included in appendix II. The following account describes the selection of the principals and the manner in which they were contacted.
The principals

Twelve principals were interviewed in depth. Eight were interviewed at their schools at the end of the working day when there were less interruptions and fewer children and teachers around. Two were interviewed in their homes and two were interviewed in the researcher’s home. This decision as to where to hold the interview was given to the principals. They all were willing to be interviewed and to give up at least two hours of their time. Some interviews lasted close to three hours as principals asked to read through documents together with the researcher. Three principals were interviewed a second time in order to ascertain whether their perceptions had changed on being transferred to a school in a different socio economic area. This was deemed significant as one of the core themes which emerged during the analysis was differential perceptions towards parents in high and low SES schools. Prior to the interviews, the principals were not known to the researcher socially, although all work in the same district. Working relations with the principals continued after the interviews and possibly even improved. The researcher was perhaps perceived as being more committed to her work in the MOE as a result of undertaking research. In addition, the fact that the focus of the research was school leadership, rather than issues of language acquisition, the researcher’s direct field of expertise, was seen by all as worthy of admiration and commendation. It would be naïve to assume that hierarchical issues did not come into play and that the fact that a colleague had become a researcher did not influence the interviews. However, the researcher is confident that what was told to her, in confidence, was as candid as the respondents wished to get. There were times when they asked that the tape recorder be switched off as they felt they were volunteering information which could be seen as particularly subversive or personal. The mere fact that this information had been volunteered reinforced the belief that the obstacles of the hierarchical nature of the relationship had been overcome.
4.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

4.8.1 Principles of data analysis
The following stages describe the method used in order to transform the raw data gleaned from the interviews into a presentable text. The method used is based on Shkedi’s model (2004a, 2004b, 2005) for building narrative-based theory. The assumption of this theory is that “people indeed have theories and that behind their actions and stories are some kind of theoretical structures” (Shkedi, 2005, p. 5). In many cases the informants are not conscious of their own theories and they are based on their tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) and not on their overt knowledge. The researcher has also relied heavily on Miles and Huberman (1994), who have provided the novice researcher with practical advice and advocate that the process of data analysis be systematic and deliberate in order to challenge the criticism that qualitative research is largely intuitive. “We need methods that are credible, dependable and replicable in qualitative terms” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 428, original emphasis).

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and coherence to the data collected (Mishler, 1986) in order to arrive at an understanding of its meaning. This involves breaking the data down into segments and reorganising these segments into a new analytical order. At the core of narrative analysis lies a twofold task: the selection of a segment of data and the assigning of the segment to a category. As the context is of critical importance to this study, it was decided not to use a structural approach to the analysis but rather a thematic approach using blocks of text and not separate words as the unit of analysis.

The first stage of analysis: the initial analysis
To begin the analysis the data were carefully reread, including notes that were taken during the interviews. The transcripts were read in their entirety several times while listening to the recordings of the interviews. The purpose was to get a sense of the data as a whole, before breaking them up into parts. In order to go beyond passive reading and to try to reach a deeper comprehension of the data, questions were asked
such as Who? Why? When? and So what? The data were then reread word-by-word and line-by-line, while taking care not to lose sense of the whole picture. “This form of coding helps us to remain attuned to our subjects’ views of their realities, rather than assume that we share the same views and world” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515).

Initial incidents were identified and named using the same language as used by the informants so as to remain open to the thematic potential of the data and not to be biased by preconceived notions. The same process was followed for each and every interview separately. The initial incidents’ names served only as a basis for the second analytical stage (Shkedi, 2005). This initial stage of coding is described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as similar to that as working on a puzzle.

**The second stage of analysis: the mapping analysis**

In the mapping analysis stage, the incidents generated in the initial stage were examined and the researcher attempted to find relationships among them. This was the initial constructing of categories and the emerging categories were integrated by creating links between them while sorting and grouping sets of related categories (Shkedi, 2005). All the interviews were examined simultaneously and not separately as in the first stage. This categorisation was represented in a ‘tree’ in order to enable the researcher to see the whole picture and control the analysis process. Associations between categories were noted in order to identify connections between them.

Categories were located on both the horizontal and vertical axes. The vertical axes distinguished between different levels of categories according to their relationships to each other, categories and sub categories were formed and new association categories that had been unnoticed previously were added. The categories were divided into two types of categories, the indication categories being those indicating a characteristic of a category and content categories which contained the informants fragmented narratives (Shkedi, 2005). The indication categories or the higher categories provided the organisational framework and the relationships between categories.
The third stage of analysis: focused categorisation

In this stage the central or core categories were identified from the mapping stage. This process of identifying conceptual core categories was done by using the criteria suggested by Strauss (1987) for judging which category should become a core category. They were judged by centrality, frequency and their relationship to other categories and their implication for a more general explanation. The criterion offered by Shkedi (2005), who suggests that it be connected to a considerable amount of textual incidents, was added.

The fourth stage of analysis: the theoretical categorisation

In this final stage of data analysis the conceptual core categories were reread and translated into a theoretical analysis. This researcher went back to the literature and the conceptual frameworks in order to explain the emerging data. This was not the first time the conceptual frameworks were revisited. However, during the initial stages, caution was applied in the use of the literature using it to help identify and focus conceptual perspectives and a conscious attempt was made not to rely on the literature in building theoretical notions. The analysis did not rely only on the principals’ perceptions and understandings of their role change but also on the researcher’s interpretation of their perceptions. This means that two levels of subjective interpretations were used in the analysis as reflected in LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993, p. 45) use of the terms ‘emic’ and ‘etic’. Emic knowledge is obtained through the subjective meanings of the insiders or participants as opposed to etic knowledge which is the researcher’s or outsider’s interpretation and constructions of the situation. The etic constructs are then the accounts, descriptions and analyses expressed in terms of conceptual categories.
4.8.2 The management of data

One of the major concerns of researchers undertaking qualitative analysis is the management of data. The use of computer software in qualitative research is documented in the literature on research methods. (Merriam 1998; Miles and Huberman 1994; Strauss and Corbin 1998). A computer programme developed by Shkedi, a qualitative researcher, called ‘The Narraliser’ was used. This software was of considerable value in applying category codes to the passages of text from the transcripts and the later retrieval and display of the text according to the coding. It made the process of memoing and the building of higher-order classifications and categories more manageable as it was easy to refer back to the original text from which the segments of data had been extracted, thereby regularly checking the data in its original context. An extract of the mapping analysis as facilitated by ‘The Narraliser’ can be found in appendix III.

4.8.3 The presentation of data

In this thesis the researcher has used different ‘voices’, used as a metaphor for stance, position or attitude, for different purposes in the presentation of the study. These will now be explained.

Miles and Huberman (1994) caution the researcher against using objective stances rather than straight forward talk as they “...serve to wrap the writer in the mantle of "science", while mystifying and alienating the reader” (p. 301). Furthermore, Morrison (2003) says that, “Interpretative researchers recognise that they are part of the reality they study and may use personal pronouns to illustrate their approach” (p. 25). This researcher uses the first person I in putting forward views that are fundamentally personal. Such views are unavoidably biased but nevertheless based on both study and life experience.

However, the use of the first person has been limited to avoid unacceptable levels of subjective reportage. The reader is approached in the scholarly tradition where information is imparted and the argument presented. The use of the passive voice is a
traditional tool of academic writing and helps to maintain objectivity (Briggs, 2003) and as such this researcher has used the passive voice in this dissertation.

According to Sanger (1994), the use of impersonal jargon-type labels in the coding of data leads to "endarkenment" (p.177). Sanger's advice in using creative, personalised labelling or using labels that respondents commonly used in their discourse in the chapters where data is presented and discussed has been followed.

4.9 Other Sources of Information

As mentioned, the researcher conducts regular meetings with principals on work-related issues as part of her own work schedule. Such meetings, by their very nature, influenced the present research. These meetings were, however, not documented as it seemed neither feasible nor ethical to do so. The potential ethical dilemma concerning the use of "incidental data" where the "collection of these data had not been negotiated" (Mercer, 2007, p. 13) was thereby avoided. In addition, throughout the field-work period, the researcher was present at scheduled conferences of all the principals in the city of Spring Heights in which issues relating to SBM and pedagogical concerns were discussed. Knowledge gleaned from these meetings has influenced this research although these meetings have not been systematically documented. In the Greater Spring Heights District, inspectors are invited to attend lectures given by academics in the field of education and educational leadership. These are presented both by Israeli and international academics and have influenced the researcher's thinking over the past ten years. The work of Dan Gibton, David Nevo, Izhar Oplatka and Ami Volansky are examples of this kind of input. This researcher has also benefited from several conferences on Educational Management and Research, at the Kibbutzim College of Education, Tel Aviv University and the University of Leicester. Thus, many plenary lectures, workshops and seminars have shaped my thinking over the decade.
Documentary evidence in the form of written sources that the researcher has access to as a matter of routine are referred to. Notably, the directives from the Director General's Bulletin which is published at least twice a month and delivered to all school inspectors and principals. In addition, comprehensive reports on issues viewed as critical within the MOE, are delivered to all inspectors. Close note of all the correspondence between the Teachers' Unions and the principals as well as the letters sent to the principals by either the Director General of the MOE or the Minister of Education has been kept. This exchange of communication was unparalleled in the Israeli education system and spanned a period of over a year, from May 2004 till August 2005. The wave of correspondence was due to the negotiations between the MOE and the Teachers' Unions over the recommendations of the NTFAE. Numerous press releases were published by both sides in the national and local press reflecting the contested nature of educational policy and were often referred to during interviews. Although this documentation is not directly related to the research questions, it provided valuable insights on the development and interpretation of policy. Some principals provided the researcher with school documents mapping out changes in the school organisation since the introduction of SBM and documents describing the school vision. These were used as tools for triangulation to determine if what had been said by the principals vis-à-vis changes in school organisation was actually reflected in the documentation. On five occasions the researcher and principals read and examined documents together, the guidelines for new roles for principals as described in the summary of the NTFAE (2004) were read with three principals and two principals read together with the researcher the roles of principals as set out in the contract signed by the MOE, the LEA and the principals on entering SBM. The comments the principals made while reading these documents were recorded and formed part of the data which were analysed.

A researcher's journal was kept in which some discussion, particularly with general inspectors and those following larger meetings and conferences were recorded. These observations were not directly analysed as they were not specifically related to the research questions. The journal was useful, however, as a reflective tool.
The researcher was fortunate to have access to a number of sources of information. Electronic data-bases were used extensively. Access was provided to the library of the University of Leicester through their distance learning services, the Tel Aviv University Library and use of the inter-library loan services at the Kibbutzim College of Education was made. Access to the research studies undertaken by the Szold Institute and the Mandel Institute in Israel was also granted. The MOE in Israel Internet site, where valuable statistical information as well as position papers on SBM are readily available, was of considerable value. The discussion list for principals in SBM schools was followed in the early stages of the research in order to ascertain whether the issues concerning principals as evidenced in the wide body of international research were equally of concern to principals in Israel.

4.10 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

4.10.1 Validity
The issue of internal validity as defined by Merriam (1988) as understanding the perspectives of those involved in the study and making sure that those constructions of reality are credible to those who construct these realities is attended to in this study by using three of Merriam’s strategies to ensure internal validity. The first strategy used was that of “member checks” (Merriam, 1988. p. 169). All the interviewees were asked to check the transcripts of the recorded interviews in order to ascertain that there were no discrepancies in the process of transcribing the recordings. Nine out of twelve interviewees agreed to go over the transcripts and felt that they accurately portrayed what they had said. The trustworthiness (as the term is used by Busher, 2003) of some of the data was undermined as three of the principals preferred not to review the transcripts, stating that they ‘trusted my judgment’ and would feel uncomfortable reading what they had said.

Performing a ‘member check’ was especially important in this study as the interviews were conducted in Hebrew and then translated by the researcher into English. Although a fluent speaker of Hebrew, it is not the native tongue of the researcher. The issue of transcription of data is described by Miles and Huberman
(1994) as “fraught with slippage” (p. 51). This is further complicated when the issue of translation is involved. An anecdote serves to clarify this point; this researcher had initially thought that the process of translating the recorded transcripts would be more efficiently dealt with by a professional translator. However, on receiving the first translation, it was immediately apparent that only the person who had been present during the interview could translate accurately what had been said. A principal had been quoted as saying that she ‘had been left standing naked before the parents’. This gross mistranslation stemmed from the Hebrew word ‘exposed’ which can be translated into English in many ways, one of them being ‘naked’. Derrida (1991a) calls this “...where the same word is already attached to very different connotations, inflections and emotional or affective values” (p. 270) as the “impossible task of the translator” (p. 274) and he describes translation as both “necessary and impossible” (Derrida, 1991b, p. 249). It was necessary to conduct the interviews in Hebrew and to translate them into English in order to render the account readable to the audience in this thesis.

In order to ensure that the translations were a truthful representation of what was said in the interviews, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Subsequently, the first two translations were given to a native speaker of Hebrew who did what is known as backward translation (Freebody, 2003). The two versions, the researcher’s and that of a native speaker of Hebrew, were then compared in order to check for inaccuracies in the translation. Only when assured that the translation contained no inaccuracies, did the researcher proceed with more confidence in the transcription and translation of the following interviews. When in doubt over specific terminology, colleagues were consulted. In this manner, the researcher hopes to have fulfilled the obligation to present a “more or less honest rendering of how informants actually view themselves and their experiences” (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p. 98).

An additional strategy suggested by Merriam (1988), that of peer examination, was employed. At various stages in the analysis of data, peers were asked to comment on the initial categorisations and, at a later stage, on the emerging findings. These were also shown to two experts in the field of educational research in order to add an
additional element of validation as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

An additional issue which may affect the validity of the data lies in the inherent differences between oral and written discourse. This is addressed by Kvale (1996), who calls transcripts decontextualised conversations in which “a living, ongoing conversation is frozen into a written text” (p. 167). The transcribed interviews did not become the “rock bottom” (Kvale, 1996, p.168) basis for the analysis as the researcher constantly referred back to both the recorded interviews and the notes made pertaining to body language and other aspects of the face to face conversations. A third strategy to ensure internal validity suggested by Merriam (1988) which has been followed is that of “…clarifying the researcher’s assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study” (p. 170).

4.10.2 Reliability
The concept of reliability is problematic in qualitative research as there are multiple interpretations of people’s behaviours. Furthermore, it is unfeasible that this research can be replicated due to its context bound nature (even if it were possible to interview the same people, they would have already been sensitivised by the original study and their responses may differ). Merriam (1988) goes as far as to state that traditional notions of reliability in qualitative educational research are “…not only fanciful but impossible” (p. 171). Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggest using the term “dependability” (p. 288) instead of reliability when undertaking qualitative research. In keeping with their suggestion this researcher has attempted to address the concerns of dependability by describing in detail the process of both data collection and the how the analysis was undertaken. This has been termed as leaving an audit trail (Merriam, 1988).

4.10.3 Generalisability
The issue of generalisability or external validity in qualitative research is one which is subject to debate. As pointed out by Merriam (1988), the reason one selects a case study approach is precisely because one wishes to understand the particular in depth and not because one wants to know what is true of the many. Merriam (1988)
suggests using the concept of ‘reader generalisability’. This means that the extent as to whether the findings of a case study are applicable to the reader is up to the reader to decide. However, it is up to the researcher to supply a sufficiently-detailed description of the case context and to clearly define the case boundaries so that readers can decide if the findings are applicable to their context. Every effort has been made in this study to provide a detailed description of the both the context of the research and the participants “so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgement” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 124-125).

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Consent, confidentiality and worthiness
The consent of the MOE in Israel, as required by law in Israel, was obtained before commencing the fieldwork (see appendix IV for the translated letter of consent). So too was the informed consent of the principals interviewed, who were reassured that they would be free to decline to participate in or withdraw from the research at any time.

The anonymity of the participants has been preserved throughout the study and will be in the future publications thereof. Coding was used in the gathering and processing of interview notes and transcripts in order to safeguard their identities. The principals were assured that all data would be treated in a way that protects their confidentiality and anonymity. This was done through the use of pseudonyms. There are of course trade-offs in considering ethical issues. Pring (2000) raises the conflict a researcher faces in educational research between the “right to know” (p. 146) and the possible harm caused to a respondent following the publication of research findings. He suggests that there is a duty to respect those who are participants in the research; accordingly every effort has been made to protect the participants in this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that respondents may not understand that they will not be anonymous to people within the same setting even though names have been changed. “Local people nearly always can tell (or will assume) who is being depicted” (p. 293). Their advice to err on the side of protecting the principals
and other stakeholders in this study has been followed by changing the name of the city the study was conducted in, the names of the schools and the names of the principals. The names given to the city, neighbourhoods within the city, the schools and the principals are all fictitious. This was deemed essential as during the course of the field work sensitive comments were made predominantly regarding issues of transparency and trust with other stakeholders all who would be easily identifiable.

Other ethical issues raised by Miles and Huberman (1994) which seem appropriate for this study are the worthiness of this study and the researcher’s own competence. As this researcher is committed to making the principals’ voices heard, it is believed that this undertaking holds value for the participants and it is hoped that it will make some contribution to educational management policy in Israel. As to researcher competence, being a novice researcher has led me to frequently seek help from colleagues and mentors in order to hone my skills as a researcher.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological considerations underlying this study and has framed it in a methodological paradigm of qualitative-phenomenological-interpretive research. Sampling considerations have been presented and the methods of data analysis have been described. Ethical considerations arising from the researcher’s position as an insider researcher have been acknowledged. Having set out the manner in which the research was conducted, it is now appropriate to turn to the findings which are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine primary school principals’ perceptions of their leadership in the context of SBM. Accordingly, the research questions and subsidiary questions form the structure of the chapter and the findings are presented in relation to the questions which are:

1. What are principals’ perceptions of the reasons for the introduction of SBM into the Israeli education system?
   a. What do they think were the underlying motivations of policy makers in introducing SBM?
   b. What are the attitudes of principals to SBM?

2. In what ways, if any, do principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy?
   a. Do they perceive themselves as being more or less autonomous?
   b. Has there been a shift from pedagogy to administration?
   c. Have their relationships with stakeholders – Ministry inspectors, local education authority officers, staff, parents and communities changed?

3. To what extent do principals feel they have the requisite competencies for the changes in their role brought about by SBM?
   a. What knowledge, skills and values are required for principals in SBM?
   b. What is the impact of SBM on their values?
   c. How important is it to have a background in education?

4. What experiences contribute to the development of leadership capacities required for SBM?
   a. What life experiences have helped develop principals’ knowledge and skills as preparation for their role in SBM?
b. What is the significance of formal training in principals’ preparation for their role?

5. In what ways, if any, do principals believe their role will change in the future?
   a. What are their attitudes towards the recommendations pertaining to new roles for principals of the National Task Force for the Advancement of Education?
   b. What do they perceive are the implications of this report for their role as principal?

Technical Issues

There are few quantitative remarks as befitting a qualitative research paradigm although at times the study does refer to frequency of notions or expressions. For example it is considered significant if only one principal expresses a different or unique perspective. Therefore, quantifiers and adverbs of frequency have been used such as many, most, none, frequently and hardly. The researcher’s remarks are added in the following format [...] in order to distinguish between the direct observations of the participants and explanations deemed necessary by the researcher. In order to show where participants wished to stress the importance of their responses either through the use of a difference in intonation, raised volume or a physical gesture, the use of bold fonts has been made. When the gesture was extreme such as pounding on the table or standing up, this has been indicated specifically. The analysis is both descriptive and interpretive in nature. The use of both a categorical and contextual approach to analysis is used in order to reach an understanding of individual principal’s motives and reflections as well as viewing the principals as a group. The six core categories which emerge from the categorical analysis of the findings are presented and discussed in the following chapter, Chapter six. The findings are therefore subjected to two levels of interpretation, that of the participants and that of the researcher. An approach supported by Miles and Huberman (1994) and
Charmaz (2000) who argue that interpretivists have their own interpretations and conceptual orientations.

The next section presents the findings in relation to the first research question and its two subsidiary questions.

5.1 Question One

1. What are principals’ perceptions of the reasons for the introduction of SBM into the Israeli education system?

1.a What do they think were the underlying motivations of policy makers in introducing SBM?

All the principals have a high degree of political insight and an understanding of the key concepts of SBM. They all cite key principles underpinning SBM such as autonomy, equity, transparency, efficiency, cutting costs, empowerment of the principal, accountability, setting priorities at the school site and improving student achievements (Caldwell, and Spinks 1988; Gaziel, 1998; Levačić, 1995; Bush and Bell, 2002), reflecting their understanding of the conceptual rationale behind the policy. However, almost all feel that policy makers had an ulterior motive, that of passing the responsibility on to the principal.

A striking observation is that only one principal displayed awareness of the policy context in which the reforms were introduced and knew that the initiative to introduce SBM in Israel was that of the MOE, Batia, who had been chosen to attend the national pilot and had been sent on a delegation to Oxford. All but three were convinced that the initiative was that of the LEA of the City of Spring Heights. One principal, Tammy, thought that it was connected to earlier attempts to form community schools. Another, Nathan, honestly admitted to “not having the foggiest idea as to who initiated SBM and what the motivations were.”
Most principals say clearly that the policy was a way to imitate the West: (Dimmock and Walker, 2000a, 2000b).

"In their course of searching for ways of improving the education system they looked outside the country to the West. I do not know whether the impetus was political or really an attempt to upgrade the system." (Batia)

A key feature associated with SBM is referred to in this response, that of looking for ways to improve education. However, Batia alludes to a recurring element evident in the responses of almost all of the principals that of a measure of scepticism as to the underlying motives of the reform. All but one express a high degree of cynicism as to the real motives of those who introduced SBM in Israel. There appears to be a discrepancy between their responses to the question: “What is SBM?” and their responses to what the motivations underlying this reform were. When asked to define SBM they recite almost on rote from the handbooks distributed to principals on SBM, but their views on the motivations for the reform reveal rather cynical attitudes.

The following definition of SBM is typical of most of the responses:

"The school has financial autonomy; we decide on the order of priorities, the most important thing is authority and responsibility. You have to provide the goods, but you need to be accountable. This is the formal definition.” (Iris)

Another principal provides a similar definition but adds the additional component of working within the framework of the MOE and the LEA’s priorities: (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992, Volansky, 2003).

"It allows the principal to see the school as the place she can make her own decisions, as long as it is in keeping with the MOE priorities, the LEA and their priorities.” (Tammy)
Two missing pieces are provided by a third principal, notions of equity (Giroux, 1992) and transparency:

"Perhaps they wanted schools to be on an even footing - before principals who were closer to the plate got more resources - some got and others didn't." (Edwina)

A fourth principal adds that the major impetus was to bypass the LEA and thereby save money. This in fact did not happen, as the direction SBM went in Israel was quite the opposite.

"Because they did not want the monies to go through the LEA, they wanted to bypass them and make the system more efficient." (Ora)

All but one, say that what might have begun as a genuine attempt to improve education, the manner in which it has been implemented has caused the burden of responsibility to shift to the principals and has allowed the MOE and the LEA to abdicate their responsibility for education. Three are explicit in stating their beliefs that the reform was politically motivated (Hargreaves and Reynolds, 1989; Ball, 1993; Demaine, 1993; Tanner and Stone, 1998).

"By giving us the responsibility they [The city. B.T.] also released themselves from their responsibility. Relinquishing responsibility from themselves was the major impetus." (Dinah)

A second principal refers to the gap between her initial perceptions of SBM and what she understands today as well as alluding to how policy has been corrupted in implementation:

"At the time, I believed that they wanted to make the system more efficient. Today I know with hindsight, the motives were not so altruistic. As the years went by, things changed. It didn't stay 'clean'." (Diana)
A third principal reinforces this perception of disillusionment with the way SBM has been implemented in Israel and connects this to a general feeling of discontent and suspicion regarding politicians in Israel:

"Looking at what has happened with it [SBM, B.T] it is hard for me to say the intention was good, like other things that happen in this country; they come out with these grandiose plans but do not do any of the necessary groundwork to see if they can be carried out in practice. I have learnt to be very suspicious of any policy statements, which claim to be in our best interests." (Sharon)

This perception of policies not been carefully thought out cannot be seen to be a unique Israeli problem as indicated by the earlier findings of Rutherford (2004) in his study of UK primary school principals where the principals described the reforms as being "ill thought through" (p. 286). This lack of esteem for politicians as educational policy makers is evident too in the statement of a superintendent in the USA, "...most of the lawmakers don't have a clue what the unintended consequences of their laws will be...I really don't think they read most of them" (Farkas et al., 2003, p. 12).

This perceived gap between rhetoric and practice is best articulated in Shaye's definition of SBM:

"On the declarative level or in practice? You are everything; you are the Director General—the Chief Executive on the declarative level.... They wanted us to become total leaders but they did not give us any tools in order to do this."

To sum up their responses, almost all of the principals in this study attribute the initiation of SBM in the city to the LEA and feel that the policy makers were masking a hidden agenda, that of passing the responsibility for education on to the principal. Their responses also hint at high levels of distrust for policy makers both on the national and local level a theme which reoccurs in the data. It is important to stress that none of the principals expressed any ideological opposition to the reform when it
was first introduced, quite the opposite in fact, as will be presented in the next section which presents the principals’ initial and then later attitudes to SBM.

1.b What are the attitudes of principals to SBM?

Principals’ initial attitudes to SBM
Most were initially enthusiastic about the opportunities they felt SBM presented, the less veteran principals, those with less than ten years as principals, all refer to their initial responses to SBM as very positive; it was seen as presenting an exciting challenge. The following response typifies those made by these principals:

"Look, I was a young principal so I was not really scared. I felt I was entering a new phase in management which was exciting, interesting and challenging."
(Ora)

This contrasts greatly with the perception of the more veteran principals, those who have at least ten years of administrative experience, that SBM was something which was forced on them. Dinah, who has since taken early retirement after serving as a principal for 22 years, encapsulates this:

"It fell on us as something we had no say in at all. We could postpone it but we knew we had to go into it eventually. I went in during the final phase. The LEA knows very well how to do ‘controlled choice’; we simply had to go according to their decision."

The above account confirms the misconception held by most principals that it was the LEA who had initiated SBM in the city. Dinah, saw SBM as something which simply ‘fell on them’, as if it had dropped out of the sky without any warning or preparation and without their consent and highlights the perception of an overwhelming external structure which dictates policy to principals.
Shaye, another veteran principal, who has been a principal for 15 years and in the education system for 31 years, describes the contrast between her initial expectations and the reality as she sees it today:

“When I began SBM I was very happy because I thought I was going to be king of the world, I would make decisions and yes, I would be accountable but everything would be in my hands. But in practice, it’s not like that at all. It’s a lot of work, a lot of responsibility and less rights and freedom. SBM is something I feel I have been raped into doing, it’s not out of free choice.”

Shaye’s choice of the word ‘raped’ to describe going into SBM is extremely surprising. So much so that during the translation of the transcripts, this was validated by asking two native speakers of Hebrew if there could possibly be any other translation for the word. The translation, ‘raped’ is the one which was confirmed; Shaye also verified the translation. This implies that she feels that not only was there no option to decline; entering SBM was something she was violently forced into doing. There is also the connotation of being threatened and abused. She feels she was forced into doing something not only against her will, but also something which she believed has had extremely harmful repercussions for her both physically and emotionally.

Only three principals expressed having strong reservations at the start of SBM mainly because they did not feel they had the capacities to manage the financial aspects of SBM, but not because they were ideologically opposed to the reforms. Dinah, like Sharon, attributes her feelings of apprehension and ambivalence towards SBM to a natural resistance to change, fear of making mistakes in financing, as well as to her own personality which she describes as being a perfectionist.

“The truth is that like with anything new I was worried; there’s no margin for error in financing. I am a perfectionist.” (Dinah)

Zoey is the youngest of the principals interviewed and the one with the least administrative experience. She had been a principal for only one year before entering
SBM and is a principal of a school of 370 pupils, in a low socio economic area. She attributes her initial anxiety about going into SBM to school demographics and fear that the budget would be insufficient to cover costs:

“At first I did not want to go into SBM. I was very apprehensive about it because the population is from a very low socio economic background. The building requires a great deal of maintenance. I was petrified that the money would run out. I feel more secure about the financial aspect now. Now I can go out and buy a digital camera and don’t have to ask anyone’s permission.” (Zoey)

Once she had overcome her initial apprehension and felt more secure about her financial skills she seems to take pride in being afforded the opportunity to buy something as small as a digital camera indicating how constrained principals had been prior to SBM.

However, they all initially saw SBM as a natural process which would make education more in keeping with modern times. This viewpoint is expressed succinctly by Zoey:

“I feel that I am running an updated, modern, cutting edge organisation.” (Zoey)

A similar response to SBM creating opportunities for principals to be more independent in carrying out initiatives which are more in keeping with their visions and in accordance with the needs of the school and the particular community is expressed by Ora:

“I was very keen on SBM from the beginning. I became a principal because I wanted to be independent. I thought it was a real breakthrough in the MOE and would give principals the ability to make decisions instead of someone else making decisions that are not always in tune with our needs.... As primary schools are very local, very community oriented, you have to take into account the rhythms of the community, the real needs of the community.”
This supports the underlying assumptions underpinning SBM, those closest to the school site are best equipped to make informed decisions which would best meet the needs of the community (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1998; Cheng, 1996; Odden and Busch, 1998; Bush and Bell, 2002).

This is noted by Iris, with 10 years of principalship, who adds the advantage of being able to carry out decisions in real time:

"We had the ability to make decisions and to carry them out in real time."

This supports the position taken by advocates of SBM who have criticised large, central bureaucracies as being ineffective, cumbersome and slow in meeting the immediate needs of the schools. (OECD, 1989; Hill and Bonan, 1991; Volansky, 1996).

**What are principals’ perceptions of SBM now?**

Although the principals were in different stages of implementation as SBM had been gradually introduced into Spring Heights in three phases beginning in 2000, there are a number of common themes which emerge from their responses. Principals raise positive aspects of empowerment as well as dangers inherent in autonomy. Positions of cynicism with regard to autonomy are evident as are expressions of disillusionment.

Many principals refer to the psychological feeling of empowerment gained by being freed of the need to flatter people in order to procure equipment for the school. All principals, even those who are cynical about SBM empowering them, are pleased about being able to make decisions about renovations and purchases, albeit on a limited scale, only purchases less than NIS 500.00 (approximately GBP 61.00) can be made without permission. The following account is representative of the viewpoint of all of the principals and highlights the extent to which they had been restricted financially prior to SBM:
"More important is the psychological aspect, being able to do things that we couldn't do before. I had to suck up to the people in the LEA. I didn't even know what my budget was. There was no transparency. If there were five schools that needed something, we would have to wait months, even years. This was something that hindered the development and progress of the school." (Iris)

Nevertheless, most principals express a great deal of cynicism as to the way SBM has been implemented and do not feel more autonomous but feel resentful of the increased accountabilities. This is expressed strongly by the more veteran principals but also by Nathan, a retired army officer with no prior background in education, who at the time of interviewing had been a principal for five years.

"If giving a principal another NIS 150,000 equals empowerment, then, you could call it empowerment. I did not feel that this empowered me. All they gave was money for in-service training sessions and even that they took away. There were constant cutbacks. We were given housekeeping money, so even though we were accountable in the past, we are even more so now because now the money is in our hands, so to speak, the feeling, the expectation, is that we are more accountable."

A recurring cause of discontent for principals in leadership positions for less than ten years, excluding Nathan, is that they have not been granted authority over MOE teachers. The ability to hire and fire MOE teachers, who comprise over 70% of their teaching staff, is perceived to be the next logical step in taking SBM further as evident in the following account:

"I'm still dependent on the Ministry inspectors for manpower - they decide who to place and where. I would like to go to a much greater degree of privatisation. One needs to be judged according to performance, the principal is the key player within the school and if he isn't good, he goes. Today you cannot stay in the system and be bad; there is greater awareness today on the part of the community as to what they should expect from a school. The whole
system has changed; it is not like running a corner grocery store where you can hire family members. If you are good, you should be rewarded and if not, then you should be sent home! [Pounding the table with her fist, B.T.] The market is very clear cut today.” (Ora)

Ora has evidently embraced the managerialism agenda in education. This is reflected both in the choice of her words - she adopts the language of marketisation - and in the message she conveys. She espouses theories that have not yet entered the educational discourse in Israel, that of the market determining whether teachers and principals remain in their positions and not their tenure with the Ministry. SBM has according to Ora not been taken far enough. She seems to be advocating a system similar to the performance measures introduced in the UK and much greater market accountability for schools which would lead to greater responsiveness to their communities.

Shaye, a veteran principal, also raises the issue of staff selection but connects it to the contradictory expectations of accountability and the lack of autonomy over personnel resources:

“I think that perhaps I would like to be able to hire and fire Ministry teachers as well, perhaps.... If I had that control as well, then I would be able to say I am an autonomous principal. That would be real SBM. Then it would be morally OK to demand results and accountability from us.”

However, Shaye then backtracks on her desire to have this autonomy revealing her ambivalence in the following excerpt:

“It’s true there are dangers – we are human too. Many of the decisions will not be pure professional decisions. Look, there are some teachers I simply cannot stand. That’s a real danger and I don’t know how it could be overcome. Perhaps there will be a body working alongside the principal to ensure fair play... and then that puts into question the issue of autonomy. [Shrugging her shoulders and throwing her arms up in despair. B.T.] Look, there will have to be checks and balances.”
Shaye seems acutely aware of the potential dangers inherent in investing principals with more autonomy. Although she would like to have more freedom, she believes that there should be ‘checks and balances’, this is not a clear cut issue for all principals.

A new theme emerging from the data, which was not evident in previous research, is the danger of granting principals more power. This was apparent in the responses of all of the veteran principals. Tammy alludes to what she terms the potential dangers of SBM:

"If the principal sees only the money, he can become blinded by the lights. The danger is if a principal feels that all the power is hers because the money is in her hands, the danger is that the principal will work alone and take decisions alone....... money with its power to corrupt is the potential source of danger."

The corrupting nature of power was raised by another veteran principal, Iris:

"I am worried about increasing our power .... I’m extremely worried about this, the conceit, the arrogance of principals that comes with so much power, this bothers me very much. There are some bad teachers in the system and I would like to be able to fire them but I’m very afraid of the repercussions of such great power been given to us. For example, what happened to Rina and to Keren could happen to others too, this comes from hybris, from principals abusing their power .... Principals are people with well developed egos and this ego combined with great power scares me."

During the course of the fieldwork, two prominent primary school principals in the City of Spring Heights were arrested for embezzlement of school funds. The national and local media covered the cases in depth and all the principals referred to these incidents. Some, however, asked specifically to speak about this off the record and as such their comments have not been recorded. It is perhaps natural that their reluctance
to be endowed with more autonomy has been coloured by these two high profile cases.

All of the principals, but Zoey, express disillusionment that the initial promises made to them have not been kept. This is largely due to budget cutbacks which in turn led to the principals being more constrained in the allocation of their hours and consequently having less freedom to carry out their initiatives. Diana refers to the gap between the initial rhetoric and reality today:

"Today the system is so political that all they are doing is to economise. They use the SBM to place all the malaise of society at door of the school. I assume that decisions were made on the political level, It's always political! There is a gap between rhetoric, the promises in the beginning and what actually happened. The last few years it is declining, even blatantly."

Another principal goes as far as to accuse the policy makers of knowing in advance that funds would be reduced but of giving them more funds in the beginning to

"...teemt us to go along with it, we agreed to do the extra work because we thought we would be getting more funds." (Ora)

Batia provides examples of actions they had been able to take in the pilot group which no longer exist, activities which she feels helped to integrate management, finances and pedagogy and created greater staff commitment. Two examples are money returned to the school in reward for reducing teacher absenteeism and the ability to provide in-service training for the staff.

"I had hoped SBM would enable us to do more. One bright sunny day, they told us from the Ministry, that's it - we will not be returning these hours to you." (Batia)
This highlights the gap between the initial rhetoric of SBM where principals would be able to integrate management and pedagogy and practice which has left them with additional administrative tasks, but devoid of any real room for manoeuvre.

Edwina is much more forthright in her criticism of the discrepancy between rhetoric and practice:

"I thought I would be able to decide where and how I could use the money – that I would be given the leeway to decide, that I can be autonomous – autonomy, a nice word! But the LEA inspectors are constantly looking over your shoulders. Autonomy, ha! I'm supposed to decide on priorities but in practice I'm not allowed to, Hila [Head of the Department for Primary School Education in the LEA, B.T.] says, "I can see exactly how much money you have". I need her permission to have a parents' bazaar, we had been doing this for years. Autonomy? [This is said using the intonation in Hebrew for asking a question, B. T.] Hila ends up torpedoing even pedagogical issues."

Autonomy according to this account appears to be a farce, with principals’ autonomy in some ways being even more restricted than prior to SBM.

Despite feelings of disillusionment, only two, Sharon and Shaye said they would eagerly return to the pre-SBM era. This supports the findings of others such as Levačić (1995), Jones (1999a), Mortimore and Mortimore (1991) and Cranston (2002).

A recurrent theme emerging from the data echoes the findings of Rutherford (2005), in which the principals’ initial sense of excitement on going into SBM has changed over time to feelings of disillusionment. All but one, present a dismal picture of broken promises on behalf of policy makers and a feeling of being duped into believing that SBM would allow them more autonomy.

To sum up, despite feelings of constraint, principals feel that some measure of empowerment has been given them if only in the ‘psychological sense’, this may be
interpreted as a false sense of empowerment. Another theme that has emerged is the potential for corruption when power is placed in the hands of the principal and this in turn puts a damper on principals’ desire for more autonomy. This appears to be a contextualised Israeli issue and has not been reported in other studies.

The next section presents the findings in response to question two and its three subsidiary questions.
5.2 Question Two

2. In what ways, if any, do principals perceive their role to have changed since SBM was adopted as policy?

The responses to this question form the bulk of the data. This section is divided into three, according to the data generated from the subsidiary questions. The first section presents the debate between SBM creating more autonomous leaders as opposed to more restricted leaders. The dilemmas principals now face between educational leadership and executive principalship is presented in the second section. The third section maps out the shifting nature of principals’ relationships with their wider and immediate role set, namely the Central Office of the MOE, the district inspectors, the LEA, staff, parents and the community.

Section One

2.a Do principals perceive themselves as being more or less autonomous?

Perceptions of increased autonomy
Despite cynical positions on autonomy, principals point to ways in which they have become more autonomous. Four major areas are mentioned. The recurring issues are first, the freedom to decide how to implement plans. Second, the ability to choose enrichment programmes according to their visions for the school and the needs of the population. The third is the authority to determine the wage scale and contractual status of their LEA teachers. The fourth is a perception of change in professional identity which has led to a personal sense of growth or empowerment.

Freedom to decide how to implement plans
The general consensus principals express is that SBM has given them the freedom to decide how to implement plans:
“Before SBM I did not have any autonomy. SBM changed things in that the way I reach my goals, even though they are determined by national and local priorities, but the way I get there is my decision.” (Shaye)

This account reveals that even though principals are aware that they are obligated to operate within the prescribed guidelines of both the MOE and the LEA they are able to determine the manner in which these goals are reached. This they feel affords them a measure of flexibility in determining priorities.

**Freedom to decide which courses to introduce**

The freedom to decide which courses to give is welcomed by all principals:

“It lets me choose the enrichment courses which I think they need and not something dictated to me from above.” (Sharon)

Enrichment courses are programmes given to pupils over and above the Core Curriculum as set by the MOE on a national level. These courses are funded by the LEA, parental payments in high SES schools, parental non profit organisations (NPOs) and funds principals manage to raise.

An additional advantage principals pinpoint is that SBM has enabled them to find solutions for the specific needs of their schools:

“SBM has been very, beneficial to me as a principal! I can make a mark; I can carry out my plans much better than I could before SBM. I feel much stronger, if I had a class that was having difficulties in English, what could I do about it? Now I can hire someone for remedial lessons.” (Tammy)

Even though this autonomy is limited to the choice of enrichment programmes and, funds permitting, for in-service programmes for the staff, principals nevertheless, welcome this small slice of autonomy. They perceive this ability to decide which programmes to introduce as empowering as it enables them to provide solutions to problems. This room for manoeuvre was previously non existent and is seen as a
marked change as prior to SBM principals had no means to tailor programmes to the needs of the school:

"It enables me to realise my aims, or even fantasies. I couldn't bring any lecturer I wanted in the past. I know it was a small fantasy, but those relatively free decisions..., not to compromise with whatever was available." (Diana)

In the above account Diana refers to the opportunity to choose the kind of professional development she provides for her staff. Prior to SBM, principals could send their teachers to in-service training sessions offered only by the inspectorate at the District level.

There is, however, one lone voice, that of Iris who says that pedagogical autonomy is not always positive:

"I don't know where autonomy will begin and accountability will end - today I suppose I have the autonomy to do whatever I want in the school as far as the curriculum goes - no one really checks except for English, Maths, Science and Literacy. I can do whatever I want in everything else. The GEMS [Growth, Effectiveness and Measurement Scores which are administrated nationally. B.T] brought about this accountability and standardisation. Results are transparent, everyone can see where the school is in relation to others but in everything else you can teach Shiatsu or any other crap you want - sorry about the language." (Iris)

Iris is critical of the kinds of enrichment programmes her colleagues offer. She believes that not all principals use this autonomy wisely. She welcomes the introduction of standardised national tests which she feels gives important feedback to principals as to how pupils are performing in relation to others in the four core subjects. Iris does not see accountability measures as restricting her autonomy.
Freedom to decide on LEA teachers' wage scale

Hours allocated to schools through the LEA can be paid to teachers either on a monthly or an hourly basis. According to the LEA guidelines, 60% of the hours allocated to schools through the LEA are to be paid as hourly rates and 40% as monthly salaries. Teachers paid hourly rates do not receive any social benefits and have no job security. The ability to determine LEA teachers' wage scale and contractual status is also seen as contributing to the principals' sense of autonomy and power:

"I can't explain it rationally, but we have been given a bit more power. Deciding which LEA teachers get paid a monthly salary and which get hourly and their wage scale gives us power." (Shaye)

Shaye sees this as ability to control financial resources and decide how to remunerate members of the LEA staff, contributing to her 'power'. Hoyle (1986) calls this control over material resources one of the four bases of power, which principals in this study perceive as contributing to their empowerment.

However, the autonomy to decide on LEA teachers' terms of employment has not been greeted by all as a positive trend. All veteran principals perceive the notion of paying teachers per hour as being immoral as depicted in the following accounts:

"I'd like to be able to choose Ministry people as well but not to decide on their salary. This is a personal issue. Look, that teacher who just walked past, I'm embarrassed to look her in the eye - I've hurt her salary, I moved her from a monthly salary scale to an hourly one, I had no choice but how can I face her? She has four children at home, her husband is unemployed - why does this have to be a decision the principal has to take? This is not moral! I want her in the staff room with a smile on her face. I do not want to be in the position where I have harmed her and harmed her financially, her salary. I find this extremely difficult, very difficult." (Sharon)
Sharon, on the one hand, would like to employ her own teachers, but on the other hand is exceedingly upset about having to decide the contractual status for LEA teachers. This she sees as both adversely affecting her relationship with staff as well as conflicting with her morals. Sharon it appears would like to have her cake and eat it. Her account clearly articulates the tensions brought on by the tough decisions principals now have to make. These tensions stem from external demands being imposed on the principal which counter their personal set of values. (Day et al., 2000; Wright, 2003).

This perception of being forced to operate against one’s values is reinforced by others:

“I think it is immoral to pay teachers hourly, it’s immoral to turn the profession into a slave market. I’m the one who has to decide who works under such inhumane conditions.” (Iris)

And:

“I think it is awful that people work on an hourly basis ... we will lose good people, in fact I already have.” (Sharon)

The opposition expressed here is on two grounds, one being the morality of employing people without social benefits and the other the difficulty this causes in finding qualified teachers. These two accounts reveal the tension which is created when personal values conflict with externally prescribed directives (Wright, 2001; 2003; Moore et al., 2002; Gold et al., 2003). The issue of LEA teachers’ contractual status becomes a significant cause of tension for principals whose values are challenged by the demands of the external policy framework. This supports the view of Wright (2001) that the power of external structures has become so strong that principals are now reduced to a form of ‘bastard leadership’ where the moral direction of leadership has been removed from principals.
There is not a consensus on this issue as some principals like Diana have used this option of paying teachers hourly as a means to stretch her budget further. By paying all LEA teachers only on an hourly basis she can provide her pupils with more hours and lengthen the school day as this is cheaper:

"The issue of monthly payment with pension rights and vacation pay, I decided not to do. Nobody gets a monthly salary, everybody gets the same...except, they forced me to pay the counsellor a monthly salary. Again, you decide one way and then the Municipality decided that the counsellor must be paid monthly. Again, there are all sorts of restrictions on our autonomy, if there is true SBM let me do it all the way and don't put a spoke in the wheels. It caused a problem with the other teachers and messed up my budget. This I considered unfair." (Diana)

Diana is resentful that the LEA forced her to pay the school counsellor a monthly salary. This annoyance stems from two sources, the first being that it restricts her autonomy, highlighting her perception that SBM as implemented is far removed from the initial declarations. Secondly, she considers it unfair that not all teachers are paid according to the same conditions. Her concept of fairness is unusual, she does not see anything unjust in teachers working without social benefits, but she does see it unjust that there are two ‘classes’ of teachers in the staffroom. Interestingly, she does not mention that teachers employed through the MOE comprise yet another class of teachers with government pension rights and tenure. When weighing the financial advantages hourly payments give her over finding qualified staff, she chooses the financial benefits. She has internalised her role of principal under SBM as a financial entrepreneur. Her concept of morality contrasts greatly with that of the more veteran principals who all refer to this issue as immoral.

Principals in this study do not respond in a uniform manner to the challenges posed by the demands of SBM. Their scope for agency varies depending on their values, their personalities and where they position themselves within the educational hierarchy.
Personal growth and empowerment

An additional advantage principals feel has arisen out of SBM is the sense of personal accomplishment they now feel. The following account typifies this response:

"On the other hand I have many personal gratifications, the fact that you are doing something, you see the results and you are responsible for it and it's your doing - this is a very empowering feeling. This gives one a feeling of great power and strength. I know it sounds silly but even the renovation of the bathrooms, I chose the tiles and the fixtures, I sat with the architect, I supervised the work, what a great sense of satisfaction it gave me to see it accomplished!" (Iris)

Iris uses words such as 'power' and 'strength' to describe her feelings of personal growth and satisfaction. She is evidently proud of having accomplished things she had never dealt with before. This sense of being strengthened on a personal level is expressed by others as well.

A unique perspective on autonomy is provided by Nathan, who claims that the size of the city makes it impossible for the LEA to closely supervise each and every school and this is what contributes to his feeling of independence:

"In Spring Heights we have more independence because the city is so big it's impossible for the LEA to be involved in what is going on in each and every school." (Nathan)

Perceptions of constraints on autonomy

Despite feelings of autonomy resulting mainly from the dealing with finances, which was forbidden prior to SBM, all but one, feel that SBM did not bring with it the degree of autonomy they had been led to expect it would. They all accept that they are obliged to operate within the guidelines prescribed by the MOE, this was clearly stated in the contract they had signed. However, they did not expect the LEA to take on such a significant role especially in regard to pedagogy. Finally free of the 'initiatives' from Central Office, they resent having to comply with new 'initiatives'
emanating from the LEA. Resentment is also evident in their perception of being under constant surveillance by the LEA. Paradoxically, it had been easier in the past for principals to ignore MOE initiatives as the Central Office was geographically distanced; now it is awkward to disregard projects coming from the LEA:

"We are obligated to attend many in-service training sessions and you are committed, pressured to attend these things. LEA counsellors call and reprimand me.... My autonomy here as a principal is very restricted." (Batia)

Once given the freedom to hire and fire LEA teachers, principals who have served for less than ten years would like this autonomy over MOE teachers as well:

"That's the part of SBM that it's a pity didn't happen. I am not the employer of my teachers. This is an absurd situation. I would like that very much." (Diana)

The rigid financial framework and the need to get approval from the LEA for financial transactions are also perceived as severely restricting their autonomy. Some see the LEA's ability to check their financial status 'online' and the tendency of LEA officers to question their expenditures, as severely restricting their autonomy. In the following statement Sharon expresses her frustration:

"Well, they [The LEA, B.T] are in our bank account and they always have something to say. Like, why have I spent so much money on x and not y, or even why I have money left over. So I don't really know why they speak about autonomy – perhaps someone can explain this to me – where exactly is my autonomy? I still need their approval even though it comes out of my budget." (Sharon)

This highlights the perceived tension between autonomy and accountability. Sharon appears to resent being held accountable for how she spends her money. She clearly sees the expectation that she be accountable for expenditures as incompatible with the rhetoric of autonomy. Accountability here is seen as contradicting autonomy.
Nevertheless, the overall feeling is that ‘a little bit of autonomy is better than none’ (Ora) even if it is only over ‘house keeping money’ as Nathan calls it and ‘piggy bank’ money as Shaye calls it.

Section Two

2.b Has there been a shift from pedagogy to administration?

As stipulated in the contract signed by the MOE, the LEA and principals on entering SBM, the expectation clearly was that principals would now take on more managerial roles. The following section illustrates how principals perceive these added aspects to their roles. The four most salient findings which will be presented in this section are as follows. First, most, though not all, principals, feel there are tensions inherent in their new roles. Second, their professional identity as leading professionals has been challenged. Third, many are experiencing physical and emotional strain associated with work overload. Fourth, the complexity, totality and isolation of the principals’ roles have been exacerbated since the introduction of SBM.

Reconciling tensions

All but three are acutely aware of the tension between finding the balance between their roles as ‘leading professionals’ (Pollard et al., 1994; Coulson, 1985) and ‘chief executives’ (Hughes, 1985; Bell and Rowley, 2002). However, some are reluctant to admit that their administrative duties have come at the expense of their pedagogical leadership.

“I can see reasons for tension. We have to be constantly aware of this so that it will not harm pedagogic decisions. You can find yourself spending more time on administration than on pedagogy. It’s easy to get sucked into it, you have to really control things and be aware of the danger of being sucked into administration. You have to try find a balance between the two.” (Ora)

Ora’s use of the phrase ‘get sucked into’ with regard to administration is quite revealing, administration seems to have the capacity to draw them in almost
unwittingly. She stresses both the need to and the difficulty in finding a balance. (Day et al., 2000; Bell and Rowley, 2002; Cranston, 2002)

The reluctance to admit even to themselves, let alone to others, that less time is now spent on pedagogy is clear in the following reflection:

"Is this at the expense of instructional leadership? Yes of course - if I am honest with myself, yes! Even though I don't want to believe that it happens, the answer has to be yes. I have absolutely no doubt that the administrative load comes at the expense of pedagogy. I have less time to go into teachers' lessons. There's a price to be paid, the price is pedagogy." (Iris)

When weighing the urgency of tasks to be done, the professional development of staff and monitoring of teachers' work gets shifted aside (Southworth, 1998; Day et al., 2000). This appears to be related to practical issues of time management. Some principals try to overcome this by attempting to deal with administrative matters only once the school day is over, leading to work overload and stress. The following account encapsulates this:

"The time factor is the Achilles' heel, I often think that if I spent more time in the classroom observing lessons or speaking with kids, I'd be a better principal. We speak about this a lot amongst ourselves. We are now far removed from pedagogy - we get so ensnared in the maintenance, the secretarial work and so on...it simply sucks us in, it draws us in. I try to deal with pedagogy during the school hours, as long as the pupils are here at the school, in the afternoon and evening I deal with management... I sit with the secretary on accounts only when the school is empty." (Tammy)

All but two principals draw clear distinctions between pedagogy and management and compartmentalise the two. This points to the impact that SBM has made on the role of principals. The additional administrative tasks have taken them further away from pedagogy, creating a tension between leadership and management (Day et al., 2000) and validating the findings of others such as Bell and Rowley (2002) and
Cranston (2002) that the dichotomy between educational leadership and management has indeed widened.

Furthermore, this tension is exacerbated as being the leading professional is an essential component of the more veteran principals' professional identity. This they see as being 'a better principal'. Tammy reveals that this is a common topic of discussion amongst principals. She, like Ora, personifies the administrative tasks and ascribes them life like qualities. The picture presented is of principals inadvertently been drawn in to administrative duties at the expense of instructional leadership. Some, like Shaye, believe that there are innate tensions between the values of a person coming from a financial perspective and that of a pedagogue, differences which she feels are impossible to reconcile reflecting her “cultural resistance” (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 154) to the new educational discourse:

“For whoever believes that a school principal is first and foremost a pedagogue, it is very difficult to become an economist. The perceptions and views of a financial person have many, many contradictions and clashes with that of a pedagogue.” (Shaye)

Only two principals say they do not spend less time on pedagogy. Both have changed the internal school organisational structure and have distributed responsibilities throughout the school. Diana, who has been a principal for six years, feels that SBM has served her pedagogical aims:

“You understand everything in a much broader context. I believe that the two go together [Diana intertwined her fingers to illustrate the close relationship between budgeting and pedagogy. B.T.]. Decisions that are made within the framework of the budget are based on the school's pedagogical aims. In the final analysis, financial administration contributes towards correct pedagogy.” (Diana)

Zoey, who has been a principal for four years, is unique in feeling that SBM has left her even more time for pedagogy:
"I even have more time now for pedagogy. Prior to SBM I still had to deal with maintenance but I had to do it through the LEA. Now, I decide. So, I am freer to fulfil my dreams and educational initiatives.” (Zoey)

The time spent convincing LEA officers to carry out maintenance work, has now been saved as principals are directly responsible for overseeing this work. Zoey is alone in seeing this as affording her more time for pedagogy.

Nathan is unique in his perception that not only is there no tension between pedagogy and financial administration but in fact, sees the administrative duties as more important:

"I don’t think there’s a contradiction; the best pedagogue in the world who does not know administration will end up with chaos in the school. If you’re a competent administrator and your educational perspective is lacking, you can utilise other people. You can manage the school without being the best pedagogue.” (Nathan)

Nathan’s point of view is coloured by his background as an army man who had had only one year teaching experience before becoming a principal. Pedagogy is not his field of expertise and it seems unlikely that it will be in the future. The division of time between administration and pedagogy has been left up to the principals to decide, none excluding Nathan, chose consciously to delegate all pedagogical responsibilities to others. Nevertheless, he too draws a clear distinction between the two roles. Most of principals in this study are struggling to reconcile the tension between their management and leadership roles. This tension has been well documented by other scholars (Bennett et al., 1992; Murphy, 1994; Odden, 1995; Blackmore et al., 1996; Dimmock, 1996; Southworth, 1998; Whitaker, 1998; Jones, 1999a; Day et al., 2000; Portin, 2000; Cranston, 2002).
Professional identities have been challenged

Principals who have been in administrative roles for ten years or more feel strongly about their abilities as pedagogical experts no longer being deemed sufficient to run a school. They concede that, perhaps, the newer principals are better equipped for this new age of principalship and that future generations of principals may receive different training. Nevertheless, they are sceptical as to whether a more managerial leader is what primary schools need, once again reinforcing the difficulty veteran principals have in adapting to the culture change SBM purports to instil. This shows that principalship in Spring Heights is still in a transitional phase. The two following accounts exemplify this point of view:

"A whole new aspect has been added, Ophira [The MOE District Director. B.T] said it and angered us all very much. She said we had been appointed principals because we had proven ourselves in pedagogy, now we have to prove our worth in economics. This really got our backs up, does this seem right? What am I doing here if not for the pedagogy? Will a focus on managerialism lead to higher achievements? I think not!" (Shaye)

And:

"I am first and foremost a pedagogue but the perception today in the District is different. Today we spend much less time on pedagogy than we should. This is a great loss. I did not become a principal because I’m a good financial administrator, I am not! The emphasis in primary schools, cannot be on management! You are constantly dealing with children, constantly, a child that is killed in a terrorist attack and the pain of the children, the parents – that’s what you deal with - not management – you need to be a pedagogue."

(Sharon)

These two accounts clearly illustrate the opposition these principals have, those who have been in principalship for more than ten years, to being expected to take on administrative functions at the expense of pedagogy. They feel that especially in primary schools, pedagogy coupled with the interpersonal components of leading a
school are of more value. They feel that the ground has shifted under their feet; the rules of the game have changed. They had been chosen for the job because of their pedagogical abilities which are now deemed insufficient (Whitty et al., 1998; NTFAE, 2005). These veteran principals believe that the new expectations and values dominant in the new leadership culture, conflict with their views of educational leadership. They are resisting the cultural change SBM purports to make. They feel they have to defend their positions and their traditional roles:

“I’m sorry to say this so bluntly but education should be the major force when talking about schooling, I feel I have to apologise for saying this.” (Shaye)

Physical and emotional strain
Veteran principals who are attempting to hold on to their traditional pedagogical roles and take on new administrative tasks are operating under extremely high stress levels. This is underscored in the following account:

“I have a terribly hard time of it, because I am not prepared to move. I am simply collapsing, I am dying, I am dying. I am falling apart because I find myself unable to serve as a pedagogical counsellor as much as I think I should.” (Shaye)

Shaye’s refusal to ‘move’ away from pedagogical leadership is clearly seen by her as the cause of her physical and emotional exhaustion, she is in her own words, ‘collapsing’ and although she is aware of the toll this is taking on her health she is determined to maintain her leading professional role. This fits the findings of Webb (2005) who says “…value conflicts and work overload of trying to sustain educative leadership…are likely to lead to stress and burnout” (p. 86). She is expressing a high degree of resistance to the new leadership culture in the present socio-political environment in Spring Heights.

The answer it seems is not simply a matter of finding the ‘right’ leadership style and a willingness to delegate, what is commonly called in the literature, ‘distributed leadership’ (Gronn, 2003) as the lack of resources to reward people for taking on
extra work impedes this solution. Principals claim that they have been given more tasks, duties and responsibilities but not the support team to carry out the work leading to both physical and emotional strain. By law the hours allocated to schools by the MOE, have to go towards classroom teaching hours, only ten hours can be allocated to non teaching roles. This does not fulfil their needs, as teachers taking on more responsibilities still need to spend a considerable amount of time in the classroom, leaving little time for management duties. All principals compare this lack of an administrative team in primary schools to the situation in high schools where it is dramatically different:

"We need skilled manpower to help us in the day to day running of the school - the job description has increased tremendously and we don't get the assistance high schools get - our allocation has remained the same. It cannot stay the way it is where one person takes on the entire burden. Principalship has become an impossible job, what others do for you is just camouflage. When they [The LEA .B.T.] say I don't delegate it's not true. According to law teachers have to teach. We are falling apart from exhaustion." (Ora)

Taking on more responsibilities without a support staff, has led to physical exhaustion. In some respects their support staff has even been reduced as principals have been forced to take on secretarial roles. Shaye explains this rather peculiar situation:

"There's a ton of work that I have to do and am accountable for, but my support staff has been reduced. I don't even have a full time secretary anymore because she is busy with finances. Her job description has been upgraded to a financial manager and I've become a secretary instead of her. The SBM budget is a rude joke." (Shaye)

This indicates the resentment principals feel regarding the size of the budget allocated to them through SBM and echoes the perceptions of principals in other countries that reforms are not adequately funded (Farkas et al., 2003; Rutherford, 2005). The view that policy makers are far removed from the realities of school life is reinforced.
Moreover, principals feel that their expertise is wasted as they are now spending more time on administrative matters when in fact had a financial expert been hired to do the job, two advantages would have been gained, funds would have been better utilised as book keeper would ‘do things better’ and their talents as pedagogical experts better exploited. This validates the findings of Webb and Vulliamy (1996), where principals expressed the need for a bursar to assist them.

All principals but one, Zoey, speak of the increased workload, stress and pressure which come with the added components of the job. This is attributed mainly to the financial administration. The following account illustrates this:

“I would hire someone to deal with the financial side if I could afford to, that would free me for pedagogy. It is like a constant cloud hanging over me.”
(Dinah)

The totality and isolation of the job

However, it is not only the administrational aspects of the job that create stress but what principals call the totality and complexity of the job which relates to the interpersonal and emotional features of the job:

“I don’t think I stressed enough the totality of the work - how totally absorbing it is - It draws you in and can suck you under. It is so dominant in your private life – there’s no such thing as a private life for a principal. The totality and loneliness, it is your decision, your responsibility and in the end you have to face the consequences. Work in education is different, the depth, the complexity, it enters every aspect of your life. These have been years in which I have nothing else in my life but school - I regret this terribly, that is why I wanted this sabbatical so badly.” (Iris)

The use of the phrase ‘suck you under’ occurs yet again in another principal’s account. The overall picture presented is that of the principal drowning under the workload. Iris, describes the totality of the job which encroaches even on her private life in fact she goes so far as to say that she has had no private life and mentions the
personal sacrifices she has made (Day et al., 2000; Farkas et al., 2003). The identification of the principals' personal identity with their professional identity as presented in this account and the accounts of the more veteran principals is discussed by Southworth (1995), who explores the blurring of the boundaries between the two.

Section Three

2.6c Have their relationships with stakeholders changed?

Primary school principals in the city of Spring Heights interact with both a wider and an immediate role set. The wider role set is the Central Office of the MOE and the immediate role set is the district inspector of the MOE, the LEA, the staff and the parents.

The following diagram maps out how principals perceive their relationships with the various stakeholders to have changed since the introduction of SBM:

Figure 1: Change in relationship with stakeholders
Members of the Wider Role Set

The MOE Central Office

All of the principals express high levels of distrust in the MOE Central Office. This is based mainly on what they see as a series of broken promises and a marked disrespect for principals and teachers. This lack of trust and disillusionment in the Central Office, relates specifically to the then Minister of Education, Limor Livnat and her Director General, Ronit Tiroshe. The following is an individual, though quite representative interpretation of principals' attitudes to the educational leaders in the Central Office:

"I don't see how we can continue to function without more backing and support. If our Minister of Education continues behaving towards teachers as she has been doing over the past two years.... I have never heard her say even one good word about the education system. She voices criticism of and exercises control over the teachers. She has made comments which disparage the teachers, the principals and the system. Ronit, [The Director General. B.T.] has become totally political and populist. Twenty reports on education can be published so what?" (Nathan)

In the above account Nathan is referring to the militant public discourse which accompanied the former administration's attempts to garner support for the contested reforms of the NTFAE (2004, 2005). The reforms were marketed and presented differently to different audiences in order to garner wider public support as often happens with educational policy (Bowe et al., 1992; Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

Principals also mention specific instances when the MOE has gone back on its word, all refer to the GEMS exams. The MOE had promised that these results would be given only to principals. Soon, however, the results were published for all to examine.

Another example of Ministry backtracking mentioned by all principals is the policy on parental payments:
"Although budget plans had been approved by the Ministry mind you, they suddenly announced that there would be no parental payments. Why? How? Explanations? None! Simple! We had followed all the regulations and they backtracked." (Diana)

Principals also point to contradictions in Ministry policy:

"Look, the regulations are contradictory, on the one hand, parental payments are supposed to be in a different account but in Jerusalem they say it should all be in the same account - they themselves do not know what they want. Parents are not prepared to disband the NPO - this is their fight with the both the Ministry and LEA and I of course support them." (Ora)

The MOE it appears has still not reconciled the perceived benefits of a centralised system and the need for school autonomy; (Friedman, 1999; Nir and Eyal, 2003) principals feel that the Ministry is reluctant to take SBM to its logical end:

"That is why I say, if they give, they should take it to the end, not give with one hand and take back with the other. They have left the principal as the executor of functions and not as someone who actually manages this thing called education." (Ora)

The principal in this account is described as an executor of functions, hardly the description of an autonomous leader.

The feeling of having to deal with contradictory directives, changing regulations, unpredictable budgetary frameworks and unexpected developments all seem to undermine the principals’ attempts to ‘do it right’ and follow the guidelines as prescribed by the MOE. These ambivalent policy messages on the part of Central Office has contributed to an erosion of trust between the MOE and principals.
Members of the Immediate Role Set

The district inspector

Principals differentiate between the Central Office and the district inspectors. As much as they speak with disdain and disrespect about the Minister and the Director General, the school district inspectors are for the most part regarded with respect. Only one principal perceives the inspectorate as redundant. They are seen by most as non political, professional people who are there to support them. However, some feel that their relationship with the district inspectors has changed since SBM. Diana cautiously suggests that the change in the inspectors’ role since SBM has mirrored the change in theirs in some respects:

"Maybe I am wrong, but I don’t think it was like that previously. I think the inspectors were also part of the determination of policy. Today I see that we are all simply executors of predetermined policy."

Diana implies that both principals and inspectors have been constrained in their ability to influence policy since SBM and both now simply act according to prescribed guidelines. It appears that principals feel that not only has their power to influence policy been eroded, but so has that of the inspectorate. The agency of educational leaders at all levels seems to have been restricted. The inspectorate, nevertheless, according to many of the principals, still has an important role to play in relation to the support provided to the principal. Diana sees the advantages of having an inspector but attributes this to the personality of her inspector and not due to anything inherent in the role:

"I get a free hand in general. Genia [The school’s district inspector. B.T.] was a full partner in decisions. The major factor here is her personality. I assume that another inspector wouldn’t have left me so much freedom."

(Diana)
This sentiment is shared by Edwina and Zoey who both feel that the inspectors allow them more autonomy and are there as consultants and interfere less. There is a downside to this though. According to Edwina, the MOE left a vacuum which has rapidly been filled by the LEA reflecting a dramatic shift in the locus of control and power.

Iris asserts that the MOE inspectors are as significant as before and not only in procedural matters. However, principals need to know how to ‘use them well’:

"People said that with SBM the inspectors would no longer be significant, but I didn’t agree. The District level is as significant as before. That is, if you know how to exploit their expertise for professional advice. I need someone else’s opinion... or the decision to purchase English Adventure [A programme for teaching English to Young Learners. B.T.] Your input helped me tremendously; I would not have had the guts to buy it if you had not given me your approval."

Here Iris seems to be alluding to the inspector as sharing responsibility with the principal in making major decisions either pedagogical or financial. The programme Iris refers to has both pedagogical implications, teaching English to first grade pupils which is not covered by the Core Curriculum and financial repercussions.

The ability to ‘use the inspectors well’ is seen by some as a source of power and unlike others who see it as limiting their power:

"The inspector can give me advice, not money. We have a lot of power; the fact that I can sit and consult with the inspector is a source of my power. Sharing and dialogue is important. Why would I want to give that up?"

(Tammy)

Tammy sees the access to information provided by the inspectorate as an important source of power. This is congruent with Hoyle’s (1986) classification of knowledge as one of the four bases of power.
On the other hand, some like Anna, see money, another of Hoyle’s power bases, remuneration, as being the source of power. This, coupled with the fact that at the time of the fieldwork, the inspectors no longer received budgets for counselling days and conferences, as these went directly to the schools, has freed her from what she had perceived as the inspector’s ‘hold’ over her:

“There’s a change in our relationship with the Ministry inspectors which is difficult to pinpoint. I no longer have to negotiate with different Subject inspectors about getting hours. SBM released us from all the pedagogical initiatives with which we were bombarded in the past. In fact since SBM, the inspector had to come to me and ask me for money for a conference - this was unheard of in the past. She needs us for counselling days and conferences instead of us getting these things from her. [This has since been reversed and the allocation of counselling days and hours for in-service training and conferences has been returned to the inspectors. B.T.]. I like this change; it has made us more equal. Money gives power!” (Anna)

The principals on the whole feel that as long as they adhere to the Core Curriculum, MOE priorities and the school development plan, the inspectors give them the freedom to decide how to implement these plans. This seems to fit Volansky’s (2003) definition of SBM, the State decides the ‘what’ and the school decides the ‘how’. Most accept this separation of policy and implementation without question:

“If the school budget matches the educational, pedagogical priorities and development plan, then no one in the Ministry questions your pedagogical decisions but they ask clarifying questions. There is also the Core Curriculum which you have to adhere to. You cannot give less, no way!” (Sharon).

Ora is unique in stating that under SBM the District inspectors are obsolete.
“That's the whole question - what is the role of the inspectorate? Nothing! The budgets come from directly from Jerusalem; do I need the District to explain to me what to do with it? Really!”

This directly opposes the view of Shaye who believes in the need for checks and balances:

“A principal should not be able to be a tyrant; he should not be able to decide alone. He should be the first among equals, he should not be omnipotent. It would be a disaster, I'm telling you, a disaster, if they disbanded the inspectorate.” (Shaye)

The role of the school inspector is seen as more than simply an advisor, facilitator and a provider of checks and balances to counteract the power of the principal. The inspector is seen by most as someone who brings expert knowledge into the school and thereby empowers the principal. The following interpretation of the role of the inspector as a bridge to the wider community, the country and the world, reflects the view presented by the more veteran principals:

“I look forward to visits from the inspectors. The role of the inspector also took on a different form; it became more of a facilitator, an advisor, supervision and empowerment of the principal. The inspector knows more than I know, he is the person who makes the connection between the school and the State and the international community, so if this role is taken away, I would be worried that I would lose out. This connection which I believe we are committed to would be lost.” (Batia)

It is clear that Batia benefits from her encounters with the inspectors; they are seen as an additional source of information, knowledge as already noted is considered by the principals as a source of power. The inspector is also seen as a vanguard against local, politicised education as well as the means to ensure the transmission of a sense of national identity and nationhood:
"I would be very upset if the city had sole control over the education system in the city. The local system isn't mature enough. I'm worried about localised politicisation of education. I am committed to the State, to the country; my inspector is committed to the same things. They share responsibility; are more objective and therefore, have a different perspective. I need an inspector. The whole concept of public or national education concerns me. We should never give up on State involvement and responsibility in education – this is simply forbidden! Each municipality should be allowed to express its own individual uniqueness but it cannot be independent in the education system." (Batia)

Batia is expressing the commonly held belief that the formation of an Israeli identity is the responsibility of the education system (Yonai, 1991; Gaziel, 1994; Shapira, 1998) and that this is non-negotiable.

**The local education authority (LEA)**

It is important to remind the reader of the formal place of the LEAs in the Israeli context. Since the Education Act of 1949 was passed, the local authorities have been responsible for building maintenance in primary schools. Since the introduction of SBM, funds have been transferred directly from the MOE to the LEA. This, however, has not simply been a change in the channelling of funds to schools, but as will be shown, has much wider implications. The next section presents the responses of the principals to the changed nature of their relationships with the LEA since SBM.

**The LEA as the provider of training and support**

In presenting the findings to the first research question it was evident that almost all principals were under the misconception that the LEA had initiated SBM. The following excerpt helps to explain why they had this misconception:

"The key significant element is the LEA. All letters sent to the Ministry are also sent to the LEA. The LEA was the one to provide the training and support; the inspector participated but was not active in the sessions." (Zoey)
It appears that throughout the training sessions for principals entering SBM and the initial stages of implementation, the LEA officials planned, conducted the sessions and provided on site support to the principals. Even Batia who had participated in the national, pilot programme, was provided with ongoing support by the LEA and says that in the training “Ministry inspectors were silent bystanders.”

**Increasing control is perceived as restricting autonomy**

The LEA now has greater control over the primary school education system. This is described by most principals as severely restricting their autonomy.

“They know online how much we have and exactly how much money goes where and for what. This begs the question as to what kind of SBM this is. There’s a lot of control, a lot, but if you work according to the principles laid down by the LEA, there are no complaints. But you have to go according to their guidelines!” (Ora)

The above statement clearly shows that the principals are expected to work within the framework provided by the LEA, which, they believe, restricts their autonomy. The feeling of being under constant surveillance is vividly described by Edwina:

"The LEA is much more on top of us than before - it reminds me of George Orwell’s ‘big brother’, I’m waiting for them to install surveillance cameras. They are involved in everything and stick their noses into every little hole. I’m constantly being watched. Even something like the cake sale, I need to get permission from Hila [Head of Primary Schools in Spring Heights LEA. B.T.] in order to raise money even though the parents have been doing this here for years. The LEA is taking over where the Ministry has left off - what kind of autonomy is this where they tie my hands over something like a cake sale?" (Edwina)

This Orwellian metaphor to describe the changed role of the LEA is also used by others:

"Big brother is always watching and waiting to pounce.” (Anna)
This view of being under constant surveillance of the ‘big brother’ appears to transcend boundaries between long serving and newer principals.

**Increased controls perceived as necessary**

Nonetheless, not all principals view this supervision as negative. The constant control over their expenditures is viewed by some as restricting their autonomy, but by others as necessary and connected to accountability. The need for constant supervision is expressed by Iris:

> "We are constantly aware that we are being supervised. The big brother is always watching us which is also a good thing. It doesn't bother me, this is public money, it doesn't belong to me." (Iris)

Tammy welcomes financial supervision as affording her protection against litigation:

> "The LEA checks the finances so from a public point of view I am less exposed to charges of wrongdoings and financial liability. I am happy that they can go into my bank account and see where the money is going." (Tammy)

Some feel that the LEA’s questioning of principals’ expenditures is legitimately connected to accountability. Nathan feels that although it is legitimate that he is accountable to the LEA, the manner in which it is done is problematic:

> "It doesn’t make sense that the LEA pays for a third of the activity in the school and I will not be accountable to them as well. They have the right to demand accountability. But it depends on how the LEA perceives its role, if the aim is to assist, then it’s different, but if it is simply to find fault and to reprimand then .... Principals resent the fact that the LEA knows every detail about and questions our expenses. I went as an observer to another city and it is done differently, there it is done as a learning process, here not at all...” (Nathan)
This suggests that the LEA in Spring Heights has used SBM as a means to exert control and exercise power over the principals and points to the localised adaptation of SBM in the city where the personality of the players involved seems to play a large role in affecting the manner in which policy is implemented. The contradictions here between expectations of accountability and autonomy are obvious, as principals no longer have the responsibility for developing educational policy for their schools. Instead, they are responsible for implementing a set of policies that have been dictated largely by the LEA.

The LEA profiting at the expense of schools

However, some principals not only resent the supervision over their financial transactions, but they also feel that the LEA is making a profit at the expense of schools, causing the perception that notions of transparency are one sided:

"Today they are operating with a profit, which was not supposed to happen. They argue that these profits are to cover their expenses. Now, I would like to see their transparency!" (Diana)

Moreover, principals are annoyed that the LEA has set up a large bureaucratic system which they feel is cutting into the schools’ budget allocation. This is depicted in the following representative account:

"SBM gave birth to many different bodies which take money from schools. Why do I have to pay commission to a totally bureaucratic body which sits in huge offices with fancy equipment? Why does the money to support this mechanism have to come from our SBM budget? SBM even financially did not go in the direction it was supposed to. The bureaucratic mechanism simply swelled. So where is the efficiency they were talking about?" (Sharon)

One of the key concepts underlying SBM, notions of efficiency, seems, at least in the eyes of the principals, to have been undermined, contributing to a climate of distrust between principals and LEA Officers.
A perceived lack of professionalism
Furthermore, principals resent having to pay the price for either miscalculations made by the LEA, which is interpreted as a lack of professionalism in their financial management or for poor budgeting on the part of other schools. This is exemplified in the following account which typifies the sentiments expressed by the majority of principals:

"The LEA distributed diskettes with incorrect formulas. I cannot rely on them, so I made my own and was left with a balance. They had calculated the fiscal year incorrectly. In the end, they took NIS 30,000 from me. What could I have done? Who could I have complained to? I had no say in the matter, no choice! They plain and simply put their hands in my till. [At this point in the interview Diana stood up, paced the room and explained that she needed to calm down before we continued. B.T.]" (Diana)

Diana is still overwrought by an incident that had occurred at least a year before, when budget surpluses from her school were used to cover the deficits in other schools. The manner in which SBM has been implemented in Spring Heights contradicts one of the most important elements of SBM, “where schools are empowered to carry over budget surpluses from one year to the next”. (Abu-Duhou, 1999, p. 34). Brown (1992) asserts that when school districts confiscate surpluses to cover district deficits this jeopardises decentralisation and may lead to recentralisation. This underscores the limited and rather precarious nature of SBM in Spring Heights. Moreover, many principals now distrustful of the LEA’s financial administration purposely plan their budgets to avoid surpluses undermining attempts to use funds more efficiently.

Areas of responsibility are perceived as being unclear
Another area of conflict in the principals’ relationship with the LEA is connected to ambiguous guidelines concerning building maintenance. The LEA is officially responsible for any renovations which have to do with school infrastructure. However, this is not so clear cut:
"Part of the budget remains in the LEA, it’s not clear what our budgetary responsibility is and what theirs is and it is not clear to them that the budget is actually ours. It causes situations which are quite awkward. We have learned to live with this over time; in the beginning it caused a great uproar. The lines of responsibility are not clear. When there is a large job to be done then the LEA gets cold feet and tries to pass it on to the school.” (Ora)

Ora’s account indicates that this bickering over areas of responsibility is something distasteful which they have simply learned to live with. She adds, “I do not make an issue out of these things. I am an obedient person by nature, I respect authority”. However, other principals are less complacent about these confrontations with the LEA and resent being told that they do not understand SBM. The following is a case in point:

“...there is a leak in the ceiling, so start arguing with the LEA. I end up fighting with them. They say, ‘this is SBM, what do you want from us? This is your problem not ours – you obviously don’t understand SBM.’ It was not like that before, I would report the problem and they would deal with it.” (Shaye)

Not only are the guidelines unclear, but principals feel that despite the SBM binder containing clear rules and regulations, the LEA sends out confusing and contradictory directives:

“I do not know how to say this delicately or politely, but there are constantly upheavals and vague directives from them.” (Sharon)

This is bewildering, time consuming and makes their work more difficult. (see Bowe et al., 1992).

**Increased involvement in pedagogy**

The shift in the locus of power has led to the LEA’s involvement in pedagogy as well. Sharon explains why she feels this has occurred:
“In the past, the Municipality was responsible for maintenance and the Ministry for pedagogy. Now, with SBM, the principals take over the maintenance so what is left for the LEA to do? They did not want to be redundant; so they went full scale into pedagogy.” (Sharon)

The changed nature of the principals’ relationship with the LEA under SBM is perceived by many as a dramatic shift in the locus of power. This is seen by most as a negative development. They tend to resent the fact that people without a pedagogical background now have the power to question their decisions and furthermore to evaluate their performance as principals. Shaye describes this:

“My relationship with the LEA has changed completely. Until SBM, my relationship with the LEA was almost none existent; today they are not any less dominant than the inspectorate. Whose servant am I? The answer is both the Ministry and the LEA. The LEA even more and that is sad. There are people in key positions who do not come from a pedagogical background. I need to get my development plans approved by the LEA. That’s an invasion into pedagogy; the LEA evaluates everything I do down to the last detail.”

(Shaye)

Although all the principals welcome the cessation of ‘initiatives’ from Central Office, the LEA it appears has ‘initiatives’ of its own. How principals respond to these varies. Some simply comply without question, others go along as it is unpleasant not too, some interpret or adapt the initiatives so that they fit in with their personal visions and others choose to ignore them. The following anecdotes represent the range of responses:

“My vision is to build a beacon to attract gifted kids. The LEA provides the framework, but within it I can design an enrichment programme for after school studies. The LEA says I must work on Green Leadership and they suggest different options but I decide on the implementation. I give it my interpretation so that it will fulfil the gifted kids’ needs. I have no problem with this, so the gifted kids will work in the ancient wine press.” (Tammy)
Tammy avoids placing herself in the situation where she would be reprimanded by the LEA for not complying with their initiatives. She uses their agenda of Green Leadership to fulfil her vision for a programme for gifted pupils. She positions herself below the LEA officers in the hierarchical system as is apparent in the following account:

"I'll never be in the situation where the LEA will tell me that I cannot do something because it's not part of the city priorities because I understand and I will have learned very well beforehand what the LEA priorities are. I build my priorities according to that - I don't run a school owned by my mother and father, I live within a community which has a framework and I work within that framework. I do not live in a bubble!" (Tammy)

Tammy appears to have adjusted her personal vision and complied with the LEA initiative. However, she does not see this as limiting her autonomy as she feels that she has managed to provide an answer to the needs of the pupils in her school. She appears have adopted the strategy which Day et al. (2000) call "complete internal adjustment" (p. 11) or deference. However, not all principals are so complacent about these initiatives. Batia presents a slightly different perspective:

"The LEA has an agenda like Green Leadership. They spoke about ecology, ecology, ecology non stop! I believe in Social Education, so I interpreted this as a quality environment which includes social values. But I always have them barking down my neck that what they mean by quality environment are green, ecological factors and not what I'm doing. I find it hard to come to terms with this. I don't believe that this should be the central issue of the city of Spring Heights or my school. They insisted on the adoption of the ancient wine press. I most certainly do not have total autonomy in pedagogy." (Batia)

It is clear that Batia tried like Tammy to interpret the 'initiative' so it would suit her goals for the school and tied to mediate between the LEAs' agenda and her values,
but she is resentful that the LEA insists on their interpretation and thereby restricts her pedagogical autonomy. Some, like Nathan, admit to being more pragmatic:

“We are bombarded by projects; I take what you feel suits the school and what doesn’t, I file in the round bin. Like I threw out the city wide quiz, but in the end I had to cooperate, I had no choice. So, I nominated a child who simply sat in my office all week long and learned for the quiz. This was very unprofessional but they did not let up! It depends on who the initiative belongs to, the MOE you can overlook – they are far away, but if it comes from the mayor of the city then you have to go along with it, it is unpleasant not to. SBM did not free us from ‘initiatives’ because we have even more now from the LEA. You have to decide what suits your school but you end up doing things because it’s awkward not to, they put pressure on you.”  (Nathan)

Nathan admits to pretending to comply as it is unpleasant not to. It is difficult for him to withstand the pressure, but he resorts to what he clearly feels are ‘unprofessional’ tactics. He at first attempts to resist adopting the role of “subversive” (Day et al., 2000, p. 156) and then takes on a strategy of “strategic compliance” (Day et al., 2000, p. 11) because of his sense of political acumen, it would be politically unwise not to cooperate, though he is acutely aware that his actions are not in keeping with his educational values.

**Budget allocations are perceived to be more transparent**

The advantage mentioned by all is that now that schools get their budget allocations according to set criteria, they are less dependent on personality factors in procuring finances. The overall feeling is that this financial transparency, at least in school allocations, is a positive change. On an interpersonal level, all the principals are relieved that they no longer have to forge personal relations with people in the LEA in order to secure finances. The following account encapsulates the sentiments of principals leading large schools in high SES communities:

“In the first year I was on a high. I disconnected myself totally from the LEA. It was a pleasure not to have to suck up to people. The LEA and I are now on
However, principals leading smaller schools feel that the allocation of hours per pupil leads to inequity. Smaller schools are usually concentrated in the lower socio-economic neighbourhoods and so the disparity between schools becomes even more acute. The following point of view is representative of principals in these areas:

"The allocation of funds is all wrong, we get hours according to the number of pupils but electricity and water is the same and not dependent on the number of pupils. Where is the logic in that?" (Edwina)

Moreover, one of the declared aims of SBM, that of equity, has clearly not been attained as schools in more affluent areas of the city are supported by strong NPOs which do not exist in the weaker areas. All the principals leading schools with NPOs are resolute in their opposition to attempts by the LEA to close down these organisations to the point of threatening to join the parents in legal action against the LEA. This positions principals as a buffer between the LEA and the parents creating additional tensions in their new role.

**The Bureaucratic framework is perceived as restricting and leading to inaction**

The framework set up by the LEA is considered by many principals to be a major factor leading to inaction. The following account although individual is quite representative:

"Most principals are worn down by the bureaucracy that is inherent in obtaining approval and give up at the start. They simply design their work plans so that they coincide with the directives. It's not a simple process to get approval. I am very stubborn and do not give up. There's a feeling that we want you to run the schools but we still want to be in control, they do not give up their control. If I want to renovate the toilets...no, I have to get their permission, - I give up and don't carry out the changes because of the bureaucracy." (Batia)
The above statement is studded with contradictions; on the one hand, Batia mentions colleagues worn down by the bureaucratic process designing their plans in accordance with the framework. This implies that their freedom or agency is limited or non-existent. She claims that she, on the other hand, is stubborn and does not give in. Yet, later she says that she chooses not to carry out planned renovations as she has been worn down by the bureaucracy. Batia goes on to clarify what she means:

"I still haven't received the go ahead for my budget. I won't give in if they don't approve it. This has major ramifications for pedagogy. I will not be satisfied with simply writing letters if it isn't approved, I will actively fight it."

(Batia)

It is evident that principals pick and choose their battles. Some, like Batia, give in on matters of building maintenance and do not enter into conflicts with the LEA on these issues and choose to confront the LEA on matters which are directly connected to pedagogy. Others avoid conflict in the first place and thus become subcontractors (Day et al., 2000) or accommodators (Bowe et al., 1992).

**The LEA is perceived to be abdicating responsibility**

Another theme which emerged is that of the principals' perception that the LEA has abdicated its responsibility and passed the buck (Tanner and Stone, 1998). This was mentioned with great bitterness by five of the principals. The time component was perhaps of significance as the interviews coincided with letters principals had received from the LEA concerning safety hazards in the schools and all produced the letters with much flourish. The following accounts reveal how principals view this expectation that they deal with safety hazards:

"Responsibility!!! [Waving a letter with great flourish. B.T.] I got this letter now from the LEA. All of a sudden they tell me I have to fix safety hazards in the school. They say that I am legally responsible, they're covering their behinds. It's quite threatening. I don't have a lawyer nor do I understand
This heightens their sense that they have been left with the responsibility but have not been given the resources, nor do they possess the knowledge and skills to deal with such issues. Edwina, in the following account, accuses the LEA of being hypocritical:

"They wrote that I have to install stair guards and that the whitewash is too rough. I mean isn't this absurd? ...when they had to foot the bill they never did anything about it, now all of a sudden it must come from my budget. The LEA is hypocritical- all the responsibility is ours but they still demand that I do things their way. Where is their responsibility? They expect us to do everything and take all the responsibility both legally and morally." (Edwina)

The sense of frustration is compounded by the fact that prior to SBM when such matters lay solely in the hands of the LEA, they were not attended to. Nathan describes the precarious legal situation principals are in:

"Safety was always an issue but now even more so because you are supposedly in SBM and it is not enough to warn others that there is a safety hazard. The responsibility on the principal is absolute, absolute." (Nathan)

Nathan goes on to discuss a well publicised case in which a Jerusalem principal also under SBM was convicted of negligence when a pupil was killed on falling out of a school window. Letters she had written to the LEA, warning them about the safety hazard, were taken as proof that she had known of the danger and still not done enough to prevent it. This is an issue which bothers all of the principals and they feel vulnerably exposed to litigation.

**Changes in the relationship with the LEA have affected the positioning of the schools**

This shift in principals’ relationships with the LEA has led to confusion on the part of the principals as to where their schools are now positioned in the educational
hierarchy. Similar to the findings in the research conducted by Gibton et al. (2000) on autonomous schools in Israel, the principals in this study do not have a clear sense of the place of the school in the educational hierarchy. They report a sense of confusion as to who they should answer to. All the principals feel that now they have two masters, the MOE and the LEA. This doubles their workload causing considerable resentment; and is seen as contributing to an eroding sense of autonomy:

“SBM did not free me from this obligation, this reporting back, to the contrary. Instead of doing the work once I do everything twice. In the past, the Municipality was responsible for maintenance and the Ministry for pedagogy. Now, I have to report constantly to everyone on everything. As I said before, I am the servant of two masters." (Sharon)

The above account also reflects the ambiguity evident in the involvement the LEA now has in pedagogical matters. Veteran principals find this difficult to accept as traditionally they were answerable only to the MOE on matters of pedagogy and their dealings with the LEA prior to SBM had been only on issues relating to maintenance. As the following account indicates, principals resent criticism from the LEA more than from the MOE:

“I also don’t really know who my bosses are, to tell the truth I feel less comfortable when I’m reprimanded by the LEA than by the Ministry. With the Ministry I understand more, we have pedagogical discussions and disagreements and I feel fine because that is what I understand.” (Shaye)

Principals are also caught between power struggles between the MOE and the LEA which places them in an awkward position:

“By definition, I’m accountable to the inspector but also in sentiment. But we have to be very diplomatic here. When there are conflicting interests you end up getting involved in frictions and arguments. I am employed by the MOE not the LEA.” (Nathan)
Principals are aware of the fact that contractually they are employed by the MOE, but they do feel accountable to the LEA as well by virtue of the fact that part of their budget is provided by the LEA:

“I felt uncomfortable when the Ministry told us not to give the results of the national tests to the LEA. We were explicitly forbidden to. I was happy not to hand over the results because I was afraid they would be abused – like published in the local press.” (Nathan)

In Nathan’s statement, the power struggles between the LEA and the MOE over areas of responsibility are evident. It can also be discerned that there is an element of distrust between principals and the LEA. This is manifested by Nathan’s fear that the results if passed on to the LEA would be published in the local press.

When asked explicitly to whom the school belongs, the range of answers was vast; from “me” to “the pupils, parents, community, the LEA, the Ministry and the country.” One said that she knew it did not belong to her but acted as if it were her private home. Some principals found this a very difficult question to answer and ended up saying “to everyone, I don’t really know.” The responses indicate that the majority of principals do not view themselves as true masters of their schools but see themselves as subordinate to a wide range of stakeholders.

**Staff**

This section is divided into two, the teachers and the support staff.

**The teachers**

Six of the principals claim to have involved their teachers more in pedagogical decisions now than they did prior to SBM. However, the extent and the areas of involvement vary. Only four claim that all the teachers in the school share responsibility for designing the school development plan. They then qualify this and explain that those who are not involved are teachers new to the school. This has been done by changing the school organisational structure and placing the teachers in teams according to the age level or subjects they teach. These four principals have
managed to do this by scheduling the timetable in a way which enables the teams to meet during the school day. This change in relationship with the staff seems to have brought about a more collegial relationship:

"The previous management structure was different. There was a lot of anger; there were many managerial tasks and few people in positions of power. There was no reason for anyone to demand payment, because they wanted it to be managed differently. They wanted the managerial functions and are happier now." (Diana)

This supports the theory that shared decision-making leads to greater commitment on the part of the teachers (Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985; Cheng, 2003).

Two of the principals feel they have involved the teachers to some extent, but this is limited either to a relatively small number of people, the SMT (Gronn, 2003) numbering not more than four people out of an average staff of thirty.

All but one of the six, feel that this has changed their relationship with the staff in a positive manner and has led to the teachers being more committed to the school’s goals. One, however, feels that it is precisely this empowerment she has given the teachers which has distanced her from them:

"They no longer see me as a pedagogical authority; I have built up a team of people who do it. It’s a compliment that I’ve empowered others, but I can’t help feeling that there’s something missing now in my relationship with the staff. This saddens me." (Sharon)

For Sharon, like the principals in Rutherford’s study (2005), the joy has clearly gone out of the job. She is no longer doing what she feels best qualified to do. The perception that decentralisation reforms have reduced principals’ ability to provide pedagogical leadership has been well documented in the research of others such as Webb (1994), Webb and Vulliamy (1996) and Day et al. (2000).
Those who have not involved teachers in pedagogical decisions provide different explanations for this. Three principals attribute this to their management style and also to a belief that the teachers are not really capable of making these decisions. One feels that involving teachers in pedagogy was not her first priority. They all expressed the opinion that teachers have a very heavy workload and should not be burdened with more. This view of principals shielding their teachers from the full impact of change is supported by Bowe et al. (1992), Southworth (1995) and Day et al. (2000).

Teachers’ involvements in budgetary concerns are with the exception of one school non existent. The principal who claims that she has involved her staff in setting both pedagogical priorities and budgeting believes that this has led to the teachers’ sense of autonomy:

“I learned it, then I taught the heads of the teams who taught it to the team members. We made changes in the organisational structure of the school and the whole staff feels more autonomous now.” (Zoey)

She continues:

“I decide on the priorities and we are given the opportunity to show our results. SBM is good for the people. The heads of teams report back to the staff twice a year. Transparency is the key word.” (Zoey)

Zoey is describing a situation in which the employees perform best as they are involved in the decision-making processes and therefore more committed, she provides support for the position of Argyris (1982), Caldwell and Spinks (1988) and Srivasta & Barrent (1988). However, her use of the first person pronoun to describe setting priorities may be more than a slip of the tongue. This compels one to question if all the teachers in her school are really involved in setting priorities or if she determines priorities and then delegates the tasks to the teachers.

All the other principals believe that either the teachers do not want the responsibility of managing a budget, (Conley, 1991; Smylie, 1992) are incapable of doing so
(Brown, 1992) or it would be morally wrong to give them added chores and responsibilities as they cannot be financially remunerated. The following statement encapsulates this:

"But to actually manage a budget - teachers don't want that. That is my argument with the Municipality. They say I have to force them. First let the LEA do SBM and then we will." (Diana)

Diana seems to be shielding her teachers from external demands much like the principals in the studies of Bowe et al. (1992), Southworth (1995) and Day et al. (2000).

Shaye provides yet another explanation for not involving teachers:

"I should have widened the circle but didn't, but even now if I change my management style and try to delegate; I don't have the resources to remunerate anyone. I cannot empower people if I cannot pay them for their extra work and responsibility." (Shaye)

Shaye attributes her lack of involving teachers in decision-making to her management style (Sakney and Dibski, 1994) and then seems to ease her conscience by explaining that her inability to reward them financially for their work is in fact the reason why she cannot empower her staff.

Nathan presents a unique point of view:

"My teachers are not involved at all in SBM. Orange Grove [A weak socio economic sector of the city. B.T.] is different, the staffroom is a reflection of the school population and vice versa. The best teachers do not come to teach in Orange Grove. The teachers are devoted and dedicated but are not of the highest calibre. I did not explain to them what SBM was all about." (Nathan)
He evidently believes that the teaching staff in his school do not possess the intellectual abilities nor the qualifications to be equal partners in the decision-making process. Nathan, then rethinks his previous statement and feels that perhaps he did not involve the teachers in decision-making processes as it was easier to make decisions himself:

"SBM means nothing to the teachers. This was my fault, I did not pass on to them the principles of SBM; I did not open this up for discussion. This is one of the conclusions that I need to draw, perhaps I did not involve them because it was easier for me not to... I have never thought about this before..., no, I did not empower the teachers." (Nathan)

This lack of faith in the teachers’ abilities or desires to be full partners in the planning process has the potential to undermine one of the underlying principles of SBM and to be leading to a leadership style that is more hierarchical than before (Bowe et al., 1992; Blackmore et al., 1996; Whitty, 1998 and Southworth, 1999). All the principals in this study are still pivotal, dominant figures in their schools with SBM having little impact on their teachers.

The support staff

According to all the principals, three people have undergone significant role shifts under SBM, the principals, the secretary and the janitor. The increased significance of the auxiliary staff is validated by the research findings of Cooper and Kelly (1993) and Webb and Vulliamy (1996). So much so, that some go as far as to say that the success of SBM depends on the quality of their support staff. All the principals draw up the final budget together with the secretaries and some have delegated administrative and financial tasks associated with SBM to the secretaries.

The janitor too has taken on a much greater role and can save the school a considerable sum of money. Janitors are responsible for doing minor repairs, calling in outside repair men and overseeing the work. The principals all claim that they are dependent on these people in a manner which was unheard of prior to SBM.
When the support staff is competent, they have the potential to not only lessen the principals’ workload but also to share responsibility and so thus avert the feeling of isolation principals experience.

"It is essential for the secretary to be excellent - SBM enabled me to empower others, even the janitor, I delegated the administrative aspects of SBM to them and that’s how I managed to overcome the hurdle. I am less alone; one of the biggest complaints of my colleagues is the isolation of the job." (Batia)

The fly in the ointment though is that these significant people are employed through the LEA and as municipal workers they belong to a very strong union and cannot easily be dismissed:

"These are people I do not hire myself and it is difficult to get rid of them. This is a cause for great frustration." (Sharon)

This discontent over their lack of autonomy in choosing their support staff is compounded by the perceived weak professional skills of some of these staff members:

"I have never had a janitor I could rely on; they have always been the lowest of the low. Their jobs have changed and they did not receive additional training. If they were good, the burden would not fall on me, I cannot rely on the janitor so I had to take over because it has financial repercussions. This is a great burden and one of the reasons I took a sabbatical, I was exhausted as I had to double check everything even the cost of painting a door." (Iris)

A new ‘trilogy’, a label used in the coding of the data, has been formed comprising the principal, the secretary and the janitor. The working relations between these three people have the potential to make school leadership, at least on administrative side easier for the principal. However, when these functions are filled by people who have neither the professional skills nor the desire to take on more responsibilities, the
repercussions are potentially dangerous, either leading to a waste of financial resources or leaving the principal with an overwhelming burden.

**Parents**

Although the link between SBM and parental participation has in some countries been a central element in school restructuring, (Levačić, 1995; Bullock and Thomas, 1997; Whitaker, 2003) in Israel this has not been the case (Volansky and Bar Eli, 1995/6). This is perhaps due to cultural differences or as some principals say, apathy:

"We don't really want total transparency and I don't think the parents want it either. This is a cultural mismatch; parents in Israel don't want to be bothered." (Anna)

As was stated in chapter two, school boards of governors or council sites were not introduced in Israel nor was parental choice of schools. Nevertheless, SBM is seen by principals, particularly those leading school in high SES areas, as bringing about a significant change in their relationship with the parents. The following account connects the change in parental involvement with schools to SBM, notions of transparency and greater media coverage of schooling:

"Parents have been given legitimacy to interfere in school management, interference, not involvement ... every move I make I have to be answerable to the parents - this was unheard of. With SBM the number of complaints and the way they complain has intensified. Much more since SBM because of notions of transparency, parents have a direct line to the Minister. They have only rights and no obligations, this transparency and the threat of media exposure is constantly with us - this was unheard of in the past, there weren't even education sections in the local papers before." (Dinah)

On the one hand, Dinah complains about parental involvement and says that it has the potential to destroy a principal's reputation, yet on the other hand, she takes advantage of their expertise in both financial and legal matters:
"I am sure that principals who do not run schools in a community such as mine, where they do not have such educated parents to assist them have great difficulties." (Dinah)

Principals in schools with NPOs also see the advantages of parental participation, both in raising more funds for the school and so enabling principals to fulfil their pedagogical aims by providing enrichment classes, but also in providing the principal with legal backing:

"Today the NPO provides me with legal coverage too because I don't trust the LEA in that either." (Diana)

Yet other principals consciously decide not to use the expertise of parents as they are cognizant of the perceived dangers of parental involvement. In the following account parental interference and the media are seen as the cause for the perceived 'crisis in education':

"The crisis of education in Israel is because borders have been blurred between parental authority and school authority. Parents today have no respect, no trust in the schools and do not come from a 'clean' place - the media has also played a negative role in this - our public image is so bad that parents are not interested in helping but in criticising and taking over. I allow them to have a dialogue with me but I'm careful about letting them become involved to the point where it becomes interference. I will not let them butt into the financial running of the school." (Tammy)

Tammy's viewpoint is supported by the findings of Goldring (1993) that principals in high SES schools realise that they have no option but to involve parents but "want to keep the limits of this involvement clear" (p. 112).

The disparity between SBM rhetoric on community involvement and practice is felt more strongly by principals leading schools in weaker socio economic areas:
"In the 'correct', SBM, in the books, parents also have a large role. Perhaps they meant that in certain populations where parents can be partners in the whole thought process.... But in this population [A low SES school. B.T.] parents have no idea about economics and most certainly none whatsoever about pedagogy." (Shaye)

Her ambivalence is clear, parental involvement it appears is not clear cut. This view that parental involvement is not suitable for all populations is echoed by all the principals leading schools in low SES areas. Principals working in low SES schools do not perceive the parents as threatening and powerful but nor do they view them as equal partners. This is evident in Goldring’s (1993) study but no evidence can be found in the present study to support her claim that principals in low SES schools are now responding more to parents’ initiatives.

Similar sentiments are expressed by Nathan who adds the element of danger inherent in parental non involvement as this leads to principals operating without adequate supervision:

"The parents in my community aren’t involved at all in SBM. On the one hand, it’s an advantage, they let you get on with the work and don’t interfere, but on the other hand, it’s dangerous, the principal does everything without any controls and criticism and these are large sums of money.” (Nathan)

Principals are aware that theoretically, parents should be active partners in schooling; however, they choose not to create opportunities for true partnerships:

"They are not partners in preparing the budget, there is no reason to make them equal partners, even though conceptually perhaps they should be, but I see no reason to... this is my jurisdiction, my decisions. There are limits to transparency." (Iris)

All of the principals in this study, without exception, admit to having restricted notions of transparency with regard to parents. They admit to going through the
motions of parental involvement but are aware that this is only for external appearances. The following anecdote reveals this:

“I tell them what I think is necessary for them to know, there are two parents who are in my pocket. I spoke to them before the general meeting and then they backed me up.” (Ora)

Although parental choice of schools has not been introduced in the primary school system in Spring Heights, principals still feel the need to market their schools. This they say is related to SBM as with the introduction of SBM parents especially in stronger areas have become more involved in schooling and have higher expectations from schools particularly with regard to financial transparency and accountability. Increased expectations of parents have been documented by both Weindling (1992) and Southworth (1998), although they do not refer to differences in socio economic areas. The local press covers schools in the city weekly and results of national and city tests are published. Although children are registered to schools in their neighbourhood, parents with the political know-how can get their children transferred to other schools. Principals are aware of this trend and make efforts to publicise innovations in the local press. The following account expresses this succinctly:

“I am not only a pedagogical principal – first I have to learn to market myself – people have to rent out facilities from me – I need to raise more money, I need to advertise myself. SBM is also financial, I need more pupils, each pupil is worth more hours so I need to convince parents to register to my school. Many kids who don’t live here have asked the municipality to place them here.” (Tammy)

New formulas for budget allocations where the “money follows the pupils” (Whitty, et al., 1989, p.30) have contributed to the need to market schools and education is thus seen as a commodity.
The community

Some principals, though not all, have taken on a wider role (Ribbins, 1985), that of leading figures within the community. This is not influenced by the SES of the school, but rather seems to be dependent on the values the principal adheres to (Rutherford, 2005). Diana and Iris, both principals in affluent neighbourhoods, see their role in the community very differently:

"SBM is the means to become a central figure in the community, an educational community leader is how I see myself. We are the cornerstone of the community. I could be in competition with the Community Centre but why should I be? We complement each other. Not every school has such a high communal awareness as this school. I could have dried up, strangled the Community Centre. I could have moved all the afternoon activities to the school but the Community Centre serves other members of the community like the elderly as well, it would have been immoral to compete with them." (Iris)

Iris sees herself as a pivotal figure in the community. She explains that she could have ‘dried up’ the Community Centre, been more entrepreneurial and raised more funds for the school, but it would have conflicted with her values.

This contrasts with Diana’s view. She too sees herself and her school as pivotal to the community but her actions stem from very different motivations:

"We were close to a Community Centre and we competed with it. We were very aggressive in our actions. There must be one place in the neighbourhood where the children can be from morning till night. The school operates after the end of the school day, as a Community Centre, but for the purpose of profit used to buy additional study hours, or improvements to the physical infrastructure, that too, although legally that’s forbidden. Look, this is one of the highest SES neighbourhoods so our allocations from the Ministry and the LEA are very small. If I did not raise funds aggressively, I would have no money to purchase the enrichment programmes. There was no other way to
obtain additional funds for the school, I took a calculated, business decision and managed to close down the Community Centre." (Diana)

Diana has turned the school into the focal point of the neighbourhood; all extra curricular activities take place in the school building under her supervision. She exhibits no moral dilemma about forcing the Community Centre to close down. She rationalises this by saying that it is her belief that children should be ‘in one place from morning to night’ and explains that this is the only way she can raise the financial resources her school needs. Diana, has embraced and internalised the managerial aspects of her job. Her financial acumen is the envy of her colleagues; all suggested she be interviewed for this study.

Another principal who has taken on a central role in the community is Sharon, however her view of community activity is quite different:

“This is a very community oriented school. We have a programme called Caring Community; we have established a group which cares for the community at all levels. We now have over 30% Arab children in the school and the Jewish kids come mainly from illiterate homes. One of the programmes we have set up is a club for parents; they meet with the psychologist, paid for with funds we have raised and two of our teachers who get paid through SBM funds.” (Sharon)

Sharon’s activity within the community is solely for the good of the community; the programmes are funded by the school through the SBM funds and are not used to generate additional income for the school. Sharon who has so plainly articulated her opposition to SBM, seems to have found a way to realise her social values and use SBM resources to implement these ideals. This is something she says she could not have done prior to SBM. This supports the findings of Moore et al., 2002 and Gold et al., 2003, who found that principals’ visions are rooted in their educational values and they can adopt “strategic pragmatism” (Moore et al., 2002, p.185) in filtering national policies so that they act in accordance with their own value systems. SBM has enabled Sharon to become a social advocate in her community (Murphy and Beck,
1994; Sergiovanni, 1995; Gibton et al., 2000). However, her decision to apply for early retirement suggests that this was insufficient to relieve the tensions arising from her new management role and the subsequent clash with her personal values.

To sum up, five of the principals see themselves as taking on a wider role beyond the school, yet the type of community involvement is dependent on their values and how they position themselves within the community.

The next section presents the responses of the principals to the third research question which examines their perceptions of the requisite competencies required for their new role.
5.3 Question Three

3. To what extent do principals feel they have the requisite competencies (knowledge, skills and values) for the changes in their role brought about by SBM?

Few principals readily admit to not having the competencies for the changes in their role. Only one, Sharon, candidly admits to not having the required skills to effectively manage a school according to the new job description, nor does she feel that it is in keeping with her values. Her decision to take early retirement, as have two other principals who participated in this study, a fourth has taken a sabbatical year stating that she needs to devote time to herself and her family, verifies the findings of scholars who have pointed to the shortage of qualified applicants for principal positions in Western countries (Gronn, 2003; DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Walker and Qian, 2006). In the following account Sharon candidly reveals her feelings of inadequacies brought on since SBM was introduced:

"You have to be a good administrator and be good in pedagogy. It is very difficult to balance the two aspects of the role. I am not a good administrator; I invest too much energy in deciding what kind of salary people get and how much money to pay the plumber. They [The LEA. B.T.] should have done these calculations for me, this is their expertise and they know how to calculate expenses, read and draw up contracts. I always end up in overdraft." (Sharon)

Another says that it is not that she is incapable of managing finances or of getting someone to help her, but that she is opposed to it on principle and therefore does everything in her power to avoid doing it:

"This is something I'm repressing, it is something I hate, detest and resent doing. I am a school principal, what do they want from me? [This is almost a shout. B.T.] ...to expect me to do work in something I have no clue about... I am crucified every time I have to present the development plans. My husband
is an accountant and would help if I asked but I resent the very fact that I am asked to deal with it. If I had known 15 years ago that this would be part of my job description, I would never have gone into educational management.”

(Shaye)

From this account, it is clear that Shaye who had initially embraced SBM, is strongly opposed to the fact that financial administration has become part of her job, so much so, that she avoids dealing with it even though she gets reprimanded when she presents her school development plans. Her choice of the word ‘crucified’ reveals how painful this process is to her, she feels that she is being cruelly and unjustly tormented. She goes as far as to say that she would never had chosen this career path, had she known that this is what would be expected of her. She is clearly operating under very high levels of stress both because of her lack of competence in the financial aspects of her role perhaps causing a low level of self efficacy (Chaplain, 2001) and because she is strongly opposed to the current managerialist approach to educational leadership which conflicts with her pre-existing educational beliefs and philosophies (Gewirtz, 2002; Moore et al., 2002; Webb, 2005). Unlike the principals in Jones’ (1999b) study, Shaye has not managed to undergo a process of adaptation where “the hybrid/professional manager performs a management job but based on professional values” (Jones, 1999b, p. 335). She fits the type that Grace (1995) calls “principal resistors” (p. 74) and is antagonistic towards the cultural change expected of principals under SBM.

Principals use various strategies to enable them to cope with their new roles. Dinah takes whatever help she can get and is not embarrassed to consult others, either parents in the community or LEA Officers. Anna for the first two years hired an administrator to deal with finances but as a result of increasing cutbacks she can no longer afford to. She has since divided up responsibilities between herself, the secretary and the school janitor, forming what is referred to in this study as the new ‘trilogy’. Batia has delegated financial duties to her secretary but like others, feels badly about not being able to recompense her for the extra workload. Tammy, Dinah and Iris like Sharon and Shaye feel that the financial administration would be more effectively handled by an accountant, but do not express the degree of resentment that
the latter two express. Ora, Diana, Zoey, Edwina and Nathan all feel that they were born to it, ready for it, had the background for it and are not opposed to dealing with financial administration.

3.a What knowledge, skills and values are required for principals in SBM?

Zoey lists the characteristics she feels principals now need:

"Responsibility is greater under SBM and so are the demands, a principal needs to have many other characteristics besides for pedagogy: [She counts them on her fingers, B.T.]

1. Initiative
2. Financing skills
3. Fund raising abilities
4. Leadership qualities
5. Communication skills
6. Interpersonal skills." (Zoey)

Diana adds an additional characteristic which she calls ‘confidence’:

"He needs a lot of confidence to ask questions, to allow himself to learn what he doesn’t know. The system also changes its bases of know-how, so much, so quickly, so many things are changing all the time. You need to know that you don’t know. The most important thing is not to be afraid of the system. You have to be sufficiently flexible and confident to change together with it and to quickly learn other things." (Diana)

She refers to the rapidly changing pace of the knowledge base which principals need to know. The pace of the change is so quick that their knowledge base is insufficient. Principals according to Diana need to be sufficiently aware that what they believe they know can at any moment be overturned. It seems she is alluding to the ability to live with insecurity and to be flexible enough and secure enough to reassess their knowledge base. The rapidly changing pace of educational reforms has been discussed by numerous scholars (Day et al., 1992; Southworth, 1998; Fullan, 2001,
2003; Rutherford, 2005), where in a turbulent environment change seems to be the only stable factor.

An additional component is added in the following account:

"A principal has to have a very broad view [She displays her arms wide and leans forward in her seat to an almost upright position. B.T.] of the whole system and be creative, close your eyes and dream...and know how to carry it out." (Tammy)

Tammy’s account includes the important factor of systemic awareness and knowledge of the broader issues of the policy context (Bell and Stevenson, 2006) as well as the vision educational leaders require and the ability to carry out their visions (Sergiovanni, 1995; Lawlor and Sills, 1999). A few moments later Tammy asks to return to the issue of requisite competencies and says that the most important skill needed is:

"Organisational skills! I have a lot of money in my budget, if I am not organised in my planning, ... God forbid! I shudder to think of the consequences!" (Tammy).

The principals’ responses demonstrate that this is indeed a job of many facets, this begs the question, how can one person fit the new job description? The picture presented by these principals confirms that presented in the literature of principalship today being an impossible job exceeding the competencies of one person (Evans, 1996; DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran; 2003; Fullan, 2003; Gronn, 2003; Davis et al., 2005; Grubb and Flessa, 2006).

3.b What is the impact of SBM on their values?
The issue of values required for a SBM principal is complex. This complexity is succinctly articulated by Iris:
"Sometimes I saw hubris in the power the principals have been given. I have identified principals that related to themselves as no less than god's deputies. I think that under SBM you have to constantly be aware of the fact that you are providing a service, you are working for the sake of the children, you are working in order to serve 'Education'." (Iris)

Iris is referring to the danger that principals will lose sight of the fact that they are in their positions in order to serve others and not to further their own interests. This perspective relates to Sergiovanni's (1995) concept of servant leadership and the ethics of leadership as reflected in the work of Bottery (1992) and Grace (1995). The values held by principals in this study are related to universal humanistic, democratic values such as social justice and equity:

"Social educational issues are still my guiding concern, my key concern and values. Attending to kids with special needs which I insist on, the PDD [Pervasive Development Disorders. B.T] class I opened stems from my belief in social values education." (Batia)

They are also committed to values of the State; they are committed to education as the means to promote a collective Israeli national identity (Gaziel, 1994; Shapiro, 1998):

"I believe that we have to educate children towards Zionistic ideals. We have put the focus on Judaism and Zionism for every grade and I added hours for this. My heart hears the needs of the community." (Dinah)

Education is also seen as the basis for success in life:

"I think that people should be encouraged to develop their abilities to the maximum, to widen their horizons, to open their minds, so that we can develop their curiosity for learning. This is the basic condition for success in later life." (Ora)
Iris focuses on what she believes to be the two major goals of education, providing children with core knowledge and forming their personalities so that they will be happy, well adjusted, contributing members of society:

"A school should be responsible for the child's well being, their emotional and physical well being and take total responsibility for learning skills and world knowledge. On the one hand, education, basic skills and on the other hand, their well being - the person as a whole. That's it in a nutshell, plain and simple!" (Iris)

A surprising premise that became apparent in the responses of six of the more veteran principals was that of SBM being responsible for producing a new breed of principals who have no educational beliefs and values. The following two accounts encapsulate this perception:

"I look at the principals in their thirties and I say to myself what does a youngster like this ...? [Shaye threw her hands up in despair. B.T.]. I sit in principals' meetings ... they know how to speak, they are very eloquent... sometimes I have to pinch myself; where do these youngsters get their self confidence from? I mean really! I would like to see as school principals people who are a class above others; I simply shrivel up from shame. Perhaps I belong to the generation of the desert. The style today is different, it is aggressive, it is not steeped in deep educational values.... There are very young principals coming in and the theories of educational management that they associate with are closely connected to the directions that the whole country is moving, privatisation, marketing .... For me this is very difficult. I think the older principals have a lot more to offer than this new younger generation. Today under SBM they have brought in young principals, young, I should say babies! How can they even identify with the hardships teachers go through? How on earth do they choose principals today... on the basis of their beauty and youth? Where are education, intellect and upbringing?" (Shaye)
And:

"I don't know how to say this politely, but when I look at this new young breed of principals coming in, I am deeply concerned, no, I am anxious to the point of sleepless nights as to the fate of our education system. They're bringing in a new generation of principals who have learned administration and have no value system, no work ethics. They know how to balance a budget and save money, but what do they know about raising a generation of caring citizens who will contribute to society and have self esteem and know how to realise their individual potential? I won't mention any names but look at the new principals, the collection of pipsqueaks, still wet behind the ears...you should come to our meetings and hear how they talk...the arrogance...and these are the people who the District and the LEA are now selecting as our new generation of leaders. I shudder to think of the people who will be taking over when I retire, it gives me goose bumps." (Edwina)

These highly charged emotional accounts are very revealing. It appears that both Shaye and Edwina are ideologically opposed to the emphasis that policy makers and current principalship training programmes have put on managerial functions of principalship at the expense of pedagogy. They see the appointment of young principals as evidence that the MOE is recruiting a different type of principal and not candidates who have proven themselves as either educators or pedagogical experts. These veteran principals are critical of the trend in Israel to focus on the rational, structural and managerial, rather than the values-led, ethical, people centred, leadership domains of principalship. An underlying current is that these long serving principals may be threatened by the younger breed coming in, people who they see as perhaps being better in financial administration as they have received the new training programmes in principalship, but who they perceive as being less committed to educational goals. They are evidently struggling to come to terms with the culture change SBM tries to achieve which appears to conflict with their past aspirations as educational leaders (Gewirtz, 2002). The condescension these veteran principals feel towards their younger colleagues comes across quite starkly.
However, when analysing the responses of some of these so called ‘young’ principals, it is impossible to say that they do not possess a deep sense of values and commitment. In fact, some seem to be more willing than the veteran principals to go against their superiors if they feel that the good of the child is being compromised.

Diana, who is considered by her peers to be the archetype of this new breed, is the most vocal in her opinion that her colleagues are too compliant and not proactive enough. She believes that the good of the children has to take precedence over the directives emanating from the MOE and the LEA:

"Before everything else, I represent the Ministry so I do not contravene the law and if I do, the Ministry must know about it. I say I'm going to do this with or without your approval, for the good of the children. We're very afraid of the law, the authorities. What is this blind loyalty? Why should directives be handed down from above and we have to execute them? If we are educational leaders, then we have to be masters of everything! [This was accompanied by pounding her fist into her hand. B.T.] We are also responsible vis-à-vis the people below us as well. There are so many things we have to fight vis-à-vis our community and to begin fighting against people above us to make changes, we don't have the energy left for that, we are worn down. I've been trying to mobilise my colleagues against this complacent attitude. But my loyalty is not with the MOE, for example with the Law of Integrating Special Needs Children; I explicitly went against the system, for the good of the children. In favour of my principles, my values, I have to see to the welfare of the general population of the school. Every child has the right to be integrated into the system as long as it does not cause harm to other children in the school. I think my first loyalty is to them, the children and I even took this to court." (Diana)

Diana’s account is studded with contradictions. On the one hand she claims to represent the MOE and says she would not contravene the law. Yet on the other hand, she clearly states that she has at times contravened the law but told the MOE of her intensions. She claims to represent the MOE ‘before everything else’ but sees her
loyalties towards the children under her care taking precedence over her contractual obligation towards the MOE. Her battle in court was over the Law of Inclusion of special needs children which she felt was endangering the mainstream population at her school. One might disagree with her position on special needs children, but her conviction to stand up for her beliefs, defend her values and openly fight the system, is admirable and unique.

Sharon, a veteran principal, who leads a low SES school sees herself as the child’s advocate and has had in her own words ‘many unpleasant encounters’ with both the MOE and the LEA. She draws the line at contravening the law but like Diana does not shy away from confrontations with the authorities if she believes it is for the good of the child.

“I am always for the good of the child especially in this neighbourhood where parents have neither the means nor the knowledge to fight for their children. I will always put the child first even if it means going against policy. I will not break the law, I will fight to change things, I will ask for special permission even if this leads to friction.” (Sharon)

Ora will risk being reprimanded by the LEA for paying teachers more than the regulated wage scale if this means securing the best teacher possible. Excellence in education she proclaims is her core value. Nathan’s attitude towards going against directives when he feels the good of the school is at stake is even more carefree:

“Worse comes to worst you can be reprimanded for doing something you shouldn’t have done. Let’s face it what can the consequences be? I do what is best for my school even if it is not in keeping with the regulations.” (Nathan)

Others like Dinah, Tammy and Zoey cannot even conceive of a scenario in which their values would clash with SBM directives. They plan their budgets and their schools’ pedagogical activities in accordance with MOE and LEA policy. They cite their respect for authority and their belief that they have commitments and obligations towards the City and the State. They position themselves below the LEA and the
MOE and do not see themselves as leaders of their schools but rather adapt to policy directives and attempt to please their superiors. Their agency appears to be restricted.

All of the principals, with the exception of Ora, as will be discussed in the section Embracement of the reforms (p. 208), have apparently internalised the Israeli ideological values of collectivism and social cohesiveness (Oplatka, 2002, 2006) and also are committed to universal values of equity and social justice. They differ though in how far they are willing to fight for what they believe in and how they respond when they perceive their value system to be threatened.

3.c How important is it to have a background in education?
All principals, excluding Nathan, as expected, believe that a background in education is essential for principals. Batia when asked if she believes that principals could be recruited from fields besides education stood up and said:

"Over my dead body!!! A primary school principal today in Israel has to be an educator - this is something I would describe as a life or death issue. A life or death issue! This is the line that should never be crossed; pass with penalty of death is what I would say! [Batia pounded her fists on the table, raised her voice and her husband in the nearby room came in to see what the commotion was about. B.T.]" (Batia)

Some were even offended by the question and felt that it should not have been raised. They are proud of both their experience in teaching and the fact that they continue to teach. However, they all admit to either teaching less than or not teaching as well as in the past due to the time consuming aspect of SBM. This distancing from teaching related activities is well documented in the research literature (e.g. Hess, 1990; Ford, 1992; Bennett et al., 1992; Webb and Vulliamy, 1996).

There is a consensus amongst all the principals, excluding Nathan, that an essential component to being a principal is a background in teaching. Nathan points out the advantages he has found in not having a background in education:
“I came into the system without prejudices and biases. As an army man I was also an educator and was on the receiving end of education as well. Education or pedagogy one can learn. I have always loved children; I connected very quickly to the kids and parents. In some ways to the teachers as well although I had to come up against them on a daily basis. I had to re-educate the teachers that a child is simply a smaller person, but a person with rights. SBM was perhaps easier for me because of my army background, I had the experience of running huge units in the army. On pedagogy, I consult with the inspectorate.” (Nathan)

Nathan expresses the view often held by laymen, that everyone has been a pupil, therefore, everyone knows about education. He believes his love for children and his ability to connect with pupils has stood him in good stead with pupils and their parents. He does admit though to having confrontations with the teachers. He feels that the advice he receives from the inspectorate is sufficient in helping him fill his gaps in knowledge. Nathan is surprisingly candid about not doing the teaching hours a principal is required by law to do:

“The first year I went into classes 6 hours a week for Values Education. The second year I stopped because there was such a constant flow of incidents that I had to deal with and this coupled with all the meetings I have to attend. I can’t say that I teach. No one checks this, perhaps in affluent areas the parents check up and see if the principal is doing his teaching hours but in Orange Grove no one checks. My inspector knows though.” (Nathan)

Nathan seems to fit Harris-Aran’s (2001) classification of the ‘juggler’ principal. He is careful in his dealings with his superiors, his inspector knows about his not teaching. However, he is in many ways a ‘pragmatist’ (Law et al., 2003) or ‘dodger’ (a label used by the researcher in the coding of data), when he believes he can get away with not complying with the directives which he perceives are not in the best interests of the school. Not coming from the field of education, he is unique in his perception that pedagogical expertise is not a prerequisite for principalship.
Next, the findings in relation to research question four and its two subsidiary questions which examine the principals’ perceptions of what has best prepared them for their role under SBM are presented.

5.4 Question Four

4. What experiences contribute to the development of leadership capacities required for SBM?

4.a What life experiences have helped develop principals’ knowledge and skills as preparation for their role in SBM?

The responses to this question are varied as have been set out in the table below.
A background in or knowledge of business management

Half of the principals believe that a background in business management or economics, be it academic, previous professional experience or simply an interest or exposure to the world of finance has contributed greatly to their ability to cope with the demands of SBM. They feel that a background in pedagogy is insufficient to assist them in coping with their new roles, a view which is supported in the literature...
(Whitty et al., 1998; Cranston, 2002; NTFAE, 2004, 2005). Tammy goes as far as to say that principals coming from only a pedagogical background will find it extremely difficult to cope with SBM:

"My background in Business Management has helped me tremendously. It is very very, very, very difficult for a principal who has only a pedagogical background to run a school under SBM."

Nathan adds the issue of gender:

"I don't want to sound like a chauvinist but I think that my army background and the fact that I am a man made it easier for me in SBM. Building maintenance is not something alien to me whereas women principals know less about this."

The issue of gender, although potentially significant, could not be explored in this study. There are at present only two male primary school principals in secular Jewish schools in the city of Spring Heights and regretfully, the second turned down the request to be interviewed due to personal reasons.

Nevertheless, Nathan sees his background as a retired army officer as both advantageous and disadvantageous to the knowledge and skills required.

"I came after 26 years in the army where I was in management positions of different kinds... so the financial aspect is peanuts for me. In the beginning it was very difficult for the teachers; they were not used to having clear guidelines and order. Every month I send out a bulletin with reminders, this drove them mad in the beginning, the amount of paperwork, in time they understood that it made their lives easier when things are clear and organised. This I learned in the army, things need to be clear cut; everyone needs to know what his role is. This is especially true in SBM."
He then goes on to describe at length the culture shock and price he paid because he did not go through the ‘ranks’ of the education system:

“I underwent a much more difficult process than principals coming from the system. I paid a much higher price and had to go through a painful learning process. I came from a totally different culture. I walked into the staffroom and experienced complete culture shock. The price I paid was high, I had to undergo a difficult learning process, I ran full speed ahead too soon, I realised that it was a mistake but couldn’t reverse things. The price I paid was high. It took me time to understand that I did not understand the spirit of the organisation.”

The ‘mistakes’ that Nathan describes making may have nothing to do with SBM and are probably connected to his being a new principal who had not yet become acculturated and had not received what Crow (2006) calls organisational socialisation and was experiencing the type of culture shock that most new principals undergo (Walker and Qian, 2006). This culture shock was exacerbated by his minimal prior experience as a teacher. Nevertheless, it is deemed relevant to this study as the perceptions of principals to the role of formal training and background experiences are examined.

Past failures
Two principals pinpoint their past failures as life experiences which have enabled them to develop the capacities required for SBM. Batia, attributes a critical incident which occurred in her seventh year to have facilitated her adjustment to SBM:

“I had been a very centralist principal. I was a principal whose word was law! After very uncomplimentary feedback from the staffroom, I was devastated! I met with an organisational consultant and started working with notions of transparency. I did a complete turn around so much so that the SMT was chosen by the entire staff. Today, though, I go according to the Rambam. [The Hebrew acronym for Maimonides, the Jewish philosopher who favoured temperance and not excess. B.T.] I take the middle road from over
centralisation to total democracy. But it is most certainly the negative feedback from my staff that made me take a long hard look in the mirror, that is what I believe prepared me the most for SBM."

Batia took a potentially crippling situation and turned it into a learning opportunity. She changed her management style from centralistic to democratic but has since found what she perceives to be the most suitable style for her, at times autocratic and at others democratic. This is also connected to her changed perception of her professional identity.

Shaye talks frankly about her failure as a principal in her previous school and attributes this to her total misunderstanding of SBM. Shaye had been a principal in a school in a very low SES school, she then transferred to a high SES school the same year that the school entered SBM, she has since moved back to the low SES area, although to a different school, where she had been previously:

"SBM was the reason I failed in my previous school, I functioned as a pedagogical advisor and not as a managing director. This I can say now in hindsight. I can say this now as a result of cold, rational analysis, I couldn't have said this to you before but now I can admit it to myself and to you. I became sick, physically ill, because of the process I went through in Arena [A high SES school. B.T]. It was my fault because I copied my management style from one place to another without reading the map, without seeing that the population was totally different. This is connected to SBM. I began SBM in Arena so I had to undergo a double change, a new school and a new style of management and I had no crutches. I arrived at a school which was new for me and straight into new expectations for principals at the same time. SBM in Date Hill [A low SES school. B.T.] does not really mean anything to the people involved, neither to the parents nor to the staff. In Arena with SBM you have to involve all the stakeholders, you have to form partnerships. I believed I knew best what was right for the organisation I was running. That's the way it had been in my previous school, the parents did not even think they could question me. I did not even try to explain my plans to the parents in Arena. In
the north of the city [The affluent sector. B.T.] under SBM if you do not share your thoughts and create partnerships with people outside the school, it is doomed to failure. I was a centralist; I did not communicate or share with them where the money was being spent. I thought that SBM meant that I could do what I wanted with the money but that is not correct. SBM is exactly the opposite, because of the responsibility you have to involve others, that was the mistake I made. I thought that the power had been given to me alone and that I was accountable only to myself.” (Shaye)

Shaye’s explanation of why she had failed as a principal in a high SES school is both revealing and surprising in its frankness. She admits to having misread the notions of accountability and shared decision-making underlying SBM and consequently failed to form partnerships with the community. She also failed to understand the changes in leadership style necessitated by SBM if one is to succeed in mobilising the support of the community. She had equated her control of the budget with power and neglected to internalise concepts of participation central to SBM (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; Bowe et al., 1992; OECD, 2001). These insights she hopes to have taken with her to her new school. Both Batia and Shaye, in different ways, had failed to take into account the organisational culture in their respective schools and communities.

**Personality traits**

Iris describes how she had always wanted to be a principal and had envied her principal. She describes walking past the principal’s office, observing her and thinking that she too could do it. She constantly sought out opportunities to learn more and when offered principalship was convinced she was ready for the job. She describes her longing to be a principal as:

“A physical longing, almost a lust which comes from many places ...it is also connected to one’s ego...I felt I had grown professionally and wanted to change things.”

However, as Hargreaves (2003) indicates, “it’s always a shock to their system when they finally get into the driver’s seat” (p. 288).
"I had only been involved in pedagogy, I had no idea about administrative matters, I did not even know how to plan a timetable. I had looked at things only from the pedagogical point of view... the rest was foreign to me. I succeeded in coping with SBM, only because of my burning desire to develop." (Iris)

In a similar vein, both Dina and Zoey could not pinpoint any particular life experience which helped develop their knowledge and skills and simply say that it is their personality and rising to the challenge which has helped them cope with SBM.

**Totally unprepared**

The only principal who states in no uncertain terms that she was totally unprepared for the role she would have to play in SBM, is Sharon:

"Nothing prepared me for this, nothing! I have to say that today I feel towards the end of my career, I have to say this. What I can say though with certainty is that training for principals will have to be totally different to what it is today. Now with SBM the important things suffer... pedagogy, going into classes, sitting with teachers on their lesson plans...all the things I had been trained to do. I am frustrated that I am being asked to do things I do not understand the logic of and am totally opposed to." (Sharon)

This seems to be a rather dismal picture of principals' readiness for their new role, those who by chance had a background in business administration or an inclination towards finances felt more prepared. It would seem foolhardy to wait for principals to experience failure and then use that as a learning experience in order to be better equipped to do the job. Recruiting principals based on their willingness to meet challenges or assessing their personality traits also seems rather unfeasible. How then can this gap in knowledge be closed? Can formal training meet the need? The next subsidiary question examines principals' perceptions of the nature of formal training.
4.b What is the significance of formal training in principals’ preparation for their role?

Only one principal said the training they had received was excellent, Zoey who had been a principal for one year before she went into SBM. All the others felt that the training was inadequate with their responses ranging from “a total waste of time” to “what was really missing was hands on learning” to “what is one session on bookkeeping? What we need is a background in both law and in business”. Nevertheless, Tammy was quite generous in complimenting the written guidelines provided by the LEA:

“It [The formal training sessions. B.T.] was like Chinese, I spoke a completely different language. I did not understand ... I went home with the folder and the CD which is always in my computer at home. Till today, I still go back to it whenever I need to check something - all the forms are there - I learned the rules and regulations back to front and inside out - all of a sudden I understood.”

Many of the principals referred to the ‘folder’ in similar terms, ‘the bible’ or ‘the book of laws’ and one even said she had made a copy and placed it on her bedside table. The prevailing sentiment was that if you followed the rules and regulations you could not go far wrong, the problem though is that the rules and regulations keep changing. This seems remarkably like Gronn’s (2003) description of designer-leadership. The implications here for principalship are clear and seem to support the critics of SBM who claim that it has led to principals becoming even more constrained and restricted and has left little room for diversity and agency.

Dinah describes her learning process and coping strategies:

“I read the booklet we got from the LEA again and again - it’s our bible. Reading comprehension I still know how to do! If there is still something not clear then I ask and I learn and I ask again. The first year was very difficult for me in SBM. I must admit though that I have a father in the school who is a financial expert and he still goes over everything with me.”
Dinah hints that even though she is no longer considered an expert in school management, she has not lost the ability to learn new things. She also says that over time the financial administration has become easier. Nevertheless, she is leading a high SES school and uses parental expertise to help her cope with the demands of SBM.

When asked what they had found beneficial in the training, Zoey replied, 'everything'. Anna, cynically, mentioned the advice she received from other principals who had entered SBM prior to her, not to rely on the budgetary promises made to them as the most helpful aspect in the training. All the others said nothing at all had been of use. Shaye admitted to having 'played truant'. She felt it was meaningless to her and admits to being ideologically opposed to SBM:

“I did not connect with it, it didn’t speak to me, it seemed meaningless. It is very difficult for me the whole equation they make that education equals money that school is thought about in business terms, that school is equated to a factory. The terminology, clients, why on earth are they clients? They can’t choose me.”

Shaye is revealing a cultural resistance to the language of business to describe education (Bowe et al., 1992). She also argues that SBM has not actually been implemented as neither school leaders have in fact meaningful autonomy nor do parents have freedom of choice (Davies and Ellison, 2000). In the Israeli primary school context, principals cannot decide which services to provide and to whom, moreover, parents and children cannot choose which schools to attend.

Dinah’s suggests that they should have sent principals to shadow those already in SBM and learn from them instead of giving them only theoretical training “which did not get down to the nitty gritty as to what principals really need.” She went together with her parents’ committee to other schools and learned from their experiences.
Nathan feels that there was not something inherently missing in the training but rather the nature of the job. He suggests that one can only really appreciate the complexities once you are doing the work (Hargreaves, 2003).

"They explained the procedures, the regulations, etc. But things I now have to argue with the LEA about, none of that was predicted. You can take twenty courses in educational management but until you sit in the principal's chair you don't really understand what it means. The same with SBM." (Nathan)

None of the principals were willing to attend additional training courses and all felt that learning by experience was best. Not only do principals perceive the training they received as too theoretical and therefore inadequate they also feel they had been led to believe that SBM would be much easier than it actually is. The following statement sums up the general sentiment:

"They made it sound all quite simple – no one indicated how much work this would entail and how great the burden would be. Even simply how many hours we would need to devote to this." (Iris)

The perceptions of the majority of principals as to the inadequate nature of the training they received have implications not only for the education system in Israel, but could be of use to education systems elsewhere. As has been stated in the literature review, there is a growing recognition of the importance of principalship training programmes in order to cope with the new expectations from principals (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1992; Bush, 2004; NTFAE, 2004, 2005; Weindling and Dimmock, 2006). However, the findings in this study support the conclusion that:

...no amount of experience or preparation – whether through formal training or through experience as a deputy – can provide a sufficient induction to what is a demanding and complex job. A major and essential part of learning to be a principal is acquired through living the experience (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006, p. 338).
The next section presents the principals' perceptions of what the future holds for them in their roles.

5.5 Question five

5. In what ways, if any, do principals believe their role will change in the future?

At the time of writing, the recommendations of the NTFAE (2004, 2005), the flagship education policy of the previous administration, had been laid aside. Nevertheless, the perceptions of the principals to this report have been included as they reveal significant insights as to how they perceive autonomy and accountability. The two subsidiary questions examine their attitudes towards the report and the implications of the recommendations for their role as principals.

5.a What are their attitudes to the recommendations pertaining to new roles for principals of the National Task Force for the Advancement of Education?

The responses to this question are organised according to three markedly different attitudes; first, principals' perceived risks of autonomy, second, ideological opposition to the reforms and lastly, an embracement of the recommendations.

Perceived risks inherent in increased autonomy

Principals express somewhat ambivalent attitudes to the recommendations of the NTFAE to increase their autonomy especially with respect to eliminating the District Office of the MOE and the inspectorate, the by product being shifting the authority over personnel resources to principals. This was an unanticipated response as one of the issues that principals saw as restricting their autonomy and unfairly so in an era of accountability, is the lack of authority in this specific area. Principals suggest ways to counter the risks they feel inherent in giving them more autonomy and in their own words more ‘power’.

“There are also threats and dangers in the widened responsibilities for principals suggested by the Dovrat report. It is dangerous to place all the
power in the hands of one person. There should be a board of directors - this should be compulsory, this is a public position, they should be accountable. If the principal also hires teachers and has control over the budget, if the control is so total then there has to be another mechanism of control - representatives of senior teachers appointed by the principal. The principal must have a say in the members of the board not people who are simply placed there....I have no idea what the role of the MOE would or should be, no idea at all....” (Ora)

Two words used by Ora are of particular significance, the words ‘dangerous’ and ‘power’. Power is perceived by her to stem from the authority to hire and fire teachers coupled with control over the budget, two bases of power defined by Hoyle (1986), coercive and remunerative. This she interprets as having total control which she calls dangerous and suggests a mechanism to counteract this. However, her idea of setting up a board of directors as she envisions it would still leave the control in the hands of the principal. She is adamant that the members of the board would be chosen by the principal. She suggests that there is no need for the MOE in the future scenario as she understands it.

The risk inherent in granting principals more autonomy is also mentioned by Iris who raises other issues which she feels are problematic:

“This power in the hands of the principal - could be good, finally I will be able to get rid of a teacher I don’t want. But I’m worried that the power that will be in the principals’ hands will be exploited. Schools will be run like a Byzantine Court where those who suck up to the principal will be given more important roles and those who are less conformists - even though they work well, will be asked to leave.”

Iris, like all principals, expresses the desire to be able select her own teaching staff but it appears that her lack of faith in her colleagues’ professional judgments and integrity leads her to conclude that this would not be a positive change. She continues:
"I am wary of the negative repercussions, this great power that the principal will have. I have seen principals who have amassed power and surrounded themselves with yes men. There will be principals whose criteria will not only be the good of the children. Look, a principal also wants to be accepted and loved, so his leadership will be unquestioned. I'm very worried about increasing our power ...."

Iris refers to the natural tendency of people to want to be accepted and liked. She feels that purely professional decisions with regard to firing teachers will not be taken and that decisions will be influenced by personal interests and not professional considerations. She appears to weigh her own personal wish to get rid of weak teachers with what she sees as the public good or even morally right. She vacillates between a desire for more autonomy and fear of the consequences of this autonomy:

"With the Dovrat report we will be given even greater powers and this scares me. There's more to this than meets the eye, it is true that hiring of teachers is directly related to pedagogy but it is complicated. Today, if I have a teacher who is not wonderful then I take her under my wing and work with her, but if I had the option of firing her, why should I waste my time on her and what about teachers who are pregnant?" (Iris)

Iris does not dismiss the fact that she may be tempted to get rid of teachers who she would have taken the time to help develop professionally in the past. She articulates the tension described in the literature between staff development and maintenance (Southworth, 1998; Day et al., 2000). She presents ethical dilemmas principals, including herself, would be confronted with if they were autonomous in their staffing decisions such as the reluctance to hire pregnant teachers due to the inevitable teacher absenteeism.

This fluctuation between the aspiration for control over staff selection and what some principals see as a values issue, or what is 'right' for the education system, is evident
in the following statement by Dinah who provides alternative reasons for placing constraints over a principal’s autonomy:

“It is problematic but I think that the principals know their people best. However, if granting more autonomy to principals means lessening the authority and strength of inspectors then it is not right. An inspector together with the principal can better evaluate a teacher and make the best decisions. An inspector has a broader overview of the education system. If the idea is to do away with the inspectorate and give total autonomy to the principal then it is a grave mistake. The principal is sometimes too involved with the staff to think rationally and not be influenced by personal factors.” (Dinah)

Dinah suggests that although principals may know their staff better than anyone else, the opinion of the inspector may be more objective or perhaps she is suggesting that the accountability for major decisions should be shared with the inspector and not rest solely on the principal.

_Ideological opposition to the reforms_

Some principals, however, feel ideologically opposed to the report and two even declare that if implemented they would leave the system:

“I don’t know what to say about the report, I haven’t really read it. I know they want principals to be more administrators than pedagogues much more than under SBM, this is simply not me! I will not be a principal under Dovrat. This kind of principal I will not be!” (Sharon).

Sharon in the above account is clearly struggling to reconcile the tensions inherent in SBM between her role as the leading professional and her new role as chief executive (Southworth, 1988; Dimmock, 1996; Jones, 1999a, 1999b; Bell and Rowley, 2002). She is adamantly opposed to taking this any further. She feels that as requirements for principalship no longer meet her skills, it is time for her to bow out graciously. Another issue which is highlighted in the above account is that which is discussed by Bowe et al. (1992) of policy texts being represented not only by the official texts but
that many of those for whom the policy is intended rely on "second-hand accounts as their main source of information and understanding" (p. 21). Not having read the report herself, does not prevent Sharon from having very strong feelings about it. Tammy, on the other hand stresses that she has read the report more than once. She is also opposed ideologically to the recommendations but for somewhat different reasons:

"I have read the Report many, many times and if implemented, I will leave the system. I think that it is clear that no principal sat on the committee - it is simply not feasible! There is no way it can be implemented as a whole and to implement bits and pieces makes no sense at all. I do not want to get more authority and autonomy in this way - if I have to keep kids at school till 4 o'clock after they have eaten in the classroom and the smell of food permeates the room, how on earth will they be able to study? There will only be more tension, there are many kids who need their own quiet time and space."

(Tammy)

Tammy it appears has weighed the advantages of getting more authority and autonomy against what she believes are misguided recommendations regarding the long school day. She has decided that the benefits of increased autonomy as a principal are not worth the price the education system will have to pay. She expresses the opinion of all of the principals that the Dovrat Report was a slap in the face of school leaders as none were invited to sit on the committee (In fact, one high school principal was on the committee). She declares that she would resign rather than comply with something she believes is not in the best interest of children. Tammy’s values clearly colour her perception of the policy.

Embracement of the reforms

However, the views presented above are only representative of some of the principals; others would welcome the autonomy afforded them by the recommendations. The view taken by Anna, who has been a principal for nine years, illustrates this:
"That all depends on the courage of the LEA and MOE to take it further, which of course they should. Ideally, we should get the autonomy to hire all the teachers on personal contracts - principals too should be on personal contracts. [At present only LEA teachers are hired on personal contracts. B.T.] This won't happen because of the unions. The MOE may demand that we take SBM further and that we include parents as part of the school directorate, they are not involved in school management today. The unions will stand on their hind legs and will not let us take SBM any further." (Anna)

Anna brings another stakeholder into the equation which surprisingly enough only two principals mentioned, that of the teachers’ unions. She hints that the MOE and the LEA will not have the courage to stand up to the unions. Anna does not see any potential threats to increasing principals’ autonomy and embraces the ideologies of marketisation where both principals and staff would be measured by performance standards and expresses a strong desire to do away with the traditional job security enjoyed by educators through tenure.

Most principals, excluding Zoey, Ora and Iris, are sceptical about the Report ever being implemented:

"Look, I read the Report. Some things I like very much. I'm sceptical when I see how the system implemented SBM. Like there is SBM and now they decided to suspend it. They implemented SBM in a way that suited the political decisions. Education has to be unaffected by political upheavals and political decisions. The system is constantly shaken up. I hope it will be implemented, but I am concerned that it will be only partly implemented, just as prior reforms. All kinds of things are taken out that are convenient at present for the Minister of Education and the Director General, it's all a sort of mess that ...the same thing, with SBM, with everything." (Diana)

She embraces the recommendations but is sceptical that these will be implemented as laid down in the Report. Her experience with SBM has led to her to distrust policy makers and she believes that their decisions are based on political motivations and not
professional ones. By saying that SBM has been suspended she suggests that the implementation of SBM in its present format, has drifted far from the original intentions. She is an illustration of the way in which practitioners confront policy texts, “they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own...” (Bowe et al., 2002, p. 22). Diana’s depiction of the education system as unstable and turbulent echoes that of many of the principals in this study and previous studies conducted by Gibton et al. (2000).

A singular point of view is that of Ora, who feels that the Dovrat Report has not taken things as far as it should with regard to parental choice, marketisation and privatisation:

"In any case there will never be social equality ...as a country we need to sober up as far as this mantra goes, there will never be equality...Look, we have a NPO, according to the principles of SBM, a NPO is forbidden, but they [MOE, B.T.] have internal contradictions all the time.... Privatisation is what will happen anyway, this is the trend all over the Western world and it does not make sense that only education will stay behind, there will be a free market in education. In the Dovrat Report it seems like they are trying to create a hybrid, to create private Education from the State, in the disguise of something more public. My dream is that they will cancel registration zones - it will make the system much more efficient because of competition. A parent should be allowed to send his child to whichever school he wants, to whichever school he wants!" (Ora)

It is evident that Ora has embraced a market ideology and is surprisingly vocal about declaring her beliefs in an open market for schooling. Her forthright comments about equity as an unattainable aspiration strike a discord coming from an Israeli educator. The striving for social equality has always been one of the dominant values of the Israeli education system (Yonai, 1991; Volansky, 1996; Oplatka, 2002, 2006; Yair, 2004). Few Israeli educators would be so bold as to state this position publicly.
To sum up the principals’ attitudes towards the NTFAE, they are ambivalent in their desire for more autonomy which the reforms promise. The veteran principals are ideologically opposed to the reforms and almost all of the less veteran principals, Nathan being the exception, welcome the recommendations of the Report. Nevertheless, only three believe the report will be implemented.

5.b What do they perceive are the implications of this report for their role as principal?

The responses to this question are presented in two sections. The first, presents the scepticism of the principals and the second their perceptions of how the reforms could affect pedagogy.

**Positions of scepticism as to the potential for real change**

As has already been presented, principals are largely sceptical of the reforms being implemented and consequently find it difficult to envision it affecting their roles. Nathan admits to having only briefly read the summaries of the Report. On reading the sections of the Report pertaining to the role of principals together during the interview, he states that he does not see where the Report has actually proposed anything new:

"I can't really see what other powers they could give us besides for the firing of teachers. But I cannot see this being implemented; if that is supposed to empower us.... The idea that principals would be able to fire teachers is very problematic, we all know principals who have their cliques, it's dangerous. A higher salary does not empower people. Building a school vision... we do this do today. What's the difference? If we perceive our role as total and complete responsibility, that's the way we perceive it today. I cannot see anything new here, just because it was published in a report. Does this mean it's supposed to change anything for me? I do all of this anyway. How can one have such a great restructuring when the budget for implementation is based on firing teachers? I don't think there is any point in even discussing it - it will not happen - the unions, the parents, even the pupils are starting to revolt against it. What Dovrat is proposing - totally absurd...." (Nathan)
In this long monologue, Nathan refers to a number of issues relating to the principal’s role. Although he is for autonomy over personnel resources he is aware of the apparent threat this entails. He feels that the proposal to increase principals’ salaries will not lead to empowerment. He dismisses the significance of the Report as not presenting anything new and having no real power to actually influence a principal’s accountability. The mere fact that policy has been published, the policy text (Bowe et al., 1992) does not according to Nathan mean that principals will act accordingly.

This is supported in the literature which examines how practitioners respond in differential manners to decentralisation reforms (Day et al., 2000). Finally, he is clearly sceptical about the Report being implemented due to what he perceives as wide public opposition which he feels will increase.

This view that neither this policy document, nor any other, will make principals more accountable or more autonomous is shared by Batia who, together with almost all of the principals, shares Nathan’s scepticism in the recommendations being implemented:

“Look, even today, the principal bears sole responsibility when it comes to the final crunch. Look all these formal documents and reports will not do the work...if a principal does not feel that he is responsible then it will not happen. I don’t believe in the Report, this will not happen, forget about it!” (Batia)

When pressed to say what she feels would be the implications of the report on her role as principal if implemented, Batia responds:

“I may delegate work to others but this [Pedagogy. B.T.] will always remain my responsibility. I tell myself the country is undergoing a new process which involves changes in the system of education. I cannot hide like an ostrich till things blow over because I have to come to school with a sense of optimism for the sake of the teachers.” (Batia)
Batia appears to be shielding the staff from the upheavals and changes in the system. Her leadership style is what Coulson (1976) calls “paternalistic” (p. 286), or proprietal (Southworth, 1995, 1999, 2006).

The next section presents rather unique insights of perceptions of the proposed reforms on pedagogy.

**Perceptions of reforms on pedagogy**

A unique and surprising perspective on the implications of the report is that of Shaye. It is unique as she is the only one who interprets the report as having positive pedagogical implications and surprising as she is vehemently opposed to the additional administrative functions ascribed her under SBM:

“I can see myself being a principal under Dovrat because as soon as we can decide which teachers to fire then we will have to go into classes more. Even though the report does not relate to pedagogy, it will force principals to be more involved in pedagogy. Teacher evaluation will become the central role of the principal, so he will have to get involved in pedagogy, he won’t be able to ignore it.” (Shaye)

The contrasting view is presented by Iris:

“Now under SBM we have had to reduce the amount of time we devote to pedagogy, in light of the Dovrat Report this I think will be reduced even more. I cannot give up anything - I think principals have to work on pedagogical plans, school plans, meeting with plumber, going into lessons, meeting parents, pupils ... everything. I can’t give up anything. I want to be involved in everything.” (Iris)

Iris, clearly is trying to manage and lead her school single-handedly, she ascribes to a proprietal view of the school, regards the school as hers and sees the school as belonging to her (Southworth, 1995, 1999, 2006). Her use of the first person pronoun in every instance was in conjunction with the pointing of her index finger to her chest. She is unwilling to delegate anything as she connects this to her accountability:
"Look even today in SBM who else is accountable besides for the principal? Only the principal is accountable for everything that occurs in the school. The widening of the principal's powers in Dovrat is a natural extension of SBM."

She believes that the recommendations will be partially implemented:

"I believe that the recommendations will be implemented even if only partially. There is a great public lobby for change and for the Report's recommendations. It's clear we need a change. We're not keeping up with the pace, we're not providing the goods, achievements are low. Perhaps simply the fact that there will be a change will bring in new energies to the system."

(Iris)

Iris ascribes to a commonly held view that change is positive as it has the potential to create new energies and mobilise people.

When summing up how these principals perceive the implications of the Dovrat Report on their roles an interesting picture emerges. Four principals, Ora, Zoey, Anna and Diana, all with less than ten years administrative experience, embrace the reforms and welcome the prospect of increased autonomy. Ora goes even further and claims that the recommendations in regard to principals' autonomy have not gone far enough. Diana and Anna are sceptical about the reforms being implemented as they have been disillusioned by the manner in which SBM has been implemented and perceive all attempts at restructuring as being too politically motivated thereby diminishing any attempt to really affect change in the education system. Zoey welcomes the reforms and cannot foresee any possible risks or threats.

Two, Shaye and Iris welcome certain aspects of the reform but hold opposing views on how their roles would be affected. Both are guarded in their responses to the reform and are acutely aware of the risks inherent in granting principals more power.
The six remaining principals are all opposed to the recommendations either because it would take them further away from teaching, or because they believe that they are ideologically a step in the wrong direction. Four declare that if implemented, they would not remain in the education system. They all resent the fact that they were not represented on the committee and feel that policy makers are far removed from classroom realities. They are sceptical about implementation due to the unstable nature of Israeli politics and power struggles between the stakeholders.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the findings in relation to the research questions and is both descriptive and interpretive in nature. The next chapter highlights the changes taking place in the culture of principalship in Spring Heights. The issues and challenges principals face during what is evidently a period of transition from traditional notions of school leadership to the new managerial discourse on education are presented through the six core categories which emerged from the analysis of the findings. A conceptual framework is then developed which represents their differential responses to these challenges.
CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS, SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings in relation to the research questions and relied mainly on a contextual approach to the analysis providing the emic or subjective perceptions and interpretations of the participants. This chapter subjects the findings to greater scrutiny and discusses their significance providing conceptual frameworks to the analysis. The etic constructs, the researcher’s interpretation, which emerged from the categorical analysis, are presented. Six core categories have come to light and have been subjected to both peer examination (Merriam, 1988) and expert examination. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The purpose of this study has been to chart the role perceptions of principals under SBM in Spring Heights. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first presents a portrayal of principalship in transition and outlines the emerging issues and challenges they now face in a changing culture of school leadership since the introduction of SBM. These are presented through the six main themes or core categories which have emerged from the analysis. The second section presents principals’ responses to these issues and underscores their differential responses to the changes and challenges presented by the external policy environment. In this section a typology representing the principals’ range of responses is developed.

6.1 Principalship in Transition

The findings in this study support the findings documented in the literature on the role change of principals under SBM. However, the locatedness and bounded nature of this study, a particular urban location in Israel and the wider policy environment, the Israeli interpretation and implementation of SBM, has enabled the researcher to present a portrait of the major challenges faced by these particular principals in this
city Spring Heights. The roles of primary school principals in Spring Heights are changing rapidly as they are expected to be attuned with a turbulent external school environment with stakeholders who in the past had relatively little impact on principals now presenting conflicting educational agendas. This will be presented by a discussion of the six core themes of autonomy, trust, the corrupting nature of power, unclear lines of responsibility, work overload and stress and leadership beyond school boundaries. One section has been dedicated to each main theme.

6.1.1 Autonomy

Autonomy refers to principals’ perceptions of changes in their freedom resulting from SBM. SBM purports to increase managerial freedom in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurialism. Two issues emerged. First, principals’ perceptions of decreased pedagogical autonomy are discussed. Then their perceptions of decreased administrative and financial autonomy are presented.

*Pedagogical autonomy*

Pedagogical autonomy in this study refers to all matters pertaining to pupils and teaching as opposed to matters of administration and ‘management’. SBM in Spring Heights has led to the locus of control shifting from the Central Office of the MOE to the LEA. As presented in chapter five, almost all of the principals in this study were in agreement in their criticism of the pedagogical ‘initiatives’ emanating from the LEA as these are seen as restricting their pedagogical autonomy and severely thwarting their agency to implement plans in accordance with their visions for their schools. Green Leadership and the City Wide Quiz are only two examples of many such ‘initiatives’. Principals perceive ‘initiatives’ as particularly attractive to LEA officers because they are visible, as they are funded and assessed and those initiating these projects and overseeing the implementation are perceived to be actively ‘doing’. Even those who recognise the legitimacy of working according to local priorities, feel that this severely limits their autonomy.

All principals, as presented in the previous chapter, are in agreement that these numerous ‘initiatives’, are difficult to implement and do not necessarily coincide with their personal objectives for their schools nor with their values. Autonomy
seems limited to the freedom to decide how to implement enrichment programmes. Nevertheless, even these programmes are difficult to implement due to the prescriptive nature of the LEA requirements, the restrictions of the binding Core Curriculum and accountability measures expressed through the need to raise pupils’ achievements in national and city wide tests coupled with the dwindling lack of resources, leaving them little room for manoeuvre. This supports the position of critics of SBM who claim that ‘freedom’ is only the freedom to decide how to implement an externally driven agenda (Angus, 1993; Codd, 1993; Smyth, 1993). This appears to be exacerbated in low SES schools, where principals do not often have the support of parental NPOs to supplement their budget in marked contrast to high SES schools where the existence of parental NPOs (Goldring, 1993) allows principals greater scope for implementing programmes tailored for their school populations.

To sum up, since the introduction of SBM, pedagogy has according to the principals, become increasingly prescribed through LEA ‘initiatives’ as well as accountability demands to raise achievements assessed by the national GEMS examinations and local assessment tools such as city wide tests. Principals distinguish between pedagogical autonomy and administrative autonomy which is discussed in the next section which seems to reinforce the perception that SBM as implemented in Spring Heights is in fact a misnomer.

**Administrative and financial autonomy**

The limited nature of SBM as implemented in Spring Heights is reflected in the fact that principals have no authority over MOE personnel resources. This is a significant Israeli modification of SBM leaving principals with no real financial autonomy (Friedman and Barma, 1998; Volansky, 2003). All, in theory, welcome the concept of autonomy over personnel resources, it is they say connected to accountability, but some express ambivalence. All veteran principals and some less experienced principals are acutely aware of the potential dangers in moving to such a system. They express a lack of faith in their colleagues and even doubt their own abilities to be impartial when hiring, firing and evaluating teachers.
Although all principals acknowledge that SBM has brought an unprecedented level of autonomy in regard to raising funds for their schools and the allocation of SBM funds to areas of need, they are no longer “passive resource receivers” (Goldring, 1992, p. 53), they are critical of the inadequate resources allocated to them under SBM. They are aware of being constantly supervised in their financial transactions, yet, their reaction to this supervision varies depending on their perception of their role in the educational hierarchy. Those who perceive themselves as servants (Sergiovanni, 1995) of the system welcome surveillance over their financial dealings and see it as providing a level of insulation and protection against litigation. Others are resentful of this control and see it as severely hampering their autonomy. All but one are scornful of the suggestion that control over small budgets in fact leads to real autonomy. Some principals admit to not always adhering strictly to regulations. They rationalise this type of borderline activity, not blatantly illegal but not strictly in keeping with the regulations, by connecting it to increased accountability. The following account typifies this rationalisation:

"Every single shekel that goes into the school, every activity is my responsibility, I am accountable –I run the NPO– legally of course I am not allowed to but how can I not? The regulations are contradictory; they give with one hand and take away with the other." (Ora)

Principals who view themselves as morally and legally accountable for everything that occurs within their schools, find the contradictory messages emanating from MOE and the LEA creating opportunities and justification for exploiting what can be viewed as ‘grey’ areas and affording them room for manoeuvre. Their rationalisation is that the law is not in line with what they believe is the best interest of their pupils:

"If I followed directives, the kids would be sent home at noon." (Diana)

The widened and increased accountability of the principal coupled with restrictions on autonomy has led to those who perceive themselves as true leaders of their schools, behaving in a subversive (Day et al., 2000) or pragmatic (Law et al., 2003)
manner and at times taking advantage of what can be interpreted as loopholes in the law.

Despite the dismal picture presented in regard to their perceptions of reduced autonomy, all but one are in agreement that SBM has created a psychological sense of empowerment due to the personal satisfaction gained from dealing with finances and not having to be sycophantic towards LEA officers. The ability to decide on minor purchases (less than NIS 500.00 or GBP 63.00) has led to a feeling of empowerment as previously even the acquisition of a printer had to be carried out through the LEA, principals feel in this respect that their hands have been ‘untied’.

Moreover, the autonomy to decide on wage scale of their LEA teaching staff has created, in those not ideologically opposed to the creation of a sub status of teachers devoid of social rights, a feeling of in their own words, ‘power’. This supports the findings of others (Mortimore and Mortimore, 1991; Levačič, 1995; Jones, 1999a) that despite the difficulties involved, the ability to manage budgets and raise finances leads to a sense of empowerment. This sense of empowerment seems incompatible with their perceptions of constraint and lack of autonomy and emphasises how restricted principals had been prior to SBM. Nonetheless, this seems to be an illusion of empowerment as control over ‘piggy bank’ money or ‘housekeeping’ in the words of two of the principals is difficult to interpret as true empowerment.

The second core theme which emerged from the categorical analysis and stems from the principals’ perceptions of limited autonomy coupled with increased accountability is that of issues of trust.

6.1.2 Trust

An erosion of trust, suspicion and cynicism appears to have infiltrated all levels of the primary school education system in Spring Heights. This core category was originally labelled ‘a crisis of faith’ using the principals’ own words. It has been changed to issues of ‘trust’ as it cannot be said that principals no longer have faith in the education system, they believe that they can and do make a difference to the children under their care. This section is divided into five parts. Principals’
perceptions of the decline in their professional relationships with the following stakeholders is presented, first the LEA, second, the parents, third, the teachers, fourth, the Central Office of the MOE and lastly, the undercurrent of tension amongst and between principals is discussed.

The LEA

The reader is reminded that schools in Spring Heights cannot carry budget surpluses from one year to the next and school surpluses are used to cover city deficits as presented in chapter five. This highlights the narrow nature of SBM as implemented in Israel. This is a cause of discontent and resentment for those principals who are competent in their budgeting and causes them to regard less financially skilled principals with disparagement. This leads principals to consciously manage a deficit budget of NIS 1.00 in order to prevent their funds being transferred to other schools. Moreover, principals are distrustful of the LEA’s financial administration and believe that funds which should be channelled to schools are instead supporting an inflated LEA bureaucracy. This has created a situation in which principals with skilled financial acumen, become evasive in their financial dealings with the LEA. The following statement is representative of this view of principals who admit to exploiting vague guidelines:

“No where does it explicitly say that I have to report everything I do with the NPO money. It’s a bit of a grey area. I know that I’m supposed to but the LEA will simply nibble away at my budget.” (Diana)

These rather fuzzy notions of transparency in principals’ dealings with the LEA seems to stem from a mutual lack of trust in the relationship between LEA officers and principals. A recurring theme is the overriding feeling principals have of being conned or duped which they feel has led to in their own words ‘a crisis of faith’. This lack of trust which pervades the system is most eloquently articulated in the following account:

“The major difference is trust in the system, which we simply don’t have! Because they promise one thing and the same year they take it away and
One of the most important elements required in an autonomous system is according to the principals, trust and without trust they believe "the whole thing gets bogged down and stuck." (Diana)

It appears that an erosion of trust is almost endemic in the education system of Spring Heights. It perhaps originated in cutbacks which led education officials to backtrack on their budgetary promises (Volansky, 2003), but it appears that the manner in which these cutbacks were carried out, 'one bright sunny day' (Batia) and 'without any explanation' (Diana) without displaying any sensitivity to how the principals would perceive these changes, has led to this erosion of trust.

Circumstances have also led to mutual distrust as LEA officers in the wake of two incidents of embezzlement in the city have tightened their financial controls over the schools creating the feeling amongst principals that they are all under suspicion. This has the potential to challenge further decentralisation efforts as one of the key beliefs of decentralisation reforms that “schools are usually trustworthy” (Brown, 1992, p. 291) has been violated.

**The parents**

In addition, principals feel that their relationships with parents have been undermined leading to ‘a crisis of faith’ (Diana, Tammy, Sharon and Batia). With the introduction of SBM, the language of the market has entered the educational discourse. This has accordingly influenced principals’ relationships with parents adversely as once education is viewed as a commodity, (Grace, 1995) parents are encouraged to behave as customers and as such the ‘customer is always right’. The language of the market has redefined the relationship between parents and principals to a relationship between consumers and producers which invites scepticism as opposed to trust. The belief that “schools often know best” (Brown, 1992, p. 191) has been eroded. This occurred simultaneously with local press coverage of schools and has according to
the principals altered the status between parents and school leaders leading to increased power struggles.

Notions of transparency, a key concept of SBM, have been challenged. Principals admit to censoring information given to parents in regard to their income from the MOE and the LEA. Principals, although aware that parents are sceptical of their integrity, respond in rather calculating manners and appear to justify diminished parental trust.

All of the principals without exception admit to limited notions of transparency with regard to parents. Yet those leading schools in disparate socio-economic areas respond differently in their dealings with their communities. In low SES schools parents are perceived as being incapable of being equal partners in decision-making processes (Goldring, 1993).

The data suggest that principals are manipulative in their relationships with the parents. The principals in high SES schools are not untainted by this manipulative type of behaviour and admit to going through the motions of transparency. Principals acknowledge drawing the line between full notions of transparency and ‘playing the game’.

Three principals who had transferred to higher SES schools and were subsequently interviewed again, confirmed that their relationships with parents had changed. They report that in the more affluent communities parents demand to be more involved in decision-making processes, were more distrustful of their integrity, more knowledgeable about school funding allocations and demanded more transparency with respect to financial administration than the parents in their previous low SES schools.

**The teachers**

Although one of the salient principles underpinning SBM is teacher empowerment through increased participation in decision-making (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988), the findings in this study support those of previous studies (Bowe et al., 1992; Whitty et
al., 1998) which show that shared decision-making has not necessarily been an outcome of SBM. On the contrary, the pressure to implement external directives quickly and to meet performance standards has created an even stronger hierarchical order within primary schools widening the gap between the 'leaders' and the 'led'. This has led to tensions in the relationship between teachers and principals, described by Day et al. (2000) as the “tension between autocracy and consultation” (p. 141).

Nevertheless, some report that they have created the necessary structures to involve teachers in decision-making processes which they feel has led to a more collegial relationship and greater sense of commitment on the part of the teachers.

However, since SBM, all principals are now required to decide which LEA teachers receive social benefits and which do not and have been forced into what Wright (2003) calls 'Bastard Leadership'. The creation of groups of teachers possessing different statuses within the same staff room has led to additional grounds for tensions within schools. The directives on wage scales and terms of employment have adversely affected the relationship between principals and teachers leading to a sense of distrust which hitherto had not been present.

The Central Office of the MOE

The previous administration was perceived by the principals to be motivated by political concerns and not the public good, a perception which was evident in their responses and discussed at length in chapter five. All principals express high levels of cynicism when discussing the national leaders of the education system. A typical view of these national politicians is:

"...the very highest levels of the Ministry are simply covering their behinds. It's all blatant lies!" (Diana)

Ministry backtracking over allocation of funds for in-service training, counselling days and reducing teacher absenteeism, together with new constraints over parental funding, are examples of events which contributed to this ‘crisis of faith’ between the MOE and principals (Volansky, 2003). These events have been presented by principals as evidence of dishonesty and deceit on the part of the MOE. These are
seen as attempts by the MOE to forestall genuine transfer of autonomy to principals (Nir and Eyal, 2003) and reinforce the perception of Israeli culture as “power concentrated” and “group oriented” (Dimmock and Walker, 2000b, p. 154). These actions undertaken by the MOE severely limit the extent of school leaders to shape their own policy agenda. Most of the principals feel they have been conned into doing more work but have not in fact been given real authority over operating budgets for pedagogical planning. The MOE is perceived as forestalling and preventing the transfer of authority to principals and attempting to maintain power.

The apparent inability to formulate and execute clear policy in the debate between centralisation and decentralisation appears to weaken all leadership in the education system. It does not allow principals to function in an autonomous manner. If the question of centrality/SBM were seriously addressed, the roles of principals, LEA officers and inspectors would require reassessment. This would necessitate changes to 1956 Law of Inspection (Friedman and Barma, 1998; Nir and Eyal, 2003; NTFAE, 2005). Given the current political instability in Israel as well as the continued perceived need for a collective Israeli identity, it seems unlikely that any government would attempt to change the status quo. Habinsky (1998) seemed to have been correct in his prediction that without changes in the locus of control, decentralisation in Israel was doomed to fail.

An unexpected area where a loss of trust was evident in the principals’ discourse is a sense of mutual distrust and tension between two ‘breeds’ of principals. Yet this could perhaps be interpreted as an additional indication of principals’ lack of faith in the policy makers’ ability to nominate the ‘right’ candidates for principalship. This is presented next as another facet of issues of trust.
**Tension between principals**

An undercurrent of tension based on a lack of mutual respect between principals working in the same city emerged from the analysis. This appears to be a finding which is unique to this study. A key factor contributing to this tension appears to be length of time in leadership positions. For the purposes of this study, the term novice principals is used to refer to those who have served less than ten years in administrative positions. Although not strictly speaking novice principals, they are most certainly not beginners, this term is used to differentiate between them and their more veteran colleagues.

A careful analysis of the data has led the researcher to cautiously suggest that SBM in Spring Heights has led to a different type of person applying for and being appointed to principalship. All the novice principals in this study, excluding Nathan, had completed a Masters degree in Educational Management and were in their early thirties when appointed to principalship. They had all taught for less than eight years before being promoted. This contrasts greatly with the more veteran principals who had taught for at least fifteen years, served as advisory teachers to the MOE and were considered experts in pedagogy before being appointed principals and were graduates of teachers’ training colleges.

The veteran principals in this study are people with a strong background and experience in classroom teaching and advisory teaching. They are attempting to retain their roles as the ‘leading professional’ (Pollard et al., 1994) in their schools with varying degrees of success and are straining under the workload seemingly unable or unwilling to let go of the pedagogical aspects of their roles. They are acutely aware of the pressure to justify their positions as depicted in the following account by one of the more veteran principals:

"We should accept the new principals but also the veteran ones and especially those who have persevered. I have to justify myself as a principal who has persevered and stayed in the same school for so long despite what research says and what the younger principals keep on telling me. " (Batia)
This supports the speculation that there are two types of principals at present leading schools in the city and hints at a tension between the new breed of principals and the veteran ones. However, the acceptance of the novice principals expressed in this statement is unique. A more representative view of the veteran principals’ attitude towards their newer colleagues is depicted in the following statement:

“There is a great gap between what is said and what is actually done. There are many principals, the young, new gang, they talk a damn good game and actually do not do much at all. You should sit in on our meetings and listen to their arrogance, you’d be surprised!” (Dinah)

The tension between the two types of principals is highlighted by the veteran principals’ choice of words such as ‘pipsqueaks’, ‘youngsters’, ‘babies’ and ‘arrogant’ to describe their less experienced colleagues reflecting the scorn they feel towards them.

The new generation of principals, on the other hand, are more subtle in their criticism of their veteran colleagues. All suggested that the researcher interview the more veteran principals to ascertain how they were managing in their newly defined roles, subtly suggesting that their more experienced colleagues were less adept in managing schools under SBM and “could not be having an easy time at it.” (Zoey)

Although conflicts and tensions between newcomers and old timers is not unique to principals, in this study it reflects the tensions between two paradigms of educational leadership, the veteran principals who believe pedagogy should be the dominant feature of school leadership and the new breed of principals who have graduated from principalship training programmes which stress their roles as effective administrators. Previous studies have highlighted the extent to which a new management driven, performativity culture creates tensions for principals whose professional identities are steeped in educational values and ideals (Stevenson, 2006). This underscores the general lack of trust prevalent in the system not only amongst the three previously identified stakeholders, but also among the principals themselves.
SBM seems to have corrupted professional relationships amongst all stakeholders. This leads to the third core theme which stems from the principals’ perception of a loss of trust, the corrupting nature of power.

6.1.3 The corrupting nature of power
The potentially corrupting nature of power was an unexpected, new theme which emerged from the analysis. This is connected to the principals’ perceptions of the education system in Spring Heights characterised by a climate of distrust. As this was a recurring issue raised unprompted by the principals and was prominent in the analysis both in volume and in intensity it has been presented as a separate theme.

The inherent danger in increasing principals’ autonomy was expressed by most of the principals with the exception of Anna, Zoey and Diana, all graduates of the new principals’ training programmes. This appears to be a contextualised Israeli issue which was not apparent in the literature and may be of relevance only to the highly localised context of this particular city, Spring Heights and not to other locales in Israel. As presented in chapter five, principals’ views on increasing their autonomy was coloured by two prominent colleagues being charged with illegal financial activities. The principals in this study were clearly traumatised by these two cases:

“There is that inescapable feeling that maybe, just maybe, I too have done something illegal, not that god forbid I have ever pocketed money but maybe I have not done things exactly according to the regulations all the time. More autonomy? Thank you very much but no thank you! Autonomy equals power and power corrupts! [This was accompanied with a rhythmic pounding of her fist on the table. B.T.]” (Tammy)

The time component may also have been a factor which influenced their perceptions, as the interviews were conducted at the same time the newspapers covered these events. Both principals had been highly respected colleagues who had been held up as exemplars of the new breed of principals and were perceived to be functioning exceptionally well under SBM and were considered to be particularly adept in raising funds for their schools. Educational leaders in Spring Heights comprise a tight close
knit community and all the principals interviewed knew these colleagues on both a professional and personal level.

Not only are most of the principals, eight of the twelve, wary of being granted more financial autonomy and consequently being more exposed to litigation but they also express a lack of faith in their own abilities to be objective in their evaluations of their teachers. The overwhelming view is that autonomy equals power (as defined by Hoyle, 1986) and power corrupts. It is surprising that the principals seem to have little faith in their own and in their colleagues’ integrity.

The shift in the locus of power and control since SBM appears to have amplified the precarious position of the principals, causing them to mediate between the different forces competing for control over education in the city. This leads to the next core theme which emerged from the data analysis, that of unclear lines of responsibility.

6.1.4 Unclear lines of responsibility

The introduction SBM in Spring Heights has led to a blurring and confusion of areas of responsibility creating new tensions and challenges for principals. First, principals’ perceptions of the changed role of the district inspector in relation to their role is presented. Then, the increased role the LEA has taken on is discussed.

The district inspectors

All of the principals in this study believe that the locus of control has shifted dramatically since the introduction of SBM. This is reflected in their changed relationships with key stakeholders. The more veteran principals all agree that the MOE district inspectors still have an essential role to play in the education system. They are perceived to be a professional body of people who support the principals, share responsibility for decision-making and are a source of power for principals due to their wider knowledge base (Hoyle, 1986) and broader overview of the system. They are perceived as less political and localised than the LEA officers and their presence ensures that national goals of a collective Jewish identity (Gaziel, 1994; Oplatka, 2002; NTFAE, 2005) are met. The lines of responsibility between these
inspectors and the LEA officers at present remain unclear, severely impacting on the
principals' role.

This perception is not equally shared by all the more novice principals. Some feel
that the role of the inspectorate is redundant as principals are sufficiently qualified to
decide on priorities for schools. Moreover, they resent the power the inspectorate has
to place teachers in their schools and are resentful of the practice of transferring
failing teachers from one school to another instead of initiating the long and painful
process of dismissing such teachers. This severely restricts principals' autonomy and
is seen to be incompatible with expectations of accountability. There appears to be a
new generation of principals who are not willing to be inspector dependent.

The way principals and inspectors interact reflects a lack of clarity that characterises
the education system in Israel and not just in Spring Heights. The paradox emerging
from the data is that, although inspectors are hierarchically above principals – strong
principals ‘use inspectors well’ as advisers, consultants and despite SBM still as a
provider of resources. They are also seen as channels of information and
legitimisation for their own autonomous functioning which at times includes taking
advantage of loopholes in the law. This kind of covert co-operation seems to work
rather well in the limited form of SBM which functions in Israel at present, but
presents an ethical challenge as inspectors could then be seen to be acting as
subversive agents within the MOE.

With the introduction of SBM in Spring Heights confusion as to whom principals are
accountable and confusion as to the areas of responsibility of the various
stakeholders has intensified with the LEA taking on a much stronger and wider role
than previously. Conflicts arise when loyalties are split or spread between an
allegiance to the MOE and practical compliance or active involvement with the LEA.
The principals present the education system in Spring Heights as unstable, with
obscure lines of authority and responsibility. This is highlighted in the following
section.
**The LEA**

In previous studies conducted in Israel (Gibton et al., 1998, 2000) on schools classified as 'autonomous schools', evidence was found that principals were uncertain as to the school's place in the educational hierarchy. Principals perceived the 'initiatives' emanating from the MOE Central Office as severely hampering their autonomy. However, the evidence in this study has revealed that although the MOE has ceased such 'initiatives', the LEA in Spring Heights has taken over where the MOE had left off. Some principals indicate that it is the personalities of the LEA officers in Spring Heights coupled with the relatively high resources the city allocates to education that has created their increased involvement in education. Principals attest to the localised nature of education in Israel:

"Being a Spring Heights principal is very different, they are **much more demanding and much more involved here than in other places**. Hila [Head of the LEA primary School Department. B.T.] is a very **dominant personality with very strong ideas**. I don't think there any other city spends so much on schooling, so it is only logical that they want us to be accountable to them and demand to get all the results." (Diana)

A visual representation of the principals' perceptions of the changed nature of their relationships with key stakeholders in the educational hierarchy can be seen in figure 2.
As evident in the above figure, the LEA in the city of Spring Heights has assumed greater controls over education in the city.

The principals are acutely aware of being placed in a precarious position and having to juggle between the different loci of control. Power struggles between the various stakeholders further complicate the role of the principal. This is more prevalent in high SES schools, where the principal is left in the unenviable situation of being a buffer between the LEA and parents. This is evident in the principals’ accounts of the LEA’s attempts to close down NPOs which parents together with the support of their principals are opposing in court.
Principals mediate between the different demands made on them by various stakeholders and are expected to comply with contradicting demands and guidelines. Not only do principals navigate between incompatible expectations of parents and LEA officers, but they have also been placed in a position where they receive conflicting guidelines from MOE district inspectors and LEA officers. Unclear lines of responsibility between the MOE inspectorate, the LEA and the principals have created work intensification, confusion and more bureaucracy, all factors contributing to high levels of stress and a depletion of energy which leads to the fifth core theme.

6.1.5 Work overload and stress
The findings validate those of previous studies concerning the effects of SBM on principals’ workload (Webb and Vulliamy, 1996; Jones, 1999a, 1999b; Fullan, 2001; Farkas et al., 2003; Whitaker, 2003; Davis et al., 2005). Their workload has been significantly increased, so much so that they are now expected to be a ‘Jack of all trades’ but in fact some feel they are now masters of none. Pedagogy which had been the traditional expertise of veteran principals and the field in which they had proven their mastery has been driven out in some cases or shunted further down the line in others, by administrative demands (OECD, 2001). All with the exception of Diana, Anna and Zoey report that they are functioning under stress leading to both emotional and physical fatigue (Oplatka, 2006). The following emotional account best captures this:

"We are all drowning under the loads. I spent almost two months flat on my back and I know it was because of the stress. We are simply falling apart! This is an impossible job, the joy; the heart has gone out of it." (Shaye)

Their heavier workloads, coupled with the tensions arising from clashes between SBM requirements and their personal values, have led to a depletion of energy. This has resulted in some of the principals experiencing stress related illness and burnout leading to early retirement. Others have acknowledged that their ‘emotional reservoir’ (Flintham, 2003) has been drained and they have decided to either take advantage of their sabbatical rights or to reassess the balance between their personal
lives and professional commitments (Farkas et al., 2003) in order to replenish this reservoir.

The overall picture is that, although the role of the primary school principal has been dramatically increased through SBM, this has not led to the requisite changes in school structure. The bulk of additional tasks shifted to the school level have been placed on what this researcher has labelled the 'trilogy'; the principal, the secretary and the janitor with the principal bearing sole responsibility, moral and legal accountability for all school activities. The secretary and janitor have taken on additional administrative tasks but still report back to the principal who makes the final decision. This is shown in figure 3.

![Diagram showing the trilogy: Principal, Secretary, Janitor. All tasks are reported to the principal who makes the final decision.]

Figure 3: The trilogy — all tasks are reported to the principal who makes the final decision

The increased demands of SBM have not been accompanied by the resources to adequately fulfil these tasks or to employ expert professionals in non-teaching positions. Although both leadership theory and policy documents advise principals to delegate leadership tasks and practice distributed leadership (Gronn, 2003), most of these principals have been unable to do so due to the inability to remunerate staff members taking on additional non-teaching roles as well as their apparent inability or desire to let go of traditional pedagogical tasks. Principals collate information with regard to pupils' achievements and behaviour; make decisions within the pedagogical domain and teachers and parental NPOs report back to the principal. The
pivotal role of the principal, despite the rhetoric on participative decision-making and teacher empowerment, seems to have remained unchallenged.

The rather chaotic representation of the education system in Spring Heights according to the principals' perceptions leads to high levels of stress and work overload as principals admit to struggling to meet the demands and expectations of the different stakeholders and yet still maintain their own visions for their schools based on their personal values. Despite excessive demands on the principals' time, some have managed to extend their roles beyond their school communities and have taken on a wider role (Ribbins, 1985) or as this is aptly called in a NCSL report "leadership within and beyond the school" (Dimmock et al., 2005, p. 36).

This leads to the sixth core theme, which emerged from the data and principals' responses to the request to choose a description which best suits their new roles.

6.1.6 Leadership within and beyond the school

When asked to choose a title which best suits their job description today, in order to ascertain the nature of their perceived role change, five added communal leadership as part of their job description suggesting that SBM has enabled principals to take on a broader role which they had been unable to do in the past.

SBM has the potential to encourage school leaders to assume a position of local community leadership which seems promising. This aligns with the findings of Murphy and Beck (1994) of school leaders in restructured schools as social advocates and moral agents and Sergiovanni's (1995) observations of principals as community leaders and Gibton et al.'s (2000) findings of principals forming value-based programmes and leading their communities in the implementation.

Nevertheless, as presented in chapter five, the type of community action taken up by these principals differs according to their perception of the role of the school within the community. Some principals in weaker areas see community involvement as a natural part of their role and as an opportunity to contribute to the wider community. On the other hand, principals in more affluent areas differ in their definitions of
community action; this seems to be dependent on their value system (Rutherford, 2005). Some see the affluent community as an opportunity to raise additional funds for the school, as a market to exploit, whereas others have seized the opportunity to assist weaker members of the community such as the elderly and thereby inculcate pupils with social values.

SBM has clearly provided not only risks and threats but also opportunities (Gibton et al., 2000) for expanded community action although the type of community involvement is dependent on the principals’ values. The impact of the principal on the community is not only the product of system demands but also the product of personal value systems and the personalities of these individuals and the roles they assume. The role of principals in Spring Heights is characterised by complexity and a lack of clarity presenting a picture of principalship in transition, where both length of time in service and personality traits appear to influence their role perception and consequently their practices.

Six core categories have been identified and discussed and although clearly interrelated they have been presented as distinct themes for the sake of clarity and structure.

The six core categories are represented graphically in figure 4 below.
6.2 Principals’ Responses to the Challenges Presented by SBM

This section develops a typology to illustrate the range of responses of principals to the policy environment of SBM in Spring Heights. Although the typologies presented in the literature have informed the conceptual framework and were of use in the analysis of the data, they are lacking in that they do not take into account the wide range of responses evident in this study.

The principals in this study do not respond to challenges in a uniform manner. Issues of power and control seem to have more influence on the day to day work of principals than any policy document or contractual obligations. The definitions of authority and the distribution of responsibilities in the education system of Spring Heights are insufficiently clarified causing on the one hand pressures and tensions for principals yet on the other allows them to manoeuvre between the different

Figure 4: Six core themes impacting school leadership in transition. The areas which overlap represent potential spheres of tension.
stakeholders. Principals point to the power struggles between the district inspectorate and the LEA officers as factors which increase their workload, add to confusion and further limit their autonomy, as in the words of Shaye they are now ‘serving not one, but two, masters.’ This underscores the perception of decreased autonomy and highlights their perceptions of empowerment as being a false sense of empowerment; the language used is hardly that of empowered leaders. Most principals clearly do not see themselves as ‘masters’ but ‘servants’.

Gibton et al. (2000) cautiously suggest legislation as the means to establishing clear lines of responsibility. However, legislation it appears does not always have the intended effects (Bowe et al., 1992; Bell and Stevenson, 2006) as clearly articulated by one of the principals in this study:

“Just because the policy makers say it is so will not make it so, we either believe these things are our responsibility or we don’t. It depends on what the principal’s values and ethics are.” (Nathan)

The ethical dimension of educational leadership (Grace, 1995; Bottery, 1992, 2000) appears to have a strong impact on those principals who have clear ideologies and values about their roles as educational leaders. These values, coupled with personality traits, seem to override their adherence to externally prescribed requirements. The complexity of their responses is presented next as a typology of responses as emerged from the data.

6.2.1 Escapees

Three of the principals in this study, Dinah, Edwina and Sharon, have been labelled by the researcher as ‘escapees’. These principals felt that their traditional values as educators clashed with prescribed external demands inherent in the new managerial culture promoted by SBM. They were concerned about the loss of their pedagogical leadership, were operating under great levels of psychological stress and were unwilling to sacrifice their values and what they deemed as important for school leadership and had made a conscious decision to retire from education.
This is a reason for concern as these three principals, appeared to be in many ways the embodiment of Sergiovanni's (1998) concept of pedagogical leadership. They felt that their emotional reservoir (Flintham, 2003) had run dry, were unprepared to cope with the new management culture as they felt they could no longer preserve their sense of integrity and commitment to their people centred core values. Their choice was to take early retirement or disengagement (Gronn, 2003) and as such have been called 'escapees'.

6.2.2 Antagonists
The second type identified by the researcher is the 'antagonist'. Shaye is characteristic of this type which is similar to Grace's 'headteacher resistor' (1995). She is paying a heavy personal price, exhibiting signs of ill health: “I became sick, physically ill” and burnout “I don’t have the energy anymore; I felt more of a professional before SBM”. She seems to be struggling against all odds to replenish her emotional reservoir and to find sustainability strategies (Flintham, 2003). This type differs from the escapees as, although they both subscribe to the same high ethical principles and resist the new cultural change due to a reluctance to comply with directives which clash with personal values, instead of electing to escape, the 'antagonist' decides to remain in the system. Shaye, the embodiment of this type, is experiencing high levels of emotional and physical fatigue but is still holding on to her leadership position even though she has been transferred to another school. She is investing a considerable amount of energy in resisting the new school leadership culture: “I have a terribly hard time of it, because I am not prepared to move [away from pedagogy. B.T], I am simply collapsing...” and its expectations for principals to become more managerial.

6.2.3 Pleasers
Personality factors also appear to play a role in determining how principals respond to directives. Two, Tammy and Zoey, have been labelled 'pleasers' and are in many ways 'subcontractors' (Day et al., 2000). They have conformed to the external demands placed on them and are keen to please their superiors. They are submissive in their dealings with both LEA officers and MOE inspectors and readily conform to and accommodate (Bowe et al., 1992) all new directives. They might also be
described as 'pacifists' (Law, et al., 2003) or 'adaptors' (Kirton, 1976). They either do not conceive there being a values clash between their personal values and those of national and local policy or they are so anxious to please their superiors that they possess a false consciousness that in actual fact they are able to operate as autonomous leaders. Nevertheless, they clearly design their development plans in accordance with LEA 'initiatives' and MOE priorities thus taking on the role of 'dependent administrators' (Harris-Aran, 2001) supporting Gronn’s (2003) theory of designer leadership. Their agency to shape their own policy agenda seems to be severely restricted due to their compliant personalities.

6.2.4 Acrobats
A fourth type has been identified in this study as 'acrobats' and is exemplified by two principals Batia and Iris. They respond as 'jugglers' (Harris-Aran, 2001), who mediate between the externally prescribed demands and their personal visions for their schools. They can be characterised as 'headteacher professionals' (Grace, 1995) who are concerned about the distance their new roles have placed them from teaching. Yet they respond to changes as 'progressive mentors' (Law et al., 2003) and see reforms as an opportunity for growth and are committed to an extent to empowering teachers. They are conscious that their agency has been severely restricted but their paternal (Coulson, 1976) and proprietal (Southworth, 1995, 1999, 2006) need to safeguard their staff from the full impact of a relentless pace of reforms (Bowe et al. 1992), causes them to retain a strong sense of optimism and they attempt to seize the opportunities afforded by these reforms as opposed to the threats. They endeavour to operate according to a 'values led contingency' (Day et al., 2000) and are at times successful and at others less so.

6.2.5 Dodgers
Three principals, Nathan, Ora and Anna, have been labelled by the researcher as 'dodgers' and are admittedly adopting a 'subversive' (Day et al., 2000) role and use various strategies of 'subterfuge' (Bowe et al., 1992). They can be termed 'pragmatists' (Law et al., 2003) and have a high tolerance for ambiguity (Sorrentino et al., 1984). They are politicians and jugglers and are less concerned with high ethical principles. They comply with external demands when their sense of political
acumen warns them that it is in their best interests to do so. Elements of external policy which they perceive as advancing their goals are adopted and those they are opposed to, if they are able to avoid them without dire consequences are ignored. They take advantage of grey areas, exploit unclear lines of responsibility and make the most of loopholes in the system. They rationalise this behaviour as the only viable option if they are expected to promote their schools, show greater achievements and provide for the needs of the pupils.

6.2.6 Activists
Only one principal, Diana, can be labelled by this researcher as an ‘activist’, a ‘leader’ (Harris-Aran, 2001) or as Grace’s (1995) ‘headteacher – manager’, positioning herself as the undisputed leader or master of the school and openly urges colleagues to take a proactive stance in relation to external policy dictates. She is the archetype of the new breed of principals in Spring Heights, who has embraced not only the language of the educational market but also entrepreneurial behaviour. She is innovative in her relationship with the wider school community, in raising funds for her school as well as in implementing changes in the internal school structure. She takes a clear stand on all matters pertaining to education exhibiting confidence in taking risks and going against directives she is opposed to. Diana does not respond in a subversive manner and unequivocally fights policy she believes is against her values and the best interests of her pupils, taking up matters in court if needed. Diana challenges attempts of both national and local policy makers to impose their values on her leadership practices.

The differential responses to the demands of SBM as emerged from the categorical analysis are represented in figure 5.
### Principalship in Transition – school leaders’ responses to SBM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Escapees</th>
<th>Antagonists</th>
<th>Pleasers</th>
<th>Acrobats</th>
<th>Dodgers</th>
<th>Activists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel loss of Pedagogical leadership</td>
<td>Resist cultural change</td>
<td>Conformist</td>
<td>Mediators – juggle between values and external demands</td>
<td>Not concerned with high ethical principles</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional values clash with new culture</td>
<td>High ethical principles</td>
<td>Adaptors</td>
<td>Empower teachers</td>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
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<td>Psychological stress</td>
<td>Reluctant to comply with directives</td>
<td>Submissive</td>
<td>See reforms as opportunities</td>
<td>Goal-oriented</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unprepared to cope with change</td>
<td>Burned out</td>
<td>Accommodative</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
<td>Managerialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a conscious decision to retire</td>
<td>Experiencing physical and emotional fatigue</td>
<td>Stumbling towards retirement but still holding on</td>
<td>Paternal</td>
<td>Exploit loopholes</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stumbling towards retirement but still holding on</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concerned about distance from teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Masters</td>
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### Similar to references in the literature:

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<td></td>
<td>Dependent administrators (Harris-Aran, 2001)</td>
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<td>Jugglers (Harris-Aran, 2001)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Subcontractors (Day et al., 2000)</td>
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<td>Values led (Day et al., 2000)</td>
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**Figure 5:** Principalship in transition – School leaders’ responses to SBM
As reflected in the above figure, the differential responses of principals to SBM and the challenges it provides cannot be contained by any one of the typologies from the literature on educational leadership. Although the representations of other scholars have been useful in providing the beginnings of a conceptual framework, they do not take into account all the responses as evident in this study, nor do they convey the complexity of the responses of school leaders in Spring Heights to the policy environment. The typology presented in this thesis better reflects the subtle nuances of the differential responses of principals and may provide other scholars in similar contexts with a more elaborate model of representations which would serve as a more sophisticated conceptual framework. The rich data as emerged in this study suggests the need to present a much wider range of typologies which better reflects the responses of these principals as influenced by issues of power and control, where they position themselves in the educational hierarchy, their values and their personalities.

Conclusion

To sum up, the findings indicate that most principals perceive their autonomy to be severely restricted by the structure of the policy environment, SBM as implemented in Spring Heights, whereas their accountability has increased. Despite this perception of restricted autonomy, most principals are wary of receiving increased autonomy due to their belief that autonomy equals power and power has the potential to corrupt. Their perception is of an education system characterised by an erosion of trust which has impacted their relationships with parents, the LEA and the Central Office of the MOE.

Furthermore, they express a lack of trust in their peers’ integrity as well as exhibit self-doubt in their own abilities. This atmosphere of distrust is exacerbated by vague lines of responsibility. The lack of clarity, conflicting regulations as well as inadequate resources is seen by some as leaving them no choice but to disregard regulations and at times exploit loopholes in the law. This reinforces their belief that power, even in the hands of principled people, can corrupt.
Conflicting externally prescribed demands on the local and national levels and increased accountability measures have led to differentiated responses. Principals' responses are shaped by how they view their position in the educational hierarchy as well as their value system. Accordingly, some have escaped or retired, others, the antagonists, resist at a high personal price. Yet others are pleasers who comply with external requirements, the acrobats juggle and mediate between conflicting demands, some are dodgers who behave subversively. Only one is confident in her position as the undisputed leader or master of the school, believes that she has the power to control her own destiny as a school leader and has become an activist and advocate for proactive as opposed to reactive leadership.

The next chapter presents recommendations for policy makers of the education system in Spring Heights based on the implications of these findings.
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The six core etic categories which have emerged from the categorical analysis and the new typology developed representing principals’ responses to SBM have shed light not only on the principals’ perceptions of their roles as leaders of primary schools under SBM. They have also revealed unexpected insights as to how these principals perceive the education system and their relationships with the various stakeholders of education in the city. A salient theme which reoccurs in their discourse is a strong sense of decline in the quality of professional relationships amongst educational leaders at both the local and the national level, characterised by mistrust and cynicism. Nonetheless, it was shown that principals’ responses to external demands are not determined solely by educational policy (Southworth, 1999) but are influenced by their personalities, issues of power and control, their role perception, their past experiences and their values. In this chapter, the implications of these findings for policy makers in Israel are discussed and recommendations suggested. The limitations of this study are then presented. Finally, avenues for further research are suggested. The chapter ends with an afterword.

The first section presents six main recommendations based on the core themes discussed in the previous chapter.
7.1 Implications

7.1.1 Perceptions of autonomy and accountability

**Differentiated models of school leadership**
A singular type of policy on the principal’s role like that defined by SBM in Israel, reflecting the “power concentrated” and “group orientated” (Dimmock and Walker, 2000b p. 154) nature of Israeli culture, in which principals are restricted in their agency by the prescribed and at times contradictory regulations from the LEA and the MOE, might conflict with the values held by principals and so prevent them from following both national and local directives. Decreased autonomy together with widened accountability seems to be leading to either responses of resistance, leading to high levels of fatigue and stress creating ‘antagonists’ who are struggling to “replenish their emotional reservoir” (Flintham, 2003, p. 2) or to severely restricted roles for ‘pleaser’ principals leaving them little room for agency, validating Gronn’s (2003) concept of designer headship. Yet others take on the role of ‘acrobats’ and manage to mediate external demands with their personal values. More worrisome are subversive responses of subterfuge, the ‘dodgers’ who at times resort to pragmatic or ‘borderline’ behaviour exploiting legal loopholes. Of equal concern is the case of three of the principals in this study, the ‘escapees’ who chose early retirement. Only one principal can be classified as an ‘activist’, a headteacher manager (Grace, 1995), an innovative, proactive, confident master of her school.

Fullan’s (2001) advice that when a minority of people are functioning well then it would be wise to change conditions to facilitate the optimal functioning of the majority and not to try and emulate the characteristics of the minority seems applicable to the findings of this study.

The principals in this study are committed to liberal, egalitarian and meritocratic values of the Jewish secular education stream in Israel (Oplatka, 2006). All but one, Ora, are committed to social integration, inclusivity, equal opportunities and excellence in education, values underpinning the ideologies of Jewish secular education in Israel. Their professional identities have been formed in light of these
values which they had ascribed to as teachers and more so now as principals. However, their subjective views of reality (LeCompte and Priessle, 1993) reveal at times a discrepancy between these values and those of the externally prescribed texts of national and local policy causing for some conflicts and tensions in their roles.

This leads the researcher to agree with Oplatka (2006) that policy makers in Israel should not devise a unified education policy that defines only one idealised type of school leadership as dictated in the SBM handbooks distributed in Spring Heights but allow for differentiated models of school leadership (Bolam, 2004) taking into account the contextual nature of schooling as well as the diverse responses of school leaders. One of the assumptions underpinning decentralisation reforms is that variability among schools is good and not uniformity (Brown, 1992). Policy makers in Israel would be wise to pause and reflect on how national and local policies have affected school leaders and have led to the differentiated responses as evident in this study, before advocating increased autonomy, widened accountability or any systemic reforms similar to those proposed in the NTFAE (2005).

7.2 Issues of Trust

The current socio-political environment which has created a system characterised by a lack of trust across all levels seems to portend disaster and the risk of more principals functioning in a subversive if not illegal manner. Some tentative recommendations are offered.

7.2.1 The establishment of clearer boundaries of authority and responsibility

The erosion of trust and blurred notions of transparency between the principals and the LEA could perhaps be addressed by establishing clearer boundaries of responsibilities between the different stakeholders of education in the city. A revamping and clarification of directives and regulations which would afford greater room for manoeuvre and agency for principals may help answer their need for less restrictive controls and help principals better address the needs of their school populations thereby eliminating much of their subversive activity. A clarification of
directives, more flexibility in the implementation of guidelines and reduced restrictions together with trust building measures need to be undertaken.

7.2.2 The formation of genuine participative structures

The current atmosphere of distrust between principals and parents seems to reflect the socio-political atmosphere which has characterised the Israeli political scene in recent years. When unprecedented numbers of public figures are under investigation, it is no wonder that parents distrust principals’ integrity in their financial dealings. The most prominent public figure who was investigated during the fieldwork was former Prime Minister Sharon who allegedly received millions of dollars in bribes in the well publicised ‘Greek Island Affair’ as well as being investigated for using front companies to launder illegal campaign contributions. This was by no means a unique occurrence; the list of politicians under investigation by the Attorney General at present (2007) includes Prime Minister Olmert, Finance Minister Hirchson, Minister for Strategic Affairs, Lieberman, former Justice Minister Ramon and President Katsav (Yoaz, 2007). In the light of unparalleled numbers of public figures facing litigation, Minister of Education, Yuli Tamir (2007) sent a letter to all educators in the country urging them to be models of stability, honesty and integrity.

Faith in the education system in Israel has been steadily eroded over the past decade due to successive cutbacks in the education budget, which has in turn affected both the status and salaries of teachers. The steady decrease of achievements of Israeli pupils on international tests, the numerous reforms which have been suggested but not implemented, (NTFAE, 2004, 2005) and the rapid change in Ministers of Education, there have been no less than eight in the past decade, have all contributed to a lack of stability and an erosion of trust in the system. One cannot ignore the impact of the militant rhetoric which accompanied the publication of the recommendations of the NTFAE, (2005) where both the MOE and the Teachers’ Unions waged vocal, strident battles against each other in the media on the public perception of educators.

It is beyond the scope of this study to address the reasons for the distrust Israeli citizens have for people in leadership positions as it is symptomatic of problems
deeply embedded in Israeli socio-political life and it would be simplistic to address this at the level of identifying the problem and offering a solution. Yet, if principals were encouraged to introduce genuine participative structures with their teaching staffs and parental communities, this may help reduce tensions between parents, teachers and school leaders and lead to more open notions of transparency.

7.2.3 Principal forums for mentoring and support
The present situation where there is an undercurrent of tension between veteran and novice principals impedes the possibility of principals in the city of Spring Heights working in collaboration as well as contributes to the climate of distrust amongst those in leadership positions in the city. The knowledge base and experience veteran principals have accumulated throughout their years in the education system should be valued and respected as it has the potential to enrich novice principals. The new breed of principals who have attended significantly different principalship training programmes could in turn have much to convey to their more experienced colleagues in particular in honing their financial acumen and administrative skills. There seems to be a missed opportunity for fruitful learning, mutual mentoring and support which is lacking at present among the school leaders in Spring Heights. As it seems unlikely, given the tension which exists, that a bottom up, grassroots initiative would be taken by principals, a recommendation to the policy setters is to establish principals’ forums where all would benefit from the differential knowledge they possess. Although at present, principals meet on a regular basis with their respective district inspectors and colleagues, these meetings are devoted mainly to passing on directives from the Central Office and the district office and do not provide real opportunities for mutual support and collaboration which would perhaps contribute to lessening the tension between the veteran and novice principals.

Moreover, almost all of the principals expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with the nature and quality of training they had received including those who had undergone the new principalship training programmes. Taking into consideration the priority given by policy makers to principal training (NTFAE, 2005), it would seem prudent to take advantage of the accumulated knowledge and experience gained by these principals and recruit them in assisting in the training of new principals.
7.3 The Dilemma of Autonomy, Accountability and Power

The ambivalence felt by many principals towards increased autonomy reflects the dilemma this presents for them. On the one hand, they believe that autonomy should go hand in hand with accountability. Yet, they are clearly apprehensive about the effects such autonomy might have when placed in the ‘wrong hands’ or even in their own hands. This seems to be based on their past experiences as well as a lack of faith in their colleagues’ and even in their own integrity. When there is a breakdown in the principals’ professional narrative, when past, present and future expectations of their professional role all seem to clash, principals may use this as a way of explaining their conduct and providing a form of rationalisation for not only subversive activity but also for unlawful activity.

The domination of headteachers as morally unacceptable has been addressed by Southworth (1999), who more recently (2006) stated that the “proprietal, pivotal and powerful” (p. 20) role of school leaders has shifted to one which is more “distributed, differentiated and diverse” (p. 20). There has been no indication of such a shift in this study. The principals all remain pivotal figures in their schools and the evidence shows that their attempts at shared decision-making and distributed leadership are few and limited. The sole responsibility and accountability rests with them making genuine distributed leadership and the formation of SMTs as Gunter (2001) says a risky business.

SBM in Spring Heights has afforded principals slightly more power in the form of financial administration, raising funds and determining wage scales for LEA teachers and although they theoretically would like increased autonomy, most are cognisant of the dangers of increased power alluding to the corrupting nature of power. This perception that autonomy equals power and power corrupts is congruent with the belief that there is a need for checks and balances and a redefinition and clarification of lines of responsibility clearly needed. This is related to the next issue of unclear lines of responsibility.
7.4 Unclear Lines of Responsibility

7.4.1 Strengthening the position of the district inspectors

SBM in Spring Heights has led to a dramatic shift in the locus of control and a striking change in the nature of relationships among the key stakeholders impacting the role of the principals. Principals in this study suggest that they resent having to report to and be accountable to two masters, the LEA officers as well as the MOE through their representative the district inspector. This has led to education in the city becoming politicised and has doubled the principals’ workload. They are straining at the demands to comply with conflicting demands and regulations. This has implications for policy makers in the new administration. Informal policy statements produced by Central Office and sent via email to district inspectors suggest that the importance of retaining a professional body of district inspectors to support principals as well as the need to re-establish bonds of trust between Central Office, teachers and principals have been recognised. This is in stark contrast to the recommendations of the NTFAE (2005), which had recommended closing down district offices and granting further autonomy and control to the local authorities. The findings in this study suggest that the majority of principals, though not all, believe that the position of the district inspectors should not only remain firmly in place but should be buttressed and strengthened with regard to principals’ dealings with the LEA.

The following diagram, figure 6, reflects how this changed education system would look.
Most principals clearly feel that the district inspectors and not the LEA Officers should be the ones to both support and evaluate their work. They would prefer the LEA to return to their previous position of channelling funds for maintenance and steer clear of pedagogy. This may help redefine areas of responsibility and could eliminate the current duplicate workload where principals are required to perform either similar tasks for different bodies or adhere to conflicting guidelines.
7.5 Work Overload and Stress

7.5.1 The auxiliary staff - the trilogy
The perceived importance that the support staff has taken on since the introduction of SBM and the overall dissatisfaction revealed by principals with the professional qualifications of their auxiliary staff points to the need for specialised administrative personnel in primary schools. This leads the researcher to recommend that the LEA transfer the autonomy over the selection of these two significant members of the auxiliary staff to the principals from a pool of highly trained professionals. In addition, as principals clearly express the need for personnel specialised in economics and in law and schools do not have the financial resources to hire qualified personnel, it would seem wise to suggest that schools in neighbouring localities collaborate and hire the services of both an accountant and a legal consultant together and share the expenses of retaining professional services.

A suggested model which takes into account the limited resources available to principals and has the potential to lessen the principals' workload and reduce stress would be to upgrade the school secretary to a qualified office administrator, the school janitor to a site manager who would then report directly to the office administrator who would in turn be accountable to the principal. The model suggested would look like the one shown in figure 7 below.
7.6 Leadership Within and Beyond the School

7.6.1 Public recognition of community action
SBM has evidently created opportunities for some principals to take on wider roles within their communities and go beyond the boundaries of their schools. However, this activity seems to be of a private, personal nature adopted by individual principals. Community action is not a widespread phenomenon in the city and does not seem to be encouraged by either the district inspectors or the LEA. The nature of action within the community is not always positive in that it sometimes takes on the semblance of exploiting the resources within the community as opposed to the school contributing to the community. At present principals receive recognition in the form of awards for excellence in education based solely on raising pupils’ achievements and not for social agency. Perhaps public recognition of principals working in community outreach programmes would encourage others to adopt initiatives which would assist weaker members of their communities.
7.7 Research Limitations

This study relied solely on interviews as the data gathering and data generating tool as befitting the study's purpose to gain insights into principals' perceptions of their roles. Furthermore, principals were not asked to supply documentation to support their accounts and only internal school documents which revealed changes in internal school structure and which were volunteered were examined and helped to inform the researcher but did not form part of the data-base for intensive analysis. Consequently, the mass of documentation accumulated during the fieldwork did not form part of the data-base intensively analysed as it was not deemed reflective of principals' perceptions. Nevertheless, a systematic analysis of these documents may have revealed more insights.

Moreover, the researcher as instrument (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Moorehouse, 1994) of both data collection and analysis clearly carries the danger of subjective bias. A different researcher would have told a different account. This has been addressed by subjecting the analysis and the interpretations of the data to the scrutiny of two expert judges as well as to the principals interviewed. Nevertheless, the account as rendered is like all qualitative research, essentially subjective.

Furthermore, it would be naive to assume that the status of the researcher did not influence in some way the responses of the principals. Nevertheless, great pains were taken to set the participants at ease and to ensure them that their identities would be masked. The fact that some principals volunteered information which was potentially damaging is an indication that they felt sufficiently secure to admit to subversive activities or activities which could be construed as bordering on the illegal. However, it would be presumptuous to assume that all principals interviewed were as candid as their colleagues.

The ethical concern of protecting the participants' rights (Pring, 2000) limited the size of the sample as a conscious decision was taken to only interview principals who had secured tenure within the MOE in order to avoid the potentially conflicting situation where the researcher would become privy to information which could have
negative ramifications on the participants’ career. These untenured principals not interviewed and belonging to the ‘new breed’ of principals could have perhaps offered more insights into how these novice principals respond to both external and internal pressures. Nevertheless, the range in principals’ age, professional background and length of time in administrative positions vary sufficiently to form a balanced, representative view of the role perception of Jewish secular primary school principals in Spring Heights.

This study has been bounded within the Israeli context and within that context even further bounded to a particular urban location and within that city the limits of the study have been confined to one particular stream of education. This attests to the particularistic nature of this study (Merriam, 1988). It is nevertheless believed that enough background information of the historical, political and cultural context of the study has been provided to allow readers to conclude if the findings are relevant to their particular contexts.

7.8 Recommendations for future studies

This study has presented a picture of school leadership in mainstream Jewish secular education in a specific major city in Israel. However, it has presented an incomplete picture due to bounded nature and cultural locatedness of the research cases. Other streams of education in the same city have not been included; consequently the findings present only a partial picture. Jewish religious streams and Arab State schools should be included in future studies to examine if cultural differences impact the way principals perceive their roles. A more comprehensive view of the citywide education system would then be presented.

A further recommendation is to undertake similar studies in other major urban locations as well as in smaller rural locations in Israel. This is deemed necessary due to the perceived dominant nature of the LEA in Spring Heights. It would be significant to determine if indeed SBM in Israel has led to such a dramatic change in the locus of control in education in other locations as it has in this one.
There is evidence in the literature, as is also supported by this study, that, over time, principals’ perceptions change (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006) and some aspects of the role which had been perceived as difficult became easier and vice versa. Consequently, a longitudinal study tracing principals’ career paths and perceptions of their role over time is recommended.

**Conclusion**

The study validated the findings of previous research findings concerning the increased pressures on primary school principals and the complexity of their redefined roles under SBM. Principals’ perceptions of decreased autonomy and widened accountability have been documented in previous studies as has the creation of vague lines of responsibility. Two unique major findings have emerged from this study and offer new insights into principals’ perceptions of their leadership roles. The first is the erosion of trust which is manifested across all levels of the education system. The second is the dilemma principals present between autonomy, power and corruption. No evidence has been found elsewhere, illustrating that principals themselves are apprehensive about being granted additional autonomy due to the fear that this may lead to corruption. Furthermore, the findings have illuminated the complex nature of the relationship between educational policy, current leadership theories and the impact thereof on the practice and perceptions of principals; role perception, personality traits and personal values seem to be more significant factors in influencing their practices.

The overall picture that emerges from this study is that primary school principals in Spring Heights do not perceive that they have become more autonomous with the introduction of SBM, just the contrary. Nor, however, can they be seen to be operating as automatons. The principals are functioning in a tumultuous environment where the lines of responsibility are blurred. Power struggles between the two major stakeholders, the LEA and the MOE, coupled with disparate responses to and of parents in low and high SES schools have created a situation in which there is an immense erosion of trust across all levels of the education system. This leads the researcher to conclude that before advocating either an extension of decentralisation
reforms and increasing autonomy for principals, or recentralisation, these issues need to be addressed at both local and national levels. Legislation, although not necessarily providing an instant cure, may help principals by clearly demarcating the lines of responsibilities between local municipal authorities and national ministry bodies. If undertaken with sufficient public debate legislation might eliminate some of the duplicate tasks principals are obliged to fulfil and may place the responsibility for education back in the hands of professionals and out of the hands of local politicians with narrow interests.

The typology developed in this study representing school leaders' differential responses to SBM provides a more sophisticated, broader conceptual framework than those suggested by previous scholars and may serve as a useful conceptual framework for future research. The model clearly shows that coping mechanisms of principals are not unified, suggesting that principals respond to policies directives in differential manners. The data suggest that the structure of the educational policy environment in Spring Heights leads to principals (those who elect to remain in the system) operating either under high stress levels, or in a significantly constrained and prescribed manner or being evasive and at times even responding in a manner which could be interpreted as bending the law. Measures of trust building at all levels seems to be a prerequisite if the education system in Spring Heights is sincere about genuinely improving educational services and encouraging open lines of communication between all stakeholders.

An afterword

Two final points must still be made. The first is the extent to which the research process has both empowered and humbled the researcher. The research process involved extensive reading of the literature which has served to inform and update me. The interviewees have taught, educated and in many ways humbled me. My professional life involves close contact with many teachers, principals, academics and policy makers on the local and national level on a daily basis. I believe that they will now be dealing with a better educated professional and educational leader.
Principals will now be working with an inspector who appreciates more the complexity of their roles.

Second, readers may be tempted to conclude that primary school principals in Spring Heights are unprincipled people. This is clearly not the case; the principals I encountered are devoted, dedicated, hard working people distinctly aware of the significance of their roles. They are in their own words:

"...out there alone in the field, a principal today is quite isolated, we are on our own. In the end, we are alone, the totality of the work, the isolation, when it comes down to it, it is my decision, my responsibility and I am the one who has to face the consequences." (Iris)

The main objective at the outset of this study was to give voice to those whose voice is seldom heard. I hope to have accurately rendered their perceptions of their roles and have managed to do what I was asked to by one of the principals:

"...put down on paper what we think, what we feel, because there is no place where we can say what we have to say, there is no place at all. I don't know if anyone thinks it's important to hear what we have to say, I don't think they really care." (Sharon)
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APPENDIX I – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name: ____________ Date: __________ Place: __________
Begins: ________ Ends: ________

Background information
Age: ____
Total number of years as a classroom teacher: ____________________
Administrative experience: ______________________________________
Total number of years as a principal: ____________________________
Number of years as principal of a SBM school: ____________________
Education: teacher certification, principal certification, B.Ed, BA, MA, MBA, other...
The official number of students enrolled in the school is __________
Geographical location __________
SES Status: ______________
What is SBM? _________________________________________________

1. Who decided to initiate SBM in Israel?
   a. Why did they decide to introduce SBM?
   b. What were their motivations?
   c. What did you think about SBM when it was introduced?
   d. What do you feel about SBM now?

2. In what ways, if any, has your role as a principal changed since the introduction of SBM?
   a. Are you doing more administrative work than before? (Can you give examples?)
   b. Is this at the expense of instructional leadership?
   c. Do you feel any tension between being a manager as opposed to being an educational leader? If so how do you cope with this?
   d. Do you have a different relationship with parents?
   e. Do you have a different relationship with staff?
f. Do you have a different relationship with LEA?
g. Do you have a different relationship with Ministry Inspectors?
h. Do you feel you are implementing a significant change in education and if so what is the nature of this change?
i. Do you act as a buffer between the Ministry and the community?
j. Do you feel more empowered, do you have the freedom to take initiatives that you did not have prior to SBM? In what way?
k. Do you feel you have been freed from Ministry initiatives?
l. Who owns the school? Who does the school belong to?
m. Who are the clients/superiors?

3. What do you feel are the essential skills and knowledge required to be an effective principal of an SBM school?
   a. How important is it to have a background in education? Do you consider this to be essential?
   b. What do you feel about principals coming from other fields?
   c. Please state your educational values or philosophy.
   d. Has being the principal of a SBM helped to realise your values, or do you feel it has challenged them? Please explain with examples.

4. What prepared you most for SBM?
   a. Was there anything in your professional/personal background that helped prepare you? Can you think of a particular incident in your life which has assisted you in your role as principal of a SBM school?
   b. What was the nature of the training you received?
   c. What would you have liked more of?
   d. What was beneficial in the training?
   e. Did they present an accurate picture of what to expect? In what way?
   f. Would you attend an additional training course?

5. In what way do you think your role will change as a result of the Dovrat Report?
   a. Will your role be easier or more difficult?
b. In what way do you think you will be more responsible?
c. Will you be more autonomous?
d. Will you change your leadership style?
e. Will you still have teaching hours?
f. Will you oversee pedagogy or will you nominate others to do so?

6. What do you perceive as the possibilities opened up to you as a result of SBM?
   a. Do you think you will have the freedom to focus more on pedagogical aspects?
   b. Will you be free to initiate new ideas and programmes?
   c. Will you be able to allocate resources where you feel they are needed most?

7. The proposals in the Dovrat Report raise important legal issues for schools. Are you concerned about the legal implications of these reforms?
   a. What do you perceive as possible threats as a result of the NTFAE?

8. If given the option of returning to pre SBM, would you do so? Why?

9. Which of the following best describes your role as principal today?
   strategic leader, instructional leader, organizational leader, community leader, manager, administrator...

10. Does educational research, for example like the research I am doing now, seem important to you?
    a. In what way?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

12. Who would you recommend I speak to who may have interesting views on SBM?
# APPENDIX II - PRINCIPALS IN THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of principal</th>
<th>Academic background</th>
<th>No. of pupils</th>
<th>SES measure</th>
<th>Years in educational administration</th>
<th>Years in SBM</th>
<th>No. of headships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>B.Ed. and principal certification</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaye</td>
<td>B.Ed and principal certification</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batia</td>
<td>Teachers' seminary</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>MA in Ed Management</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ora</td>
<td>MA in Ed Management</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwina</td>
<td>B.Ed. MBA</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoey</td>
<td>MA in Ed Management</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td>B.Ed. and principal certification MBA</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinah</td>
<td>Teachers' seminary</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Teachers' certification Principal certification MBA</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>MA in Ed Management</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>B.Ed. MA in Ed Management</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SES** – This refers to the socio economic background of the pupils in a school. A school with a SES of 1.72 would indicate a very high socio economic background whereas a school with a SES of 6.12 would indicate a very low socio economic background.

**The principals in 2007:**
Iris, Ora, Zoey and Nathan have all moved on to new schools in either higher SES areas or magnet schools.
Tammy has taken a sabbatical.
Edwina, Sharon and Dinah have retired.
Anna, Diana and Batia are still in the same schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batia</td>
<td>ambiguous messages - don't relinquish control</td>
<td>All of a sudden there is a feeling that we want you to run the schools but we still control... all the departments in the LEA. If I want to renovate the toilets... no, I have charge of building - criteria of standards so I do not touch it... I give in and do not compete for control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>control over all funds</td>
<td>They don't encourage it. They even want to close down the existing NPOs. For pressure to close down my NPO. Which I shall not do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ora</td>
<td>wanting more control at expense of NPO</td>
<td>I also have a secretary in. Now, the power of the LEA increased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaye</td>
<td>LEA increased powers</td>
<td>I never go back but if the child must be the center by the way I still have not make profit... the key significant element is the change was mainly who gets control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>oversees budget - neutral</td>
<td>The most frustrating thing was... no because even before I changed technical but personality issues... the ministry and also the MOE as consultant... We are obligated to attend meetings...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>LEA should be admin not pedagogy</td>
<td>I think that the key significant element is who gets control...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batia</td>
<td>willing to fight to get budget approved</td>
<td>Look, I said this before; that no because even before I changed technical but personality issues...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaye</td>
<td>invasion into pedagogy</td>
<td>Look, both the ministry and also the MOE as consultant...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>change technical but personality issues</td>
<td>I also do not really know what will happen...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoe</td>
<td>more significant in training &amp; support</td>
<td>The most frustrating thing was... no because even before I changed technical but personality issues...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>size gives independence</td>
<td>The most frustrating thing was... no because even before I changed technical but personality issues...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batia</td>
<td>obligations and pressure to attend sessions</td>
<td>We are obligated to attend meetings...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batia</td>
<td>pedagogical initiatives</td>
<td>Look, I said this before; that no because even before I changed technical but personality issues...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>obligations to do initiatives</td>
<td>Look, both the ministry and also the MOE as consultant...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>pedagogical initiatives</td>
<td>I also do not really know what will happen...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaye</td>
<td>reprimanded by LEA</td>
<td>The most frustrating thing was... no because even before I changed technical but personality issues...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwina</td>
<td>hypocritical</td>
<td>We are obligated to attend meetings...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td>lack of faith in financial dealings</td>
<td>We are obligated to attend meetings...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**compete for control**

Batia -- compete for control

ambiguous messages - don't relinquish control

All of a sudden there is a feeling that we want you to run the schools but we still control... all the departments in the LEA. If I want to renovate the toilets... no, I have charge of building - criteria of standards so I do not touch it... I give in and do not compete for control.

Diana -- compete for control

control over all funds

They don't encourage it. They even want to close down the existing NPOs. For pressure to close down my NPO. Which I shall not do.

Why?

Because there is a directive to have only one account in the school. Which I shall not do.
APPENDIX IV – LETTER OF CONSENT

The State of Israel
The Ministry of Education
The Chief Scientists’ Office

18th November 2003

District Director Generals:

Re: Research on Principals’ Perceptions of Leadership in the Context of School-based Management in Israel.

Ms Beverley Topaz is undertaking research for doctoral studies at the University of Leicester in England. Her area of research relates to the impact of School based Management policies on the attitudes and practices of school leaders in Israel. The research will be conducted via interviews with school principals.

We have no objection to the research to be conducted on schools under State supervision only and in accordance with the following conditions:

1. The consent of school principals to be interviewed and prior appointments made with them.
2. Confidentiality of the recorded data, the names of the principals, and the names of the schools.
3. The destruction of the recordings on completion of data analysis and the publication of the findings without revealing the identities neither of the principals nor of the schools.

In order to remove doubt:

1. This letter does not vouch for the quality of the research
2. This letter must be presented by the researcher to the principals upon entering schools
3. This letter is valid for a period of two years.

Sincerely,

Rene Usizon
Coordinator of Evaluation and Measurement

Copy: Ms Beverley Topaz