THE ETHICAL LIMITATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA’S EDUCATION MARKET

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Spring 2009
Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Johan Wassermann, whose guidance and sense of humor made the research process a truly rewarding experience. This project would also not have been possible without Principal Gerhard van Rooijen’s warm acceptance and support for my research interests. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Jeffery Smith for introducing me to the work of Elizabeth Anderson and teaching the principles of market ethics with such an enthusiasm and clarity that the lessons learned in his classroom have become a permanent part of my world view.
Table of Contents

Introduction 4

I. The Historical Context

People’s Education for People’s Power 5
The NP Perspective—Unilateral Restructuring and the Model C Plan 7
CODESA and the ‘Selling’ of School Fees to the Democratic Movement 8
The South African Schools Act—Successes and Failures of School Fee Implementation 9
Returning to the Ideals of People’s Education 12

II. The Ethical Framework

Anderson—Ethical Concerns over Market Systems 13
Is Education Better Valued by Market or Non-Market Norms? 15

III. Logistics

Research Aims 19
Selecting a School—Durban Academy 20
Methods 22

IV. Findings

Community 1—School Governing Bodies as ‘Cost and Budgeting Centers’ 24
Meeting the Needs of the Wider Community—SGB Admissions Policy 24
Why Market Norms Come into Play—the Demands Placed on SGBs 26
Egoism and the Offer System 29
Business as SASA Dictates—Recap of SGB Community 31

Community 2: Teacher Motivations and the Preservation of Social Norms 32
Prioritizing Student Needs over Teacher Wants 33
Preserving Personal Relations in the Classroom 33
Opting to Stay—Teachers’ Absence of Exit 34
Recap of Teaching Community 35

Community 3—Parent and Student Perspectives in the Educational Market 36
Township Exit and the Selection of Durban Academy 37
Commuting Learners—Explaining Low Levels of Parent Voice through Learner Exit 41
Non-Commuting Learners—Want Based Explanations for Low Parent Involvement 43
Egoism, Exit, and Indoctrination—Concerns over Market Norms in Bluff Community 44
Recap of Parent/Student Community 46

V. Conclusion 47
Suggestions for Further Research 49

VI. Bibliography 51
Abstract:

In response to the centrally controlled Bantu Education system, the resistance movement advocated a decentralized system of educational governance that included local voices in the running of schools. In 1996, the government satisfied the movement’s demands by including local school governing bodies (SGBs) as apart of the South African Schools Act (SASA). Attached to the powers of SGBs however was a right not advocated by the movement: the ability to set school fees. SGBs’ authority over school fee policy has transformed their role in school governance from democratic platforms for local voices into efficient cost and budgeting centers. As a result of school fee implementation, South Africa witnessed the creation of an education market in which student access is determined by an economic “ability to pay” standard. This essay challenges the introduction of market based reforms by expanding upon Elizabeth Anderson’s “The Ethical Limitations of the Market.” Through a case study of a former Model C school in South Durban, I argue that the norms guiding market decisions within SGBs undermine the way parents and learners value education. If the goal of education is to teach students democratic values and the ideals of responsible citizenship, the market, an inherently egoistic and impersonal mechanism for distributing educational goods, is ill-suited for the task. Suggestions for further research are noted.

I. Introduction

The goal of my ISP is to determine whether the marketing responsibilities devolved to SGBs promote economic norms which undermine important social values in education. While the literature identifies the failures of marketisation as a tool for redress, my research extends this substantive critique by assessing school fee policy from an ethical standpoint. I am concerned with the competitive and egoistic values that govern market relations and whether these norms undermine the larger social aim of education in preparing learners to become responsible citizens. In this sense, my research is less focused on the aspects of racial integration and more concerned with the effect market values have on learners across the racial and economic spectrum.

My argument is premised on Anderson’s (1995) critique of market norms and her notion of sphere differentiation as a means to secure important democratic values. The introduction of school fees and its establishment of local markets for education conflict with Anderson’s argument for establishing barriers between market and nonmarket systems. Through a case study of Durban Academy, I look to determine if market norms guide decisions within the SGB, and if these norms corrupt teacher, parent, and student valuations of education. Assessing South African school policy through Anderson’s lens identifies the moral concerns over market systems in the public education sector. The potential benefits of my research rest in its ability to better conceptualize the way school fee policy impacts the lives of parents and learners.
My research is comprised of five sections. Section 1 provides a historical overview of the People’s Education movement and the creation of SGBs. Included in the first section is a discussion on the reasons school fees were introduced and the positive and negative aspects that have developed from the creation of local education markets. Section 2 outlines Anderson’s ethical concerns over unregulated market practices and relates the potential issues arising from market-based distributions of education. Section 3 describes the specific aims of my ISP, the reasons for selecting Durban Academy, and the particular methods employed. Section 4 presents the findings of my research, in which I assess the presence or absence of market norms in three communities at Durban Academy: the SGB, teachers, and parents/students. Conclusions and suggestions for further research are discussed in the final section. Based on the data gained at Durban Academy, I conclude that the market is inherently flawed as a mechanism in the distribution of educational goods. The financial burden placed on SGBs forces these institutions to operate along market norms, which in turn, undermines parents’ and students’ freedom to value education as a shared good and realize the democratic values that the schooling system is designed to promote.

II. Historical Context

This section traces the historical forces that led to the development of South Africa’s decentralized system of educational governance. Specific emphasis is placed on the role of SGBs in providing local platforms for community involvement. An analysis of the reasons why school fees were introduced is then examined. This section closes with an assessment of SGBs and school fee policy.

‘People’s Education for People’s Power’

When the Nationalist Party passed the Bantu Education Act in 1953, the majority became increasingly fearful of a centrally controlled education system. The “gutter education” administered by the apartheid regime was, as Gilomee (2004) observes, “designed to prepare blacks for a marginal place in life.” The lack of resources, medium of instruction, and poor quality of teaching worked to reproduce the apartheid notion of a subservient black population. In response to the oppressive Bantu Education system, the democratic movement mobilized under the grassroots organization—People’s Education for People’s Power.
According to Soobrayan (1990), though the People’s Education movement prioritized efforts to end Bantu Education, they began outlining a general framework for a post-apartheid education system during the struggle. The movement sought to replace the strong central apartheid authority with local structures for community involvement. They reasoned that the only way to ensure that local voices would be heard was to decentralize the educational policymaking process. Soobrayan describes the rationale behind the People’s Education movement’s emphasis on local control:

Under Nationalist control education is used to further subservience and oppression. Whereas in the hands of the people it becomes a weapon for liberation. Therefore, for education to serve the interests of the majority, the majority must not only control it, but the people must also participate in its conception, formulation and implementation. Soobrayan’s assessment identifies the ways in which the guiding principles of People’s Education were a response to the abhorred centrally controlled apartheid system. Supporting Soobrayan’s observation, Fiske and Ladd (2004) argue that the majority viewed schools as “instruments of the apartheid government,” and that the only way they could overcome their deep-rooted distrust over apartheid institutions was to devolve the decision-making processes to the local level. Similarly, Dieltiens et al. (2007) describe the movement’s commitment to local control as an attempt to “undermine structural hierarchies.”

Perhaps the clearest indication of the movement’s values is expressed through the words of the leaders themselves. In 1996, Walter Sisulu voiced the demands of the People’s Education by stating, “We are not prepared to accept any ‘alternative’ to Bantu education that is imposed from above.” Sisulu’s comment identifies the merging of liberation ideology and a growing emphasis on local control. According to Sisulu, education policy would be decided from the ground up through local involvement. But the notion of People’s Education was not only an appealing euphemism, it was a principle embedded in the Freedom Charter’s message that, “The people shall govern.” The movement’s rejection of Bantu Education spurred the demand for a decentralized system of education. But while the People’s Education movement was busy protesting Bantu Education and constructing plans for a post-apartheid education system, the NP was busy constructing its own plans to forestall educational redress.
The NP Perspective—Unilateral Restructuring and the Model C Plan

Unlike the democratic movement, the state was in an advantageous position by virtue of its presiding control over the education system. Pampallis (1993) uses the term, “unilateral restructuring,” to describe the NP’s last-minute attempts to entrench white privilege. As in the case of the People’s Education movement, the NP advocated for a more decentralized system of educational decision-making, but for radically different reasons. The NP’s conversion of public schools to Model C schools marked the first of its efforts to decentralize education policy and empower local white communities.

Beginning in 1991, white public schools were allowed to select from three different models from which to begin integrating black students. Initially, three models were proposed: Model A converted former state schools to private institutions, Model B allowed state schools to remain public institutions, and Model C converted state schools into semi-private state aided schools. On April 1, 1992, the Department of Education and Culture in the House of Assembly announced that all white state schools would become Model C schools. While the government granted white state schools the alternative to remain Model B through a two-thirds majority vote from the parents, schools selecting Model B faced severe funding cutbacks. Moreover, these schools were not allowed to charge school fees to supplement government funds. As a result of the NP’s unilateral restructuring, 96% of white state schools became Model C by the end of 1992.

Dolby’s (2001) case study of Fernwood High identifies the factors that inclined parents to support the Model C option. According to Dolby, the appeal of Model C rested in the considerable autonomy and control parents had over the integration process. Dolby describes the rational behind Fernwood’s decision to become a Model C school by incorporating the voice of Fernwood’s SGB chair: “If we go Model C we’ve got control and we just up the school fees and we will only take the nice blacks.” Under Model C, parents were well-positioned in a powerful financial gate-keeping role, which allowed them to prevent a mass learner migration to their children’s schools through the adjustment of school fees. In the negotiations over post-apartheid education, white constituents would remain committed to SGBs’ power to set school fees. The NP’s unilateral restructuring began the decentralization process and marked the first instance of government incorporation of market based approaches to funding public schools.
CODESA and the ‘Selling’ of School Fees to the Democratic Movement

Once it became clear that apartheid was no longer sustainable, the NP began assembling policy alternatives to build upon the newly established Model C framework. Describing the NP’s response toward the end of apartheid, Pampallis notes, “The National Party has been busy putting together new policies which it hopes it will be able to sell to the liberation movement, but which will effectively result in the maintenance of white privilege.” One such policy alternative was the creation of SGBs and the provision of financial responsibilities to these local organizations.

But even the negotiation process was a strategic opportunity for the NP to shift the majority’s support in favor of their policy recommendations. Nzimande (1993) argues that the NP used the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) negotiation process to divide the ANC from the democratic movement. Having struggled for decades against closed-door negotiations, advocates of People’s Education argued for talks to take place “on the ground” as opposed to “around the table.”

Describing the concerns of the People’s Education movement, Nzimande writes,

The constitutional negotiations at the moment are largely about creating formal structures of representative democracy. Important as this may be, there is a grave danger that the debate around the struggles to build and institutionalize participatory democracy may be lost. It is within this framework, for instance, that the issue of the role and location of PTSAs/PTAs should be approached.

The CODESA agreements managed to link black fears to white aspirations by strengthening the movement’s support for local governing bodies. While the ANC understood the potential setbacks of local control over education, the majority became increasingly committed to a decentralized system of educational governance. Pampallis (1998) compares the ironic merging of interests between the NP and the mass movement as, “a coincidence of the interests of the two most powerful, if usually antagonistic, constituencies.” With the social and political climate treading in its favor, the NP began its attempt to sell its version of post-apartheid education.

Based on the historic role of Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs), selling the idea of school governing bodies was not difficult. During the resistance struggle, the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) established PTSAs in order to coordinate parent and student protests. PTSAs gained widespread support and were lauded for their ability to wrest control from the state. Sithole (1994) argues that the masses’ support for PTSAs stems from a widespread “fear of victimization.” Unlike the distant, centrally controlled
Bantu Education system, PTSAs were local, transparent organizations that looked to include the people’s voices rather than exclude them. Embodying the mass movement’s support for PTSAs, Nzimande states, “The only way to guarantee a thoroughgoing transformation is to develop organs of people’s power now.”\textsuperscript{20} Selling the idea of SGBs thus blended well with the democratic movement’s support for PTSAs.

While the merging of the black PTSAs and white SGBs of the Model C system satisfied both the ANC and the NP, debate concerning the particular roles and responsibilities of the SGBs were much more difficult to resolve. Conflict between the ANC and NP centered on the issue of school fees. In order to convince the ANC and the democratic movement that SGBs should be granted the power to set school fees, the NP relied on three arguments: 1) there was a need for supplementary funds to accommodate the massive influx of black learners, 2) allowing white schools to set school fees would “free up public funds” and allow the government to focus its resources on those schools with the greatest need, 3) and school fees would prevent another bifurcated education system by retaining policy makers’ support within the public school domain.\textsuperscript{21} In the first instance, the Hunter Committee estimated that the education budget would double from R25.6 billion to R62.4 billion if school fees were not introduced.\textsuperscript{22} In addition, supplementary funds from the private sector would allow the government to channel its resources to the rural and township schools. Concerning the flight of influential policymakers and professionals from public schools, the second White Paper on education argues that failing to allow SGBs to set school fees would make it impossible for the government to maintain the quality of former white schools. This in turn would cause professionals to move their children into private institutions, resulting in a bifurcated educational system resembling that of the apartheid past. Though the ANC acknowledged the arguments presented by the NP, the movement’s lifelong commitment to ‘free education for all’ made accepting school fees a difficult task.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, the ANC recognized how SGB control over school fees would inhibit integration efforts by creating a loophole in the non-racial admissions policy. Negotiations over school fees would continue until 1996.

\textit{The South African Schools Act—Successes and Failures of School Fee Implementation}

Although initially opposed to school fees, the democratic movement eventually conceded to the NP’s demands. In 1996 the government passed the South African Schools Act, which remains the most fundamental
piece of legislation on post-apartheid education. Included in the Act is the stipulation for SGB membership and their particular roles and responsibilities in school governance. Under SASA, SGBs must include a parent majority with representation from the principal, teachers, staff, and learners. In addition to membership stipulations, SASA outlines the responsibilities of SGBs, which include: adopting a constitution and mission statement, determining admission policy, overseeing school property, recommending the appointment of teaching staff to the Department of Education, and developing a budget for the school, which may include school fees.

Pampallis’s “School Fees” provides a general overview of the general successes and failures of SASA. Perhaps the greatest success resulting from the Act was the integration of black urban learners into former white schools. Describing the new multiracial Model C schools, Pampallis remarks, “They have absorbed children of the emerging black middle class (African, coloured and Indian), as well as a limited number of poorer black families.”

Supporting Pampallis’s observation, Karlsson’s case study of former Model C schools in Durban identifies a similar increase in the enrollment of middle class applicants irrespective of the learners’ race.

Another success of SASA has been its ability to retain the support of the professional class. Since SASA allows SGBs to set school fees, former white schools have continued to offer quality education, which has prevented the flight of professionals from the public school system. Thus, independent schools account for less than 5% of all South African learners.

But while former Model C schools have continued to thrive under SASA, the vast majority of black township and rural schools have remained severely impoverished. Consistent with Pampallis and Karlsson’s observations, Tikly and Mabogoane (1997) observe that the provision of school fees has benefitted only a small minority of urban middle class black learners, while ignoring the majority of disadvantaged learners in the townships and rural communities. The authors observe that the effectiveness of SGBs is dependent on the wealth and social capital of the surrounding community. As a result, SGBs in poorer areas have lacked the capacity of SGBs in more affluent areas, deepening the divide between former white and former black public schools.

Recent amendments to SASA like the Norms and Standards for School Funding (NSSF) have looked to address SGB inefficiencies in poorer communities. Under the NSSF, the poorest 20% of schools receive the
highest level of government support.\textsuperscript{30} Despite the government’s renewed focus on poorer schools, the overall quality in these schools has not improved.\textsuperscript{31} As a result of minimal government support, 98% of schools in poor township and rural areas charge school fees despite their inability to collect these payments.\textsuperscript{32} Since the introduction of school fees has placed the onus of funding schools on SGBs, local community members are forced to demand payment from parents in order to maintain school operations.\textsuperscript{33} A recent study by the Nelson Mandela Foundation observes SGB members have resorted to physical violence and humiliation tactics to acquire school fee payments.\textsuperscript{34} In addition, Pampallis argues that since attaining funds from the central government is often a difficult and lengthy process, SGBs turn to local parents to address their financial needs. While targeting these “softer targets” is a faster and more reliable method, it has fragmented parent participation and local community involvement.\textsuperscript{35}

Complicating the financial challenges of poorer families is the fact that SASA does not legally bind SGBs to inform parents of their exemption status. Since it is in the best interest of the school to collect a high percentage of fees from the community, SGBs have avoided disclosing information concerning qualification for exemption status. As a result, even in areas of absolute poverty, fee exemptions are not often used.\textsuperscript{36} In addition to withholding information from parents, SGBs have used screening tests and application fees to exclude learners who may be unable to meet the cost of fees at a particular school.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, the exemption requirements enumerated in SASA rarely apply to the vast majority of poorer families. Under SASA, a families’ annual income must be less than ten times the cost of school fees in order for the family to gain at least partial exemption. Based on the high threshold under SASA, exemption applies primarily to poor families who send their children to wealthier schools, not the vast majority of poor families sending their children to poor schools. For instance, school fees in poorer areas average R100. Parents would only be exempt from paying fees if their annual income was less than R1,000 / year, but any family receiving social grants is already above this income bracket.\textsuperscript{38} Even if parents understood the requirements for exemption, very few parents, including those living in extreme poverty, would qualify for school fee exemption.

In order to address the inefficiencies of school fee policy, the government amended the NSSF in 2006 and gave the Minister of Education the power to declare schools as no-fee schools.\textsuperscript{39} Schools in national quintiles one and two, which account for the poorest 40% of schools, were declared no-fee schools. As a result
however, there has been an increased learner migration toward these no-fee schools, leaving quintile three schools struggling to recruit learners and to accrue sufficient funds to maintain their schools. Chaka projects that no-fee-schools policy will be extended to Quintile 3 schools by 2009. 40

Returning to the Ideals of People’s Education

Although the People’s Education movement has seen their dreams of “local organs for peoples power” become a reality, the NP’s unilateral restructuring and attachment of school fees to SGBs has undermined the efficacy of these local democratic institutions. Although SGBs were designed to be inclusive platforms for local decision-making, their school financing role has transformed them into business centers demanding school fees. Pampallis (1998) describes the ironic result of South Africa’s shift to decentralize educational governance:

The irony is that the very decentralization that has led to greater democratization of schooling by giving all the main stakeholders a powerful voice in the schools’ affairs, is also contributing to the perpetuation of inequities among our schools. The new inequalities, however, are increasingly being drawn on class rather than racial lines. 41

Pampallis is right to observe the increasing importance of class instead of race in determining access to education. The devolution of financial powers to local SGBs has inhibited integration by framing access to public schooling as a matter of income and wealth. Rich schools have maintained their quality, while poor schools are unable to extract even low fees from the surrounding community. On the other hand, Pampallis suggests that the increase in decentralization is consistent with an increase in democratization. But Pampallis’s observation assumes that having the legal right to a ‘powerful voice’ equates to one’s ability to exercise a ‘powerful voice.’ Although SASA stipulates the creation of SGBs, the Act does not necessitate local communities’ immediate and effective use of these new democratic platforms. The data drawn from Fiske and Ladd, Karlsson, Tikley and Moboagane suggest that the voices of local communities remain unheard to a great extent. Moreover, the data produced by the Nelson Mandela Foundation explains how the introduction of school fees has undermined the principle of inclusivity within SGBs that the People’s Education movement sought to establish.

Returning to Pampallis’s discussion on the introduction of school fees, he notes, “Although school fees need not be part of a self-governing package, they were seen as a way of giving local governing bodies both discretionary funds and a major incentive to use funds wisely.” 42 School fees are viewed as an effective market
incentive in increasing efficiency and competition among schools. According to Chaka, the considerable pressure on SGBs to fund schools explains why SGBs are more concerned about fundraising and financial matters and less concerned with educational issues. The use of market mechanisms in the distribution of education has extended economic inequalities to the educational sphere. Understanding the successes and failures of school fee policy, the next section assesses outlines the moral limitations of market based reforms in education policy.

II. The Ethical Framework

The following section explains Anderson’s argument on sphere differentiation. Emphasis is placed on her discussion of the five market norms, which forms the foundation of my field research. The subsection entitled, “Is Education Better Valued by Market or Non-Market Norms?” incorporates additional arguments for the separation of market systems from the schooling system.

Anderson—Ethical Concerns over Market Interventions

In “The Ethical Limitation of the Market,” Anderson explains the important role of the state in limiting the scope of the market in order to preserve citizens’ freedom and autonomy. Anderson’s argument is based on an assessment of market exchanges as transactions guided by self-interested norms. She is concerned with the state’s reliance on markets as a mechanism to distribute public goods and argues that failing to regulate the market can undermine the way we value shared goods by allowing commercial norms to corrupt the values within nonmarket domains. By reducing the options through which a citizen can value a particular good and replacing social norms of valuation, the market limits individual freedom and autonomy.

Since Anderson’s argument centers on the protection of individual freedom and autonomy, a proper conception of these terms, as understood by Anderson, is required. Anderson defines freedom as having a wide range of options through which one can express their diverse valuations. Autonomy is understood as the ability to govern oneself according to the principles one reflectively endorses. Again, Anderson is concerned with freedom and autonomy in relation to the corruptive influence of market norms. She argues that market norms stand in contrast to nonmarket valuations in five ways: they are impersonal, egoistic, exclusive, want-based, and provide ‘exit’ instead of ‘voice’ as a means to influence policy outcomes. In the first instance, economic
transactions are impersonal, since as Anderson notes, “Money income, not one’s social status, characteristics, or relationships, determines one’s access to commodities.”47 Relationships in the market are formed in virtue of another’s capital, not upon their personal characteristics. Second, market exchanges are guided by egoism, which Anderson defines as, “When each party defines and satisfies her interests independent of the other.”48 One involved in market exchanges rarely considers the well-being of the other, so long as their individual wants are satisfied. In the third case, economic transactions are exclusive since access is limited to the purchaser.49 Property rights are acquired through the purchase of commodities, which entitles the buyer with the freedom to exclude whomever he/she chooses. Fourth, economic transactions are want-based in that they satisfy “desires backed by the ability to pay.” Anderson clarifies her description of want-based norms by noting that the market does not draw a distinction between one’s “urgent needs” and “intense desires” and satisfies whoever can afford to trade.50 Finally, economic transactions also promote exit over voice in that a consumer uses the practice of exit, or ending business, to instigate change. A customer has no right to directly participate in the design of the product or to determine how it is marketed.51

The nature of economic goods and the ‘use’ mode of valuation we associate with these goods conflict with personal and social valuations common to civil society.52 Values of compassion, cooperation, and generosity are replaced by economic norms of impersonality, egoism, and exclusiveness when market systems enter nonmarket domains. When market norms undermine social values and limit the range of significant options one can pursue, individual freedom is limited. Similarly, autonomy is compromised when market valuations replace the options by which one can reflectively endorse.53

Based on the corruptive influence of market norms, Anderson argues for a system of “sphere differentiation.”54 Sphere differentiation involves the separation of goods into multiple spheres, which preserves distinct modes of valuation. She argues that the practice of boundary setting will protect individual freedom and autonomy by preserving a range of diverse opportunities for one to value a particular good.55 Soule succinctly summarizes Anderson’s theory: “Anderson’s aim is freedom and autonomy through protective spheres that allow goods to be properly valued.”56 Preventing the infiltration of market norms enables individuals to freely and autonomously pursue those values they deem important.
Understanding Anderson’s theoretical framework, she proposes a three-step methodology to determine whether the state is permitted in regulating market systems. The first step involves determining whether a particular good is better valued according to market or nonmarket values. If a good is better valued by nonmarket values, step two asks whether market norms undermine important social values belonging to a particular good. If market norms corrupt social values, then state regulation is permitted. The next section looks to satisfy Anderson’s first requirement and argues that educational goods are better valued according to nonmarket norms.

**Is Education Better Valued by Market or Non-Market Norms?**

Anderson argues that educational goods are best valued by social norms of democratic values and fraternal relations. In contrast to market norms, Anderson describes the values underpinning our conception of education:

> Democratic ideals strongly inform our conception of elementary and secondary education. A principal purpose of education at this level is to prepare children for responsible citizenship, exercised in a spirit of fraternity with others of diverse class, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

If the purpose of education is to prepare learners for civil engagement and equip them with the necessary skills to address social ills, what role, if any, do markets have in the educational sphere? Since markets promote competition by dividing learners according to the ‘ability to pay’ standard, learners are likely to receive an education without first-hand experiences with learners of different economic classes. Since class is closely tied to race especially in the South African context, markets undermine the larger aims of education by confining the “spirit of fraternity” to a homogenous pool of affluent white learners or poorer black learners.

Supporting Anderson’s assessment of democratic conceptions of education, Strain (1995) expresses a similar concern over the state’s increasing reliance on markets as a vehicle to distribute educational goods. Basing his argument off of the UK’s Education Reform Act of 1988, Strain argues that markets encourage schools to manage their affairs like businesses in competition with neighboring schools. Schools compete to sell education to parent and child consumers. According to Strain, the Education Reform Act conceives of education as a packaged commodity, void of any intrinsic worth. By distributing education according to economic standards of production and consumption, the market removes forums of communal participation.
The lack of local democratic organs undercuts the goals of schooling by promoting individualism over cooperative fraternal relations.

Returning to Anderson’s analysis of market norms, Strain emphasizes the importance of ‘voice’ and ‘need-based’ values in underpinning our understanding of education. He argues that democratic platforms are necessary to give individuals a voice to express their educational needs. When deliberations focus on satisfying the needs of the least advantaged instead of promoting competitive individualism, education can realize its promotion of democratic ideals. But since the market distributes education in terms of price mechanisms (i.e. school fees), those with the larger incomes will consume more, even though their needs may be less. Strain’s analysis reverts back to Anderson’s assessment of markets as mechanisms that do not discriminate between ‘urgent needs’ and ‘intense desires.’ Again, we see how the market fails to provide for the least advantaged. Instead of education operating as a mechanism to even out class barriers, the introduction of markets into schooling magnifies these inequalities. Based on the market’s role in limiting voice and need-regarding ideals, Strain concludes, “Markets, even when heavily regulated and administered, induce effects contrary to the values of individual and social freedom upon which public education is understood to be founded.”

Like Strain’s support for removing markets from the provision of education, Ranson’s (1995) critique emphasizes the inherently self-interested nature of markets and their role in undermining the larger social aim of education. Though Ranson’s criticism is directed at the UK’s 1993 Education Act, which calls for a stronger centrally administered market in education, his critique of market norms speaks to South Africa’s decentralized local markets for education. As in Anderson’s assessment of markets as egoistic, Ranson argues that the “individualism of markets” erodes democratic values of cooperative deliberation. The promotion of market mechanisms is thus inversely related to the promotion of democratic values.

Unique to Ranson’s assessment of markets is a holistic understanding of education as a social institution designed to prepare learners to address contemporary social ills. Describing the current problems of our society, Ranson states, “The problems we face [. . .] cannot be resolved by individuals acting in isolation.” Since markets promote individualism instead of cooperation, matriculates leave school with a hollow understanding of what it means to engage in collective activism. Markets fail to realize what democracy alone can establish.
concludes that if we are committed to preparing learners to address the predicaments of our time, we cannot rely on markets as a vehicle for distributing access to education.

Perhaps the most formidable obstacle confronting the arguments set forth by Anderson, Strain, and Ranson, is the libertarian commitment to economic freedom. Philosophers of the libertarian camp argue that removing the role of markets in education infringes upon a parent’s freedom to invest in their child’s education. They argue that state involvement limits parent choice by prescribing which school their child must attend and confining parents to restrictions in locality. They argue additionally that free market are morally superior in that it creates a system whereby free and voluntary choices in education are secured through individuals acting according to their own moral and prudential interests.

But this narrow conception of freedom fails to recognize how an unregulated market can severely limit the freedom of poorer individuals. For instance, Ranson describes markets as, “formally neutral but substantively interested.” In other words, though the market appears to increase parent choice by ‘freeing’ parents from poor local schools in their catchment area, this increase in economic freedom assumes each person entering the market has the same package of capital upon entering the market. But centuries of black disenfranchisement have tipped the scale against the black community. When market mechanisms enter the education sphere, it complicates inequalities in income with inequalities in educational opportunity. As a result, markets fail to offer disadvantaged communities a fare shake in the educational market. Similarly, Strain argues that markets assume that society operates within a ‘moral vacuum.’ But as Ranson describes, social agents are differentiated by virtue of their differences in income, ethnicity, religion, and culture. Libertarians assume that the actual market is reflective of the ideal market where individuals deliberate on an equal playing field and naturally sort themselves among various choices in public schools.

A final complication arising from market systems in education is the conservative perspective of voluntariness with regards to the least advantaged class in society. Describing the market perspective of educational distribution, Ranson notes, “The market can parade under the guise of neutrality while any ensuing inequality can hide beneath the illusion that, because the agents have acted, they must also have assented.” Simply because poorer parents choose to send their children to poorer schools does not mean that their choices are made voluntarily. Inequalities in education cannot be justified simply because parents ‘assented’ to sending
their children to lower quality schools. This surface level understanding of voluntariness fails to consider the background conditions that may coerce parents to choose and to act in a certain way. For rural and township learners, the ‘choice’ in attending poor local schools is not an expression of consent or acceptance of the market system, but simply a decision made within a forced-option scenario confined by the limitations of school fees and transportation costs. Based on the normative assessment of educational values and the equality compromising effects of market based distributions of education, we can conclude that education is better valued according to nonmarket norms. The next section describes the preliminary steps prior to my field research in which I attempted to apply the ethical concerns related by Anderson, Ranson, and Strain, to a case study of a public school in South Durban.

III. Logistics

To restate the goal of my research, it is to answer Anderson’s second question: do market norms corrupt important social values in education? This section refines my general research question in terms of Anderson’s framework and then describes the reasons why Durban Academy was selected. I briefly touch upon the school’s history and transition to a multicultural school since understanding the racial aspects of the Durban Academy audience is an important consideration when assessing their perspectives on class and education. Included in this section is a description of the methodologies employed and their accompanying limitations.

Research Aims

Since my initial goal is to determine whether market norms guided Durban Academy’s understanding of education, I needed first to frame Anderson’s five economic norms in relation to my specific education focus. Arriving at appropriate questions simplified the field research phase by serving as a guide throughout my study. The table cross-lists the specific community type with the specific market norm I looked to uncover.
### Figure 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Norms</th>
<th>A. SGB (Producers)</th>
<th>B. Teachers (Facilitators)</th>
<th>C. Parents / Students (Consumers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Impersonal</td>
<td>How does the SGB deal with non-fee paying parents?</td>
<td>Do teachers discriminate between fee-paying and non-fee paying learners?</td>
<td>How do parents respond to SGB school fee requests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Egoistic</td>
<td>Does SGB prioritize collection of school fees over parents’ well-being?</td>
<td>Do teachers exhibit a preference for higher school fees?</td>
<td>Are parents focused solely on their own child’s development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exclusive</td>
<td>Is SGB school fee policy exclusive?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want-based</td>
<td>Does SGB satisfy needs of poorer learners?</td>
<td>Do teachers respond to student needs?</td>
<td>Does parents’ ‘ability to pay’ determine child’s access to school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exit &gt; Voice</td>
<td>Does SGB provide a platform for parents’ voice?</td>
<td>Do teachers express a desire to leave DA for a better school?</td>
<td>Assess parent participation and student decisions to enter/exit DA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For sake of clarity in my argument, I categorized the three communities using identifiers that related each community’s particular role in school operations and their relation to the two other communities. Due to the administrative and financing role of the SGB in managing the school, they were identified as “producers.” Teachers became “facilitators” in virtue of their absent role from managing school funds and their intermediary role between the SGB members and the learners. The parent and student community are best characterized as “consumers,” who pay school fees for an educational service.\(^1\) Labeling the communities assisted in the organization of data and in the construction of a holistic argument that related the challenges each community faces individually and in relation to the other communities.\(^ii\)

In addition, in evaluating the data through Anderson’s ethical lens, I recognized that each community was only capable of exercising market norms in virtue of their particular role in relation to the other two

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\(^1\) The identifying labels were drawn from Strain’s discussion on school competition and parent consumers (For more information see Strain (1995), 5).

\(^ii\) These labels were not used prior to the research phase in order to avoid relying upon any assumptions heading into the field.
communities. For instance, the power to exclude was not invested in the teachers or parent communities, but in the governing body, while the ability to exit was reserved to teacher and parent/learner communities. Understanding the broad structure of my argument, I searched for a school that would provide access to these three communities.

**Selecting a School—Durban Academy**

Based on the limited duration of my field research, my academic advisor, Johan Wasserman, suggested I focus on one school for a case study. Johan advised that a case study would provide richer and more in-depth information regarding the questions I attempted to address. Based on the school’s proximity to my living accommodations, its unique placement between affluent public schools and poor township schools, and its diverse student body, I believed Durban Academy would be a suitable choice for my research. When I managed to contact Principal van Rooijen at the end of March, I committed myself to Durban Academy and postponed contacting other schools on the Bluff. Once access had been obtained, the more information I gathered on the school convinced me that I had made the right decision.

Durban Academy is a secondary school located in the working-class Bluff community. The school was founded in 1957 under the name, Dirkie Uys, in commemoration of the fifteen year-old Voortrekker hero who died protecting his father in the Battle of Italeni. For forty-years the school carried a strong Afrikaner tradition. In 1997, the school became a dual medium Afrikaans-English school, which began the initial process of change in the school’s ethos and student body. Under pressure from the SGB, the school changed its name to Durban Academy / Akademie on the 1st of April 1997. Today, the school website states, “The staff and students reflect the rainbow nation.”

In addition to the political pressure to integrate Model C schools, the declining numbers of Afrikaner students fueled Durban Academy’s transition toward a multiracial parallel school. By 1997, the school enrollment leveled off at around 400 students due to the ‘white flight’ from navy, air force, army, and railway personnel whose children comprised the majority of enrollees at Durban Academy. As one respondent explained, “The survival of the school depends on the learners . . . and what good is a school without students.” The added pressure to maintain enough students to continue employing the teaching staff resulted in the school’s
decision to become a dual-medium school. The decision to amalgamate with Port Natal, an Afrikaans school in Pinetown, fell through during the negotiation process.

Although respondents praised the school’s transition to a dual-medium school, interview data revealed mixed explanations on the motivations behind Durban Academy’s decision to integrate. While interviewees argued that the former principal had the vision to open enrollment to black township learners, the former principal himself described the transition process as a “numbers game.” Another respondent who participated in the decision-making process during the transition phase explained, “Our problem started when the availability of space in the school got too big. So we had to take in and fill up to keep the teachers. There was just no way to keep that school Afrikaans and survive.” In addition to Durban Academy’s genuine goal to integrate, the data suggests that the external political pressures and the internal ‘numbers game’ required Durban Academy to open access to non-Afrikaans speaking learners in order to survive.

But to discount Durban Academy’s management as bitter-enders opposed to the integration process would be to overlook the courageous steps the staff took in defying the culturally conservative Bluff community. One respondent described the social climate immediately following Durban Academy’s decision to integrate by remarking, “All those people that are struggling now at that time wanted to crucify us. They would say, ‘How can you do it? How can you do that?’” Additional responses related continued resentment towards Durban Academy as a school who “sold out to the black community.” Regardless of the motives behind Durban Academy’s decision to integrate, its current student body is indeed reflective of the rainbow nation.

The history behind Durban Academy’s transition to a multicultural school is important in imagining how education is perceived from SGB members, staff, and learners at Durban Academy. Though my research focuses on economic valuations that ignore references to race, since economic status and race are closely correlated in the South African context, understanding one without the other would fail to understand the complete picture.

Methods

A few days prior to conducting research at Durban Academy, I had an important meeting with Johan. Johan emphasized a reflexive approach, encouraged me not to ignore data that fell outside my narrow
“Anderson lens,” and stressed the social and ethical responsibilities of a field-researcher. Perhaps the single most important advice Johan provided was to postpone any assumptions that I may have gained during the literature review and ISP proposal process. Johan’s advice resonated with Glesne’s (2006) suggestion to novice researchers: “What you know is the basis for the assumptions that preclude you from seeking explanations and that shut down your depth-probe inclinations.” Johan asked me not to simply conduct a study that proved Anderson’s argument correct. He asked me to include data that did not fit Anderson’s ethical framework. By not allowing my research focus to determine the results of my project, I assumed the role of a researcher—that of a learner.

Concerning the actual methods used, my initial approach to uncovering market values relied upon a content analysis approach. Johan emphasized the potential gains that could be made through investigating, “what already exists.” When I was directed to the SGB secretary who then provided access to Durban Academy’s governing body minutes, I anticipated a smooth-sailing research process. I quickly discovered that the SGB minutes would not be as informative as I had initially hoped. The heading, “Beheerliggamnotules,” should have been enough to inform me that the minutes were composed primarily in Afrikaans. For instance, of the 113 pages in the 2001 SGB minutes, only two pages were written in English. Though the hiring of a translator could have assisted in circumventing this obstacle, it was too expensive and time-consuming an alternative to yield worthwhile results. The only documents I managed to obtain were the SGB constitution and school fee exemption forms.

The limitations of the content analysis approach were offset by the interviewing process. Over the four-week period, I managed to conduct seventeen interviews: nine of whom were affiliated with the SGB or served finance administrative roles, eight who were teachers, two parents, and one private employee in charge of the school’s subsidies.iii Access flowed from the top-down, beginning with Mr. van Rooijen’s welcoming acceptance of my research interests. Through a snow-balling process, I was directed from teacher to teacher and from one SGB member to the next. In order to avoid researching a homogenous pool of interviewees, I kept track of the interviewees’ relative age, ethnicity, and personal affiliation or history with the school.

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iii Interviewees often identified with multiple communities, which explains why the sum total of the individual interviewees adds to more than sixteen (e.g. two teachers were also members of the SGB and the Principal was an SGB member).
Since the interviews averaged one to two hours and transcribing the notes placed significant time burdens on my schedule, I was unable to conduct interviewees with the students. To compensate for this gap in data collection, I constructed student surveys to administer during batting periods.\textsuperscript{iv} Obtaining parent perspectives was equally difficult since the parents I wanted to interview were parents of township learners residing in Umlazi and KwaMashu. Travelling to the townships presented significant time and ethical barriers, which overrode the potential gains. Fortunately, a parents’ evening coincided with my research, during which I managed to conduct twenty to thirty informal, unrecorded interviews.\textsuperscript{v} Parent valuations from Bluff community members were obtained through observant-participation in family braais, informal encounters near the local restaurant, and during commuting trips to and from the school.

Ethical considerations were limited by the nature of my research and the respondents I managed to contact. Privacy, voluntariness, and confidentiality were secured during the interviewing phase through informed consent forms. Each respondent was asked to first read and sign the form, which related my research interests and ensured their right to exit during the interview. In addition, I verbally expressed my commitment to ensuring their personal privacy prior to the start of each interview. Though the ethical procedures occasionally challenged my ability to establish rapport with the respondents, only on one rare occasion did the interviewee remain distant and removed from my research aims.

\textbf{IV. Findings}

As indicated by Figure 3.1, research findings are organized by community instead of theme. Explaining Anderson’s notion of sphere differentiation becomes clearer when arranging the argument by community type. Although the SGB should not be governed by market norms in the first place, the findings express a need to establish barriers between the financial organs of SGBs and teacher and parent/student communities. Under each community type are subheadings relating the particular norm under investigation. Understanding the structure of my argument, we begin with an assessment of the SGB community.

\textsuperscript{iv} Batting periods were free periods during teacher absences. In only one of the classes did the teacher leave an assignment for the learners in which I withheld administering the survey.

\textsuperscript{v} Additional commentary on the parents evening is described in the next section under subsection “Community 3.”
Community 1—Market Norms in the ‘Cost and Budgeting’ SGB

Since SASA places the onus of school financing on SGBs, one would expect Durban Academy’s SGB to demonstrate each of Anderson’s five norms. Based on qualitative data, the SGB community demonstrated mixed valuations of education consistent with both market and nonmarket norms. Though the SGB community was not exclusive nor want-reaching, opening admissions to township learners required an impersonal and businesslike approach in dealing with non-fee paying parents. The practices of blacklisting and the offer system were used to compensate for the lack of funds received from township learners, transforming the SGB into an impersonal budgeting center.

Meeting the Needs of the Wider Community—SGB Admissions Policy

Based on Durban Academy’s diverse student body, one immediately recognizes the inclusive admissions policy set by the SGB. In contrast to other former Model C schools, Durban Academy works to set school fees at a level that best approximates the wealth of the enrollees. Principal van Rooijen described the makeup of Durban Academy students and the challenges that inclusive admissions policies often bring: “Money wise we have problems. We don’t serve an affluent community. We serve people from all over the board. You know from rural areas from townships, which means you can only get so much money and you have to live with that.” By prioritizing the needs of poorer learners over financial efficiency, Durban Academy has defied the norms of a typical market system.

But even more than simply surviving the challenges of a more open admissions policy, Durban Academy has raised a new standard of acceptance that even the neighboring middle-class Grosvenor schools have not been able to meet. Describing Durban Academy’s inclusive admissions policy, one parent remarked, “Durban Academy will take the kid no other school will take.” Accepting non-fee payers has come at an expensive cost however, by upsetting Durban Academy’s more elite and conservative support base. The former principal remarked that during the transition phase, even long-term faculty grew increasingly upset with his decisions to admit poorer black learners. Notice the sincere devotion to including disadvantaged learners expressed in the former principal’s discussion on whether to exclude township learners:

But where does he go? Where is he going to get a chance in life? We always said, ‘give him a chance, give him an opportunity.’ Because it is like closing a door, if that door is closed and you can’t come in,
and there is no opportunity elsewhere, where do you go? Where do you go? Because at other schools, they won’t even take him. If we can’t change them, then nobody will.

The principal’s closing remark suggests that it was not only a learner’s inability to pay school fees, but the undisciplined behavior that sparked resentment toward a more inclusive admissions policy. But this fact only strengthens the courage required by Durban Academy to blaze a new path in an inclusive admission policy.

Working in tandem with the SGB’s inclusive admissions policy is the exercise of needs-regarding norms. Discussion on school fees reflected a similar commitment to maintaining a low cost of school fees in order to include disadvantaged learners. Again adopting an inclusive approach, Principal van Rooijen remarked, “There are suggestions of putting it up a lot, but it’s unfair.” While some schools prioritize quality concerns over fairness, Principal van Rooijen has opted instead to sacrifice quality gains for a more diverse student body. Once again, Durban Academy’s needs-based approach is even more admirable when considering the mounting opposition the SGB has faced in relation to its school fee policy. One SGB member described the wider community’s perception of Durban Academy’s school fees: “So many parents and even the teachers are on our backs because our school fees are so low. I’ll say about 50% of our school children come from Umlazi because our school fees are so low.” Umlazi is a black township located southwest of the Bluff. Due to a lack of quality education in the townships and the higher cost of school fees at the neighboring Grosvenor Boys and Grosvenor Girls, Durban Academy’s enrollment currently totals 800 learners. Both Grosvenor schools average around 600 learners with school fees priced at around R2000 more than Durban Academy.

**Why Market Norms Come into Play—the Demands Placed on School SGBs**

While Durban Academy has committed itself to addressing the needs of township learners, accommodating students from poorer families has come at a heavy cost by increasing the financial burden on its SGB and finance committee. According to the SGB secretary, only 40% of learners pay school fees. In order to offset the majority of learners who attend Durban Academy, the SGB is forced to adopt a strict, businesslike approach to retaining funds. Since the school’s survival depends on the effectiveness of the SGB to collect school fees, it is without surprise that interviews with SGB members revealed an impersonal and egoistic

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*vi The percentage is a rough estimate calculated by adding the sum total of school fee payments and divided by the total number of learners. Thus, more than 40% of learners are likely paying, but not at the total cost of school fees (i.e. 100% of learners could be paying, but at a rate subsidized by 60%).*
The methods of blacklisting and the “offer system” are two means that have been adopted by the SGB community in order to ensure the survival of the school. What was initially referred to as “the cycle” was probed further and identified as the blacklisting process. Blacklisting involves removing the ability of non-fee paying parents to receive a future loan. According to the school’s bursar, 95% of non-fee paying parents are blacklisted. Section 41 of the SASA stipulates, “The governing body of a public school may by process of law enforce the payment of school fees by parents who are liable to pay in §40.”

Section 40 outlines exemption status for eligible parents. If a parent is not exempt from paying school fees and refuses to pay, the SGB begins blacklisting parents through their affiliated private debt collectors. The school’s bursar estimates that “old school fees,” which are funds obtained through blacklisting parents five to ten years after their child has matriculated, account for approximately R60,000 of the school’s annual budget.

While blacklisting is an efficient and arguably necessary means for Durban Academy to retain school funds from non-fee paying parents, it is a practice dominated by impersonal and egoistic norms. When asked if blacklisted parents ever approached the SGB, one SGB member replied, “They sometimes do. But the thing is you don’t take them off that. Because as soon as you break that cycle, you have to restart the cycle. So if he doesn’t pay, the debt collector will come knocking on his door.” For this SGB member, the need to collect school fees forces him to prioritize efficiency gains over parent concerns. Instead of cooperating with parents and working to accommodate their specific issues in a personable fashion, the SGB must adopt an iron façade to ensure the school’s survival. It is what one SGB member described as “running a tight ship.”

An exact figure of the number of parents who are blacklisted each year was not discovered. But when asked how many parents were handed over to the debt collectors each year, the finance secretary replied, “A lot, a lot. I can’t even think. We hand over every year.” The demands placed on SGB members demands a stringent approach to working with non-fee paying parents. Again describing the inability of the SGB to make exceptions, one member replied, “A lot of people will phone us and say, ‘Hey I want to borrow money, but I’m blacklisted.’ ‘Pay, pay, pay your accounts! We can’t take them off until they’ve paid.’”
But particularly troubling to the blacklisting process is the mixing of private interests in the funding of schools. Durban Academy’s relationship with a private debt collecting company is best explained in the words of one SGB member:

We need that money, so if people don’t pay our school fees then Ms. X jacks them up and says listen, ‘Why didn’t you pay your school fees.’ Once we can’t get it out of her then we just hand it over to debt collectors. But obviously we also pay for the debt collectors. Any money we collect, we have to pay them 20%. They are helping us, but we are helping them as well. That’s their job . . . they just collect money all the time. So when we hand over, they try to get as much as they can from us because it means money for them.

Consider first the demands placed on the SGB. The opening line, “We need that money,” relates the arduous task burdened upon SGB members in collecting school fees. Since an inefficient SGB equates to a poorly funded school, and a poorly funded schools is often a poor quality school, each SGB member is forced to approach non-fee paying parents from a business standpoint. In the interviews conducted with the SGB community, each member related an understanding of their important role in sustaining school operations. Consider next the mixing of private interests. If a company’s profitability is dependent on blacklisting parents, then the incentive for private debt collectors is to maintain a pool of non-fee paying parents. Instead of working to decrease the number of blacklisted parents, private companies like Durban Academy’s debt collectors, incentivize low levels of school fee payment for their personal interests. Thus, funding is complicated by individuals who “just collect money all the time.”

In spite of their market approach to dealing with non-fee paying parents, SGB members presented a dual personality: on the one hand an impersonal and rigid persona demanded by their profession, and on the other, a sincere sense of compassion and pity for those blacklisted parents who returned asking for exemption. The finance secretary described her feelings on blacklisting parents: “I’ll be quite honest with you, we don’t like handing over our parents. But then again, you can help the parents so far and no more. And then they have just got to face the consequences after that. There is nothing we can do. We’ve tried to help them.” SGBs operate within a financial straightjacket, which forbids compassion and outlaws personal relations. In a case study of Gauteng SGBs, Dieltiens et al. note a similar observation of the burdens placed on SGB members: “For schools serving impoverised communities, the burden of establishing, retrieving, and exempting parents from paying
fees is particularly onerous. SGBs have become cost and budgeting centers.” As Dieltiens et al. suggest, the cost and budgeting requirements of SGBs force SGB members to prioritize their professional role over their personal role.

Two responses from two different SGB members expound upon Dieltiens et al.’s observation. One SGB member described blacklisting as the most difficult and trying aspect of her profession:

The hardest part is handing people over. We’ve had people come here crying and saying, ‘I can’t get a loan, I need to pay my debts, but I can’t because I’m blacklisted.’ So it is very hard when they come and say, ‘Please take us off the blacklist.’ But you can’t do that. You do it for one and you have to do it for everyone.”

For this SGB member, it is as if she strives to exercise social norms, but is trapped inside the impersonal and egoistic domain of market relations. Similarly, the head of the SGB stressed how unfortunate it was to have to blacklist parents: “We have to be rigid and it’s unfortunate. It is so unfortunate really.” In running a “tight ship,” the SGB is forced to blacklist non-fee paying parents in order to keep the institution afloat.

Returning to a macroscopic analysis of school funding, one might ask why we are defending non-fee paying parents. This essay does not legitimate non-fee paying parents, but criticizes the fashion in which these non-payers are dealt with by SGBs. Based on the data gained from Durban Academy’s SGB, we find that instead of incorporating parent voices and uniting the community, the school fee requirements of SGBs leads to a demise of fraternal values and a fragmentation of school and parent communities. To reiterate the criticisms of this section, it is not the individual SGB members that need reforming, but the local markets for public schooling.

Egoism and the Offer System

In addition to blacklisting, Durban Academy’s SGB is forced to adopt a second alternative method to ensure a sufficient amount of school fees are retained. What will be referred to as the “offer system,” concerns a single line attached to the national school fee-exemption form that allows Durban Academy to acquire funds from families who are completely exempt from paying school fees. First, this section outlines the exemption process and then provides an analysis of the school bursar’s role in transforming the offer into a legal statement.
Finally, a description of the bursar’s particular role in school fee policy is assessed in relation to Anderson’s critique of market norms.

At the beginning of the year, exemption forms are sent home with the learners and are reviewed by the finance secretary. The sooner exemption forms can be administered and returned, the earlier the school can begin collecting offers for the school year. In addition to providing pay slips and disclosing their entire financial background, parents applying for exemption must respond to the question: “If you are not able to pay the full school fees, state the amount that you are able to pay.” The provision is not apart of the national exemption form, but could be considered an extension of SASA’s elastic clause as noted in §36:

A governing body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the schools to all learners at the school [emphasis added].

When the exemption forms are returned, the finance department sends the forms to the school bursar who computes a legitimate offer on the basis of the applicant’s income. The bursar then sends an “acknowledgment of debt agreement” back to the parents with the adjusted offer. Once the document is signed, it is an official legal document whereby the school can take parents to court if a parent fails to comply.

The offer system is guided by impersonal and egoistic market norms. It is impersonal in its handling of exempted parents and egoistic in terms of prioritizing the school’s financial needs over a parent’s condition. The underhanded methods behind the offer system are clarified in one SGB member’s statement:

In other words, what happens here is that he doesn’t have to pay a cent. But he has offered to pay R50 per month. We are a little bit cheeky, I’ll tell you why. On the form we put there, ‘If you are not able to pay the full school fees, state the amount that you are able to pay.’ And then we hold them against it. We will accept that offer because they actually don’t have to pay us a cent. We just try to get something out of them.

This particular SGB member approaches exempted parents as a trading partner in a business transaction and attempts to maximize profit on behalf of the school. Another SGB member described the offer system according to market norms: “That one line, we put it in because there are a lot of kids that are actually exempt from paying school fees. But you think to yourself, ‘Why must the others carry them?’ If they are prepared to pay R50 a month, let them pay R50 a month.” Cooperation is submerged beneath competition, as local governing bodies are forced to fund schools and take “all reasonable measures” to supplement state funds.
But the offer system is not a passive mechanism that asks parents to voluntarily follow through on an offered payment. Perhaps the cruelest aspect of the offer system is the way legally exempt parents can be legally bound to pay their offered amount. So while a parent may be exempt from paying R5720 a year, he/she can be bound to pay whatever amount is offered in the exemption form. Describing the conversion of a parent’s offer into a legally binding document, the school bursar stated, “It’s voluntary, but I turn it into a legal document. They, I didn’t, they make the decision. I then drew up a legal document, which they signed, so they are committed to that amount. There is no escape from that. No escape.” But how is the offer voluntary if the proposed amount is adjusted to the bursar’s computed sum of what should constitute an ‘appropriate offer’? The SGB’s twisted notion of voluntariness penalizes exempt parents, but based once again, on the considerable demands placed on SGBs.

The rigid impersonality and egoism of the offer system only sinks deeper as the details are brought to light. The bursar described the process that takes place if a parent offers more than the calculated amount:

So if the offer is more I hold onto the offer. I don’t show them that they actually should pay less. Because the schools Act allows me to negotiate with parents. So that amount they put in there, I assume they’ve worked out their budget. That is the amount I claim from them in court if they don’t pay it.

SASA legalizes SGB’s attempts to legally bind exempted parents to pay an offered amount. Interview data identified cases of pensioners who received R800 a month being held legally accountable to pay a R150 offer.

**Business as SASA Dictates—Recap of SGB Community**

In review of Community 1, the SGB operates according to a mix of market and nonmarket norms. As the blacklisting and offer methods relate, Anderson’s five market norms are not mutually exclusive categories, but often operate in a web of relationships. The SGB’s inclusive admissions policy demands an impersonality and egoism in the handling of non-fee paying and exempted parents. With the obligation of retaining school fees placed on the SGB, market norms are required for the successful upkeep of school operations. As one SGB member stated, “You know a school is a business. You can’t run a school without capital.” And if building capital is the SGB’s responsibility, operating along business norms is a necessary extension of their role. Ranson describes the way market systems illicit economic norms in individuals: “The point is not that individuals are by nature possessively self-interested, but that the institutions of the market make them so.”
The demands that are placed upon SGBs and financial secretaries manifest within these financiers, the egoistic and impersonal norms that should have no role in education. It is the system, not the individuals that needs restructuring.

The most disconcerting finding within the SGB was recognition of how its role as an inclusive democratic organ has been subverted by market norms. Instead of serving as an inviting platform for communities to decide collectively on school-related issues, the financial and managerial role of the SGB divides the school and the surrounding community. One SGB member related stories of parents who refused to answer their cell phones and who changed their SIM cards to avoid debt-collecting calls from the school. Another SGB member explained that parents often “hop” from school to avoid debt collectors. Finally, one SGB member described parent response to blacklisting by stating, “You try to tell them that it is for the school, but they take it personally.” The attachment of school fee policy to SGB responsibilities has undermined the freedom of SGBs to value education as a social good with the community as opposed to against the community. Personal interactions between SGB members and parents are replaced with exemption forms, which is as one SGB member remarked, “[This is] how we get to know the parents.” The impersonal and businesslike relations between the SGB and the parent community might explain low levels of parent involvement.

Considering our market assessment of Durban Academy’s SGB, we can estimate how finances are handled by SGBs in richer and poorer schools. For former Model C schools still offering top-quality education, market norms of exclusion and want-based ideals are likely to inform their admissions policies. Quality public schools like Glenwood and Durban High School have been criticized for catering solely to the emerging black middle class, while ignoring the greater needs of poorer township learners. Though the number of non-fee paying parents may be lower in these more affluent public schools, Durban Academy SGB members related that blacklisting and the offer system was used more readily in these schools. In fact, one SGB member described the perspective of non-fee paying parents by remarking, “We heard a lot of parents say, ‘We send our children here because we reasonable.’” If Durban Academy’s blacklisting and offers methods are considered reasonable, once can only estimate what SGB operations may look like within more affluent institutions.

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vii Discussed further in Community 3, subsection “Commuting Learners—Explaining Low Levels of Parent Voice through Learner Exit.”
At the other end of the spectrum are the SGBs in poorer schools. For SGBs in townships and rural areas, the ability to exercise market norms is limited by the wealth of the surrounding community and the capacity of SGBs. The blacklisting “cycle” requires a minimum of five to ten years of steady recordkeeping in order to yield any benefits from “old-school funds.” Moreover, the offer system is moot without the hiring of a school bursar who can aggressively assess exemption forms, transform offers into legal documents, and attend court trials when necessary. One SGB member described her perception of finances in poorer schools by remarking, “I don’t think they got systems that really run. If they have computers, I don’t think they know how to run them. You can still get away in your cash books, but I don’t know I haven’t been there.” Though this case study is limited in its scope and knowledge of SGBs in poorer communities, if anything, the analysis of Durban Academy’s SGB identifies the complexity and sophistication of SGB operations, which may be beyond the capacity of SGBs in poorer communities. Understanding the ways in which market norms guide SGB operations, the next section assesses whether these valuations flow into the teaching community.

**Community 2: Preserving Social Norms in the Teaching Community**

Although the SGB community demonstrated a reliance on market norms, SGB members described their separation from “in-house” or classroom operations. For instance, one SGB member described her role in relation to the teaching staff: “We don’t get involved in the day to day running of the school. It is not our responsibility.” Based on the interview data from the SGB community, Durban Academy seems to model Anderson’s notion of sphere differentiation. The market norms within the SGB sphere are contained by the barriers between the SGB’s financial role and the teaching staff’s educational responsibilities. But in order to offer a conclusive assessment of teacher valuations of education, an assessment of school fees from the teachers' perspective is required to either support or negate the SGB observations. Based on data gained from eight teacher interviews, the teaching community revealed little to no reliance on market norms. In terms of Anderson’s framework, the teachers emphasized three social norms: 1) an absence of egoism, prioritizing student needs over better resources and smaller class sizes, 2) a personal approach to education that looked fulfill learners’ parenting needs, and finally, 3) exercising voice instead of exit by opting to stay at Durban Academy and grapple with the challenges of teaching at a multicultural school.
Prioritizing Student Needs over Teacher Wants

In the first instance, teachers prioritized student needs over a better resourced school and smaller class sizes. While they admitted their preferences for overhead projectors, dry-erase boards, new desks, and air-conditioning, only one of the eight teachers recommended an increase in school fees to make these changes possible. Egoism, understood as “teacher’s wants,” was placed beneath the students’ needs. One teacher described her preferences in relation to wealthier public schools, but acknowledged the feasibility of new resources considering the financial status of learners’ families:

You know it would be nice. If you look at a school like Glenwood, and they pay astronomical amounts of school fees and what makes it nice is they have got all the resources of a private school. And it would be nice to have it here, but I don’t think that the people that enroll here can afford more than that actually.

Teachers were hesitant to raise school fees based on the economic background of a majority of their learners. While school fee increases could relieve them of large class sizes and under-resourced classrooms, teachers were willing to cope with these inconveniences in order to accommodate township learners.

Preserving Personal Relations in the Classroom

Regarding personal relations within the classroom, teachers expressed a desire to spend more time with their learners, but were forced to deal with the practical constraints of large class sizes. Thus, personal relations within the teaching community were expressed more as a desire, than an actual exercise of personal norms. For the purposes of our study however, teachers' motivations and valuations of education are equally important to their actual practices. The teachers’ personal approach to learners is best captured in one educator’s statement: “Being a teacher you can’t do as much as you would like. You would like to go around and ask each child, ‘Do you have a problem?’ But you don’t get the chance to go and do something like that.” Although time constraints and class size inhibited the development of teacher-student relationships, these obstacles did not undermine educators’ desire to reach through to their learners.

In addition to teachers’ desire to spend more individual time with learners, they expressed a willingness to assume a parenting or social worker role in their learners’ lives. Educators described the “several roles” of

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This observation does not discount the presence of personal interactions between teachers and students.
teachers in filling the void in parent involvement, counseling students after working hours, and assisting them in future career or job opportunities. Teachers were distressed by the inability to assist children in need. One respondent described the most difficult part of her job as her inability to counsel students:

You know, when we had smaller classes, we knew more about the kids. You know, now you could see them sitting here, but you wouldn’t know that they are being abused all the time because you don’t have that kind of knowledge. There are a lot of kids who need help, but you never know unless they come to you.

Stories of student rape victims and suicide attempts were related in teacher interviews. Each time these cases were referenced, teachers expressed a longing to assist students and offer whatever support or parenting guidance they could provide.

Opting to Stay—Teachers’ Absence of Exit

Perhaps the most important social norm concerning teacher valuations of education was the teachers’ exercise of voice instead of exit. Though the motivations underlying Durban Academy’s transition to a multiracial school are debatable, educators’ reactions to the changes revealed a commitment to improving the quality of the school. Principal van Rooijen’s description of the personal challenges to teaching in a multiracial school reveal his unwillingness to exit: “I think I took about six months to adapt and to feel free and happy . . . in the beginning it was hard because I had been teaching so long, for so many years in my own language, but everybody learns.” Supporting the principal’s exercise of voice, another teacher remarked, “I am very happy that this school became a multi-racial school. And I feel blessed that I teach in a school where there is a cross-section of the community. Yes, it is hard at times, but you learn to adapt.” While white flight from the conservative Bluff community was common in the 1990s, Durban Academy teachers not only decided to stay on the Bluff, but chose to continue teaching at an institution undergoing drastic changes in student demographics, resources, and school culture.

Supporting teachers’ commitment to improving the quality of education at Durban Academy is the low salary that they receive. One respondent expressed her frustrations with the pay, but then retracted her comment by describing her commitment to teaching: “The salary is pathetic. Its peanuts. But we are not working for the money. It is your love for kids that makes you stay.” The willingness of the staff to grapple with Durban
Academy’s transition to a dual medium school and to devote their time and energy to develop successful learners demonstrates the democratic norm of voice over exit.

**Recap of Teaching Community**

The preservation of social norms in the teaching community correlates with their low involvement in financial affairs. One teacher described her involvement with school finance issues by remarking, “Not at all. You don’t have to be involved with payments and that is nice. If a child doesn’t pay his school fees, you don’t get involved with that, you don’t even know if he is behind on his payments.” Each teacher interviewed reflected a similar detachment from finance issues, which was consistent with Principal van Rooijen’s statement that teachers are employed to teach, not to collect school fees. Moreover, teachers who provided assessments of school fee statistics were often incorrect, which strengthened the conclusion that teachers are separated from school financing issues.

Based on the case study of teachers at Durban Academy, we can extend our analysis of social norms in the teaching community to educators in richer and poorer areas. In the first case, since more affluent schools have strong parent involvement, powerful governing bodies, and a steady supply of school fees to employ additional financial secretaries and governing body educators, teacher involvement with financial issues is likely to be even less than at Durban Academy. In addition, increased staffing would allow teachers to develop personal relations with students in smaller classes. The “several roles” of teachers become specialized to suit their normative role as educators within the classroom.

Teachers in poorer schools are likely to demonstrate the opposite effect. Since poorer schools lack the capital to hire additional staff members to manage the school’s finances, teachers will be required to fill this financial responsibility. Complicating matters is the capacity of SGBs in poorer areas to fill the void. Chaka observes that teachers are often the most vocal members in SGBs due to the incapacity and lack of involvement from the parent community. So if SGBs are governed by market norms in virtue of their financial roles, and if teachers in poorer areas comprise the main voices in SGBs, what values are learners in townships and the rural areas exposed to within the classroom? The barriers between SGB and teacher roles appear to crumble in
In addition to the mixing of market and nonmarket norms, large class sizes in poorer schools inhibits teachers’ ability to develop personal student-teacher relations.

Returning to the case study of Durban Academy, determining whether regulation of South Africa’s education market is necessary requires an analysis of student valuations. The aim of the following section can be understood in terms of the preliminary conclusions we have made thus far: do the market norms of SGBs or the social norms within the classroom have a greater effect on parent and student valuations of education?

Community 3—The Convoluted Educational Market: Parent and Student Perspectives

Analysis of parent and student valuations demonstrated a reliance on market norms linked to the financial role of the SGB. Due to the wide variation of socioeconomic status within the parent community further differentiation within the community was required. For instance, for black township families, exit equates to entrance into Durban Academy, whereas for wealthier Bluff families, exit means leaving Durban Academy and enrolling in alternative public schools or elite private schools. In both cases however, the learners suffer by means of long distance commutes and limited interaction with peers of different socioeconomic statuses and cultures. But the massive learner migration has had a detrimental impact on parents’ voice as well. For black township parents, voice is denied by public transportation limitations. Learner exit also draws concerns between Bluff parent’s freedom and their children’s autonomy. In the post-apartheid education market, parents are capable of exercising exit and enrolling their child in a school reflective of their particular values, thus filtering the types of knowledge a child is exposed to. The first two subsections entitled, “Township Exit” and “Explaining Low Levels of Parent Voice through Learner Exit” focus primarily on the poorer, black commuting group of learners. The following two subsections entitled, “Want Based Explanations for Low Parent Involvement” and “Egoism, Exit, and Parent Socialization” are more specific to the affluent, white, non-commuting parent/learner community.

Township Exit and the Selection of Durban Academy

While much attention has been devoted to the white flight from former Model C schools into private institutions, a similar migration of learners has occurred from township and rural schools to urban former Model C schools. Since SASA’s provision of school fees has maintained the divide in school quality between former
black and white schools, parents and learners strive to enroll in the highest quality schools they can afford. For poorer black learners, selecting a school in the South Africa’s education market is a matter of locating an affordable school beyond the townships. Exit from township learners is directly linked to their parent’s wealth. While democratic values may be taught in the classroom, these norms are undermined by learners’ first-hand experiences of what money can buy.

Figure 3.2

'Township School in the Suburbs': Geographic Breakdown of Durban Academy Learners

The title, “Township School in the Suburbs” drawn from Chisholm, 258.

*Commuting Learners* include those learners residing in: Umlazi, Lamontville, KwaMashu, Isipingo, Mobeni Heights, Newlands, Austerville, Clairwood, Woodlands, Sea View, Wentworth, and Merewent.

**Non-Commuting Learners** include those learners from: Bluff, Brighton Beach, Fynnlands, Ocean View, Marlboroug, and Grosvenor.

Dividing learners into “Commuting” and “Non-Commuting” camps is subject to interpretation. While subjective limitations are acknowledged, researcher’s break-down of learners was drawn from interview data and cross-checked with approval of SGB members.

Figure 3.2 above identifies the mass-learner migration occurring at Durban Academy. Of the 798 enrollees, 544 (68%) commute from townships located off the Bluff. Only 254 learners (32%) reside on the Bluff. The most common explanation interviewees provided for the massive influx of learners was that the
quality of education in the townships was poor. ix SGB members, teachers, parents, and students each related the problems of township schools by making a reference to either one of the issues that include: poor structure of the school, limited resources, overcrowding, violence, unqualified teachers, lack of teacher motivation, teacher union strikes, and corporal punishment.

Teachers who commented on the quality of township schools often lacked first-hand accounts, but managed to construct an image of schooling based on second hand experiences from educator colleagues. In a discussion on transportation issues, one Durban Academy teacher described why he believed learners’ exited from township schools:

   You know, but a lot of people will argue, ‘Why don’t you go to schools closer to your own neighborhood?’ But you find that a lot of those schools aren’t functioning at the level that they should be functioning. So you find a parent is looking for a school where they know their child will be taught proper.

A majority of the respondents’ explanations for township exit resonated with the above-mentioned statement.

One Durban Academy teacher went so far as to say that learners commute to the Bluff simply because at township schools, “nothing happens there.” The parent’s observation echoes Tikly and Mabogoane’s description of township schools and the ‘choice’ these parents have:

   “For many black communities living in black areas, ‘choice’ of school has been severely limited (to the point of becoming almost meaningless) by overcrowding and by a shortage of accessible schools. […] It is these glaring inadequacies of the historically black system that have made historically white schools the only meaningful choice open to many black parents despite the long distances and rising transportation costs often involved.” 80

Based on Tikley and Mobogoane’s assessment of township schools, Durban Academy is not a unique case, but a school reflective of the greater learner migration occurring throughout South Africa.

Returning to the case study, data on parent and student motivations was again limited by the ability to meet and interact with these communities due to informed consent form limitations and the inability to establish meetings or interviews with parents. x To substitute for the gap in data, teacher perspectives were used based on

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ix Due to time constraints, secondary sources were used to develop a conception of the “township school.” While the essay lacks empirical research at township schools, teacher perspectives were assessed in combination with commuting learners’ impressions of their local schools.

x While principal van Rooijen located potential student respondents, time limitations convinced me that I would not be able to gain a reasonable cross-section of the students. In weeks two and three, I decided instead to focus on teacher interviews.
an assumption that teachers managed to gain insight into student lives that extended beyond the academic setting. For instance, one teacher described learner decisions to exit by recalling an encounter he had with a township learner:

They are in a sense running away from the schools nearby their homes. I call it ‘runaway’ because they know that the teachers are either not there, or they do not do the work properly. I mean . . . I can name learners who came here from other townships who said, ‘Please sir, I can’t carry on like this. I want to do something with my life.’

In addition to student desires to exit township schools, parent motivations played a premier role in student’s decision to enroll in Durban Academy. In response to a survey questionnaire question which asked students whether their parents’ preference determined their decision to attend Durban Academy, 70% of the learners responded “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement.xi

Assuming the student responses are an accurate representation of the factors determining which school they attended, it then became important to assess parent motivations in selecting Durban Academy. Interactions with the parent community revealed several variables behind their selection of Durban Academy: discipline, school’s history, languages offered, cost of school fees, and the poor quality of local schools.xii Again, the quality of education in local areas was one of the primary reasons parents were willing to send their children long distances to public schools in the suburbs.

Informal interview data with parents was supplemented by teacher responses on parent motivations. Describing the mindset of township parents in selecting a school, one teacher stated, “They want their kids to be better. They don’t want their kids to be domestics. They are not getting them in the black schools, so they bus them out.” Similarly, another respondent assumed that parents immediately consider the Bluff when looking to exit township schools. She described the selection process from the perspective of a poor black parent: “If you are a black parent, you get a low wage, and you are looking for a high school. You go to Grosvenor Boys then

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xi Survey was a random sampling survey. Data is taken from commuting learners only (which comprised of forty-eight learners commuting from locations referenced in Figure 1.1).

xii Parent responses from parents’ evening are limited by the cross-section of parents who were able to attend. The next section goes into greater detail regarding the way student exit has decreased parent voice.
to Grosvenor Girls, then to Durban Academy. And since we have the lowest school fees, you come here.” The quality and affordability of Durban Academy explains the school’s high percentage of township learners.

But what does the selection of Durban Academy mean for commuting learners? In response to the open-ended survey question, which asked, “If you were headmaster of Durban Academy, what would you change, if anything?” students commented on solutions to their daily transportation difficulties. One learner expressed his concerns over the wasted hours spent commuting and stated, “I would get a skool bus so that we don’t have to use public transport an waste time.” In addition, parents living on the Bluff often related stories of Durban Academy learners waiting at the bus stop from two o’clock when school ended, until five o’clock when the bus fares were cheapest. While the SGB staff acknowledged the transportation issues, funding a school bus was beyond the school’s budget.

Although student responses are important in informing our assessment of the challenges arising from student exit, one teacher provided an important perspective on the obstacles facing commuting learners: “They travel an hour maybe an hour and a half just to get to school. And they come here and they are tired. I can’t blame them for that. Now they’ve got a full school day and they get home when it is almost turning dark again. There is a vicious circle and it is just going to get bigger and bigger.” Long hours of commuting might explain the lack of student motivation. Students would describe their week-day routine, which begins at 4am and ends at 8pm. Homework was an afterthought for most of the learners commuting from Isipingo, KwaMashu, and far sections of Umlazi.

**Commuting Learners—Explaining Low Levels of Parent Voice through Learner Exit**

While long distance commutes have placed an extra burden on township learners’ social and academic growth, the school’s distance from the township communities has hampered parents’ exercise of voice. Although SGBs were designed to foster local democratic participation, since 68% of the students do not live in the surrounding Bluff community there has been a fragmentation of communal involvement. Distance would not be an obstacle to township parents had it not been for by South Africa’s poor transport system and the inability of poorer parents to find the time between multiple jobs.
At parents’ evening, a few mothers commuting from KwaMashu had not even planned their return route home. They were the first to arrive in the teacher’s hall and were anxious to meet their son’s or daughter’s teachers first in order to catch a ride home while the minibus taxis were still operating. Supporting this ethnographic account is teacher and SGB impressions of the hard-working lives of township parents. One SGB member described the low parent involvement as a result of their larger social and economic problems: “Maybe ten percent of parents might be involved, but even that is high. And I think it is also because they are struggling to survive.” Supporting the SGB member’s statement, one teacher described what he believed was the average working day of a township parent:

I mean if you take parents that work in Umlazi in this modern time of ours, he still has to get up at four o’clock in the morning and be at work by seven o’clock. So, just track the time . . . if he leaves at half past four or five o’clock in the evening . . . once he’s finished working, he gets home at seven o’clock or half past seven in the evening. Who’s going to come to school still? Where is he going to have the time for that? It is actually a very sad thing to see . . . the involvement of the parents.

Student exit is thus inversely related to parents’ voice. Of the sixteen parents questioned during parent’s evening only five were from commuting locations. The overall atmosphere during parents’ evening was one of frustration expressed from the teaching community. Conditioned to the low parent involvement, teachers related the common problem of parents’ evening by stating, “And the parents you need to speak with are the ones that never show up.” The problems township learners face in the classroom are aggravated by the inability of parents to support their children outside of the classroom.

Low parent-involvement presents autonomy concerns as well when assessing the decision-making process within SGBs. Durban Academy’s 2009 SGB is entirely Afrikaner, but not out of a malevolent or exclusionary policy. Explaining his failed attempts in recruiting township parents, the SGB chairperson stated, “We try to get the black demographics on the governing body, but it is just too hard. You just don’t get them . . . it is difficult for them to get there unfortunately because our meetings are at nights and there is no public transport to the Bluff at night.” Principal van Rooijen’s assessment of township parent involvement resonated with the chairperson’s statement: “I think the day to day living and staying alive and getting money took over so much of their time that they don’t really get involved. So the parents are allowing people to make decisions for them and that’s unbelievable.” Parent autonomy is compromised in virtue of their inability to attend meetings
and voice their opinions. Decisions are made for them not by them. The effects of learner exit thus speak to the concerns over parent voice and autonomy.

As a transition to the more affluent Bluff community, it is interesting to note the student responses to the survey question, which asked learners to rank their parents’ involvement in school activities.

According to the survey, 41% of commuting learners argued that their parents were “Not Active” with school affairs. Similarly 37% of non-commuting respondents related the same level of parent non-involvement. The data suggests that distance might not be the only factor inhibiting parent involvement.

Non-Commuting Learners—Want Based Explanations for Low Parent Involvement

For non-commuting learners then, what explains low parent involvement? Within the non-commuting parent community, market norms evidence themselves through want-based norms. SGB members explained that increasing parent participation among Bluff parents was equally as difficult, since parents expected some type of recompense for their participation in parents’ meetings. On one occasion, the SGB purchased food to

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xiii Want-based norms are used in the description of non-commuting parents’ lack of involvement, but not exclusively. According to SGB members and teachers, township parents abide by the same culture of ‘I want.’ For clarity purposes however, since Bluff parents are not challenged (or challenged to a lesser extent) by long-distance commutes and multiple
increase parent involvement, which did in fact improve parent turnout. One SGB member described low parent involvement in terms of parents’ want-based norms:

> Because of the culture we have in this country, I call it, ‘I want . . . I want . . . Everybody I want. Because the culture is what can you give me, before I give you something. Part of the challenge is to get this mindset to change. I mean you can’t go to Pik ‘N Pay and say, ‘I want bread, or I want the money.’ It’s the same thing, you have to give to get.

Want-based norms are evidenced from both parent and the SGB perspectives. While parents expect a reward in return for their participation, the SGB is unwilling to offer anything in exchange without the parents support. Even if the SGB had the funds to purchase rewards for each parents’ meeting, parent involvement would only increase on the basis of market exchanges of want-based norms.

Concluding the section on low parent involvement, although SASA’s decentralized system of educational governance was designed to promote local voice, we find that both township and the Bluff parents rarely participate in democratic forums due to exit and want-regarding norms. One SGB member explained that although there are 800 students at Durban Academy, roughly twenty parents show-up for parent meetings. Teachers and SGB members agreed that the general attitude of parents is one of no involvement.

But complicating matters are teachers’ response to low parent involvement. Although the majority of teachers preferred stronger parent involvement, a few teachers noted that low parent involvement made their day to day work easier. Describing the advantages of an uninvolved parent community, one teacher stated, “The nice thing for me is that the parents in general don’t really interfere what happens in the school. They come in when they have a problem with the child, but generally they accept what you are doing [emphasis added].” As in the autonomy concerns arising from low parent involvement in SGB affairs, a similar autonomy compromising affect stems from low parent involvement with the teaching community. What is concerning here is the teacher’s acknowledgment and even preference for low parent involvement. Again, despite the decentralized system of education designed to give parents a voice, decisions are made for parents, not by them.
Beyond want-based explanations for low parent involvement, Bluff parents active in school affairs were similarly governed by market norms. Egoism and exit were the most common methods of market practices in parent approaches to education. Regarding egoism, one parent described her involvement narrowly in terms of her child’s development: “I don’t do it for myself. I do it for my child’s education.” Though the parent downplayed her personal egoism, valuing education solely for her child’s benefit reveals the egoistic tendencies of the market. Corresponding with Ranson’s assessment of the individualism of the markets, one parent remarked, “The motto I tell my child is: just remember, if you don’t do it for yourself nobody else is going to do it for you.” The market’s promotion of competitive advantage fuels egoistic norms in parents’ approach to education. Cooperation and fraternal relations are undermined by parents’ narrow concerns for their own children.

As in the case of township parents, Bluff parents extended their egoistic understanding of education by considering the practice of exit. During parents’ evening, one parent admitted to his intentions of pulling his son out of Durban Academy and sending him to a private school or the Afrikaans school, Port Natal. Describing his approach to education reform, he remarked, “I am not going to be a Bluff patriot.” The respondent explained that he was not going to send his child to one of the public schools on the Bluff simply because he was a resident there. He expressed a feeling of powerlessness and inability to affect change, arguing that he was only one man and would be unable to improve the quality of the school. Again, the data identifies the way market norms interplay with each other, forming more complex issues. Here egoism becomes entangled with parent motivations of exit. Another parent accompanying a friend at parents’ evening admitted to sending her daughter to Grosvenor Girls even though she lived across the street from Durban Academy.

As a final comment on Bluff parents’ exercise of market norms, Bluff parents’ practice of exit gives rise to serious concerns over reconciliation efforts in post-apartheid South Africa. One of Anderson’s primary concerns with markets in education is the relationship between the “freedom of parents” and the “autonomy of children.” While SASA and its stipulation of school fees increase parent choice, it reduces learners’ autonomy. Instead of education teaching learners to exercise their own judgment, schools become centers for parents to indoctrinate their children with their own ideals. Since according to the student survey, students
strongly agreed that their parents’ preference determines which school they attend, parents are able to determine the types of values and knowledge they want their child exposed to through the practice of exit. One teacher described the process of white flight from township schools in the suburbs by referencing parent preference for schools with a particular ethos:

Now you bus these people in and the school now becomes a poor inner town school. So suddenly the whole school’s ethos changes. The white parents of the kids in that school now, who can afford it, take their kids out and they send them off to another school where there is an ethos that they want for their children.

While a parent may opt out of a poorer school simply to provide a higher standard of education for their child, in the post apartheid context especially, more extreme cases were related in which parent desires to indoctrinate their children with particular values motivated decisions to exit.

Even though Pampallis observes that school fees have prevented a white flight from public schools, the 5% statistic of private school enrollees does not account for learner migration within the public school system. The varying types and quality of schools within South Africa’s public education system allows for parents to select schools that reflect their own value systems. In the case of Durban Academy, Bluff parents often mentioned Port Natal, an Afrikaner school in Pinetown, as one of their ideal-options.

As noted in the section on Durban Academy, Port Natal was one of the schools that Durban Academy considered amalgamating with during the 1997 transition period. While the quality of education and sport remains strong at Port Natal, teachers and SGB members at Durban Academy expressed their concerns over the types of knowledge that was being taught at the Afrikaans-only school. One SGB member explained his concerns by describing the types of learners who matriculate from Port Natal:

But the kids that are coming out of that . . . where are they going to go? The environment they are growing up in is not healthy. The kids’ minds get indoctrinated with one side of the story. In that way I am so glad that the school went this direction. And like I said in the beginning when the people go out to the workplace or to the university or into some real situation, he can concentrate what he really needs to concentrate on and not these other issues.

Considering South Africa’s past, limitations on parent choice become a necessary step towards racial redress. The market has complicated reconciliation efforts by normalizing parent exercise of exit. Anderson offers a final assessment of the relationship between parents’ freedom and children’s autonomy by observing, “Parental
rights to freedom of educational choice do not extend to holding their children in perpetual subjection to their own ideals.\textsuperscript{83}

\textbf{Recap of Parent/Student Community}

In the education market, children at a young age recognize the power of money in opening educational opportunities. Differentiation by wealth subverts Anderson’s notion of fraternal relations as, “a valuation of participants as equals engaged in a common cooperative project.”\textsuperscript{84} When market norms enter the education sphere, learners are separated by economic status, limiting the opportunities for learners to associate with peers of different backgrounds. As a result, markets in education eliminate the ability for learners to experience and realize the meaning of fraternal and democratic values.

The initial assessment of SGBs as need-regarding institutions is reversed by an examination of learner exit. Since Anderson defines the want-regarding norm as, “desires backed by the ability to pay,” we see how the SGB satisfies the wants of ‘better-off’ township learners. Motala’s (2007) observation on the internal differentiation within poor township and rural communities clarifies this relationship: “Evidence is also provided of internal differentiation within the poor, with ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ being apparent.”\textsuperscript{85} The exiting ‘winners,’ are those learners whose ‘ability to pay’ allows them to attend former white schools in the suburbs. Market values teach them the acceptability of “running away.” For township learners unable to afford exit, the freedom to value education as a shared good is undermined by a strong desire to exit. From the perspective of these ‘losers,’ one’s future success is understood as a matter of attaining enough money to exit and join the winners in life beyond the townships and rural areas. Since, as Ranson suggests, the problems of our time cannot be solved in isolation, how can we expect our future leaders to engage in collective problem solving and address the needs of post-apartheid South Africa if they grow and mature in an environment governed by individualistic market norms? An acceptance of the education market thus equates to an indirect acceptance of the contemporary social ills present throughout South Africa.

For parents operating within the education market, the freedom to value education according to the democratic ideals of the People’s Education movement is reduced to a competitive and egoistic approach in the selection of schools. What was once a collective struggle for “Equal education for all,” has been transformed by
market values into a society governed by individualistic competitive advantage. Parents prioritize educational opportunities for their own child with little consideration of the well-being of other learners.

V. Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recap of Market Norms in Durban Academy’s Valuations of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Egoistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exit &gt; Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is community “comprehensively governed” by market norms?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1 corresponds with the research questions as noted in Figure 3.1.

School Governing Body:
A1: Blacklisting—old school funds and maintaining “the cycle.”
A2: The offer system—prioritizing schools funds over parent concerns.
A3: Inclusive admission policy, contrast with Glenwood, DHS.
A4: Differentiation among the poor, ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in virtue of students’ ability to pay.
A5: SGB platform for voice, but practical inaccessibility challenges for township parents.

Teachers:
B1: The desire for personal relations.
B2: Unwillingness to raise school fees and the coping mindset.
B4: Recognizing learners’ challenges and assuming multiple teacher roles.
B5: Opting to stay and to grapple with changes at Durban Academy

Parents / Students:
C2: Individual perspective and focus on their own child.
C4: Culture of want and the economic approach to education.
C5: Commuters exit township schools and non-commuters decline of Bluff patriotism.

The introduction of school fees has created a market for public schooling whereby SGBs have become local debt-collecting organs feared by the non-fee paying community. While reform efforts look to extend the
number of non-fee paying schools to Quintile 3 schools, the education market would remain in place for
Quintile 4 and 5 schools. But as Motala observes, limiting a market for education to richer schools still impacts
the values richer and poorer students learn to endorse. In a partially regulated education market, exiting
‘winners’ still learn the acceptability of running away, while ‘losers’ compete for entrance into the winning,
richer sphere. Confining the market to Quintile 4 and 5 schools does little to address the ethical limitations of
South Africa’s education market.

This case study has examined the ways in which SGBs’ marketing responsibilities has undermined their
freedom to value education as a social good. The marketing norms within SGBs have compromised the freedom
and autonomy of parents and learners as well. Learners are unable to value their peers as equals, limited by the
market’s economic filtering of applicants through school fee based admissions. Students attend schools
reflective of their own economic status and mature in an environment that fails to demonstrate the values of
fraternal relations and cooperation. Parent autonomy is dominated by SGB decision-making in virtue of their
inability to attend SGB meetings and the want-based norms that govern their own valuations of education.

In conclusion, we recognize how the introduction of school fees has undermined the original goals of
the People’s Education movement. Recall Soobrayan’s assessment of the movement’s core values: “It must be
aimed at overcoming negative social values such as elitism, individualism, authoritarianism and
competitiveness—and in their place instill democratic values, collectivism, and a wider social consciousness.”

While the movement succeeded in establishing platforms for parent and student voice, the effectiveness of SGBs
has been undermined by the introduction of market systems. The “fear of victimization” from a central
authority is replaced by a “fear of debt collectors” at the local level. As a result of school fee policy, voice for
the majority of parents is exercised to such an insignificant extent that it differs little in comparison to their
expression of needs under the centrally controlled Bantu Education system.

Based on the case study of Durban Academy, the answer to Anderson’s final step is apparent: state
regulation of the education market is permitted. Anderson explains why the goals of education can only be
realized through non-market mechanisms:

Some goods can be secured only through a form of democratic provision that is nonexclusive, principle-
and need-regarding, and regulated primarily through voice. To attempt to provide these goods through
market mechanisms is to undermine our capacity to value and realize ourselves as fraternal democratic citizens.\footnote{87} Democracy, not markets, is best suited for parents and learners to realize themselves as democratic citizens. Democratic provisioning of education secures collective community based deliberations and fraternal values that were once a powerful force under the resistance to apartheid. The way forward thus requires a reassessment of the past and reflecting on the original goals of People’s Education is a worthy place to start the restructuring process.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

In any research project that lasts four weeks, one is likely to come across more questions than answers. In addition to extending the market analysis of Durban Academy to case studies on more affluent and poorer schools, the following topics are suggestions for further research.

*The Relationship between Trade Unionization and Township Exit*

During an interview with the SGB chairman, he remarked that many parents who send their children to Durban Academy are teachers in township schools. When asked what explained this unique occurrence, the chairman explained that teacher union strikes were the primary reason parents decided to send their children to former Model C schools. The chairman’s observation is best communicated in his own words:

> You find that a lot of those Umlazi and Lamontville’s parents are teachers. And it is amazing what they tell you, I was dumfounded when they told me that. And it wasn’t just one person that told me that. They said that they strike because they get forced to strike and at our schools we don’t strike. Because they know that the children’s education will still carry on. And that was the biggest reason I found.

The chairman’s brief statement presents an interesting puzzle for a future ISP project. An examination of which teacher unions are more likely to strike, for what reasons, and in which areas are these unions are strongest would be a rewarding research project. A follow-up question might concern the relationship between teacher unionization and parent decisions to exit. If teachers are more likely to exit, what inside information does belonging to a teacher union provide that other parents might not know? A more positive research project might look into the reasons why teachers decided to stay at township schools instead of joining their children in more affluent schools in the suburbs.
High Parent Involvement in Primary Schools?

Another suggestion for further research might look into what explains the high parent involvement in primary schools. One SGB member described the poor participation of parents at Durban Academy by comparing it to primary school SGBs: “When the children are in primary school, they [parents] go all out. If primary schools have fundraising events, or fun runs, the parents are there. And it is as if the parents are burnt out by the time their child gets to secondary school.” Supporting the SGB member’s observation, one teacher remarked, “At parents evening we get a handful of parents, while at Primary school, I can promise you that they will stand in line to get in.” Adding to the complexity of this question is the fact that Bluff primary schools enroll a similar percentage of township learners. According to one respondent, 99% of commuting black learners at Durban Academy attended English primary schools beyond the townships. If exit is already occurring at the primary school level, what accounts for higher parent involvement at this stage? Another research question might examine the effects of long distance commutes on young township learners’ academic and social growth.
Bibliography


Appendix A - General Interview Schedule

Community-specific questions were inserted at *points. See Figure 3.1 for more information. The interview schedule was used initially, but became more of secondary support as I became more comfortable with the interviewing process.

1. How long have you been _________ (a member of the SGB, teaching, a parent) at Durban Academy?
2. What led to your decision in becoming X?
3. How would you describe Durban Academy to someone who has never been here before?
4. What do you think are the school’s strengths?
5. What do you see are the school’s major challenges?
6. *Want-Based: [by particular community]?

School Fees
7. How much are school fees at DA?
8. There is a lot of literature on the way class has replaced race in determining access to quality public schools. Could you comment on this?
9. *Exclusive
10. What is your view of school fees (do you see them as necessary source of supplementary funds or as a barrier to integration)?
11. I have heard many teachers describe Durban Academy as a school that is reflective of the “rainbow nation.” What do you think of this description?
12. *Impersonal

Values
13. What would you consider the guiding values / principles at Durban Academy?
14. *Egoistic
15. Why do you believe parents and/or applicants choose Durban Academy as opposed to other schools in the area?

Governance
16. What are your financial responsibilities?
17. Could you describe your relationship with the (SGB, teachers, parents)?
18. I had the chance to meet a former SGB president who mentioned that SGBs have a ‘de facto ownership’ over the school. Would you consider this an accurate assessment of SGBs? Durban Academy’s SGB?
19. *Exit > Voice:
20. What qualities do you hope Durban Academy instills in their learners before they matriculate?
Appendix B – Student Survey

Please fill out the survey as completely as possible. Your participation is voluntary and answers should only be provided to those questions you feel comfortable responding to. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY. The survey is confidential and individual responses will not be shared with the faculty or staff at Durban Academy.

1. Please indicate the area which you are from: ____________________________

2. Please rank the following (from 1 to 7) in terms of what determined your decision to attend Durban Academy (if an option does not apply please leave blank).
   a. School history ________
   b. Price of school fees ________
   c. Quality of the school ________
   d. Quality of the teachers ________
   e. Distance from home ________
   f. Athletics ________
   g. Parents’ preference ________

3. How would you characterize your participation in school affairs (e.g. attending sporting events, religious services, volunteer meetings, etc.)?
   a. Very active
   b. Active
   c. Occasionally active
   d. Not active

4. How would you characterize your parents’ involvement with Durban Academy?
   a. Very active
   b. Active
   c. Occasionally active
   d. Not active

5. What is the best thing about Durban Academy?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. What is the worst thing about Durban Academy?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

7. If you were headmaster of Durban Academy what would you change? Why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Appendix C – Revised Student Survey

Please fill out the survey as completely as possible. Your participation is voluntary and answers should only be provided to those questions you feel comfortable responding to. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY. The survey is confidential and individual responses will not be shared with the faculty or staff at Durban Academy.

1. Please indicate the area which you are from: __________________________________

Please circle the answer that applies:

2. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on the languages offered.

3. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on the cost of school fees.

4. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on my parents’ preference.

5. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on quality of the school.

6. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on the quality of the teachers.

7. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on its distance from my home.

8. My decision to come to Durban Academy was based on the diverse student body.

9. How would you characterize your participation with Durban Academy’s student activities?
   a. Very active
   b. Active
   c. Occasionally active
   d. Not active

10. How would you characterize your parents’ involvement with Durban Academy?
    a. Very active
    b. Active
    c. Occasionally active
    d. Not active

11. If you were headmaster of Durban Academy what would you change? Why?

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
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