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Democracy and Schools in Southern Sudan:  
A Study of the Role of Primary Schools in Promoting Democracy

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	Convention of Rights of the Child
EFA	Education for All
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GoNU	Government of National Unity
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
JAM	Joint Assessment Missions
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
LC	Local Council
LGB	Local Government Board
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIE	Multicultural and International Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NCP	National Congress Party
NESH	National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities
NUP	National Unionist Party
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OUC	Oslo University College
PED	Payam Education Director
PTA	Parents and Teachers Associations
SBM	School-Based Management
SDC	School Disciplinary Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
SPLA/SPLM	Sudan People Liberation Army /Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSEA	South Sudan Education Act
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programmes
UNDPA	United Nations Departments of Political Affairs
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organizations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund-formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UIS	United Nations Institute for Statistics
UP	Umma Party
US	United States
W.M.D	World Movement for Democracy

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to all South Sudanese freedom fighters who have sacrificed their lives and services for a free and an independent democratic South Sudan.

## **Abstract**

Most democratic societies expect their schools to play an important role in helping citizens to develop a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and knowledge that are conducive to the maintenance of democratic institutions. There is no important task for a nation other than developing an informed and responsible democratic citizenry through education. Therefore, it is imperative that educators, policymakers, and members of civil society should concern themselves with streamlining democratic issues in the educational programs in the primary schools for the advancement of democratic institutions and governance. Internal demands for democracy and the rule of law combined with the externally driven democratization and good governance projects has left some African states to experience a transition from one-party system of governance, military rule or civilian dictatorships to various forms of political pluralism systems of government. Yet schools, the very institutions expected to prepare students for democracy have not been given adequate attention for playing a central role in the mission of preparing young citizens for democracy. The purpose of this study is to determine how primary schools in South Sudan promote practices of democracy. In that regard, this study sought to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the education policies of the Government of South Sudan on the promotion of democracy in primary schools? 2) What are the pupils and teachers perception of democracy? 3) How do primary school organizational structures contribute to the practices of democracy?

The empirical part of the thesis was based on a fieldwork study of three primary schools in South Sudan. A qualitative research approach was used and in all twenty participants consisting of pupils, teachers, head teachers and government officials were interviewed. Observation of activities in the schools was also done together with a study of documents as source of information. The following theoretical concepts informed the conduct and execution of this research study: democracy, citizen participation and socialization.

The following major findings featured out in this study: There are policies for fostering democratic values and behaviours in primary schools of South Sudan. These policies include, inter alia, a South Sudan education policy for inculcating democratic values and practices in learners by encouraging participatory learning, development of critical thinking and problem-

solving skills. The study has also revealed a South Sudan education policy for the involvement of local community through SMC (School Management Committee) and PTA (Parents and Teachers Associations) as the school governing bodies with managerial powers over financial management; disciplinary management; co-curricula activities management; teacher and learner welfare management. Other roles include overseeing mobilization of resources by the community. There is also a South Sudan government education policy that requires prefect systems to be formed in a democratic manner at every public primary school as pupils' representative for establishing formal channels of communication between learners and the school administration.

The findings further indicate that both pupils and teachers' perception of democracy is that they view democracy as a way of governing society. In general, their understanding of democracy is that democracy is a method. It is has to do with participation in voting or election and institutions of the school such as the prefects, the school management committees and the parents and teachers association. Moreover, their concept of democracy includes knowledge on the government, democratic systems, legislative power, and the structure of parliament. In that regard and in my own point of view, their concept of democracy is that it is not a way of life or process but rather it is a way of governing.

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## **Chapter One: Contextualization**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Internal demands for democracy and the rule of law combined with the externally driven democratization and good governance projects have left some African countries to experience a transition from one-party systems of governance, military rule or civilian dictatorships to various forms of political pluralism systems of government (Salih, 2001). Salih argues that despite the internal and external demands for African states to democratize, yet schools, the very institutions expected to prepare students for democracy have not been given a centre stage attention for playing a pivotal role of democratizing citizens. For him, primary schools in most African states are pre-occupied with the basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Sudan is no exception. After the decades of civil war came to a halt, one of the immediate challenges facing the government of Sudan and the South Sudan in particular is to combat illiteracy. Research study conducted by the New Sudan Centre for Statistics in association with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund-formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) revealed that South Sudan with a population of about 8 million people has over 75% of its school-age children not having access to education. Only 7% of its primary school teachers have had a single year of training, and about half of all the teachers did not receive any formal teacher training. Many of the teachers did not even complete grade 8 (primary leaving school certificate). The study went on further to reveal that an estimated 7% of the teachers are female and less than 1% of head teachers are women (MoEST, 2007). With the high percentage of school-age children not having access to education coupled with a lack of trained teachers, it seems clear that at the moment, the South Sudan primary education policy is devoted more to having schools combat illiteracy, support science and vocational education than it is for the democratization of pupils as future democratic citizenry. As such, the need to combat illiteracy has made the Government of South Sudan in its education policy to establish a mandatory core of subjects for primary-level education. These include mother tongue, English, Mathematics and Sciences. Clearly, math, reading, and sciences are important. However, when there is a disconnect between the academic subject matters and its social relevance for humanity from the standpoint of building and supporting a democratic society, then a lot of questions would be asked about the purpose of education for the society. Connected to this point and central to the purpose of this

study is the question of how primary schools can promote the practices of democracy. Hence, this study explores an important gap of the roles of primary schools in promoting the practices of democracy in South Sudan. Democracy is a political enterprise and education is not neutral but built on a political foundation (Freire, 1985). While pointing out that democracy is a political concept and a set of values, Giroux (1992) on his part laments on the impaired relationships between democracy and education in some of the developed countries that have a history of democracy. According to him, neither the ideals nor the practices of democracy in some of these nations any longer characterize the purpose or practices of schooling—or if they do, they are so weak as to be near of insignificance. In connection to that, it can still be argued that the situation can even aggravate further if teachers are not trained on issues of democracy because it may be difficult to expect them as role models for the practices of democracy in schools. In that context, it can become increasingly difficult to expect education to play a significant role in the practices of democracy in everyday life if teachers are not only untrained but also that the schools themselves lack history of democracy. In my view, this is troubling because what takes place in schools - in the curriculum, in extra-curricular activities and throughout the school culture - will have a significant effect on how pupils can understand and internalize non-authoritarian values or views for their engagement in the practices of democracy. Young people need to learn and acquire the skills and values of democracy in order for them to engage effectively in civic, social, and political life. If politicians need the votes of the citizens to represent them in public offices, then the citizens must be an informed democratic citizenry with the knowledge of how the politicians can articulate or represent their interest. In order to do this, schools must play a crucial role of educating and nurturing an engaged and informed democratic citizenry. This is one of the reasons my study seeks to investigate how primary schools promote the practices of democracy. In this first chapter, I will discuss the background of the study, historical and political background of Sudan, the education system of Sudan in a historical perspective, language in use education policy, rationale of the study and the objectives of the study in the perspective of the role of primary schools promoting democracy. Although this research represents a study of three primary schools in South Sudan, it is hoped that the themes raised here can also relate to the similar context of other schools in South Sudan.

## 1.2 Background and Context

In a multicultural society, the construction of a stable democratic society, the rule of law and the sustained economic development are largely the functions of the mobilization and engagement of the civil society and the political society (Boadi, 2004:183).

This statement suggests that the establishment of a stable democratic society, the rule of law and the sustained economic development needs the mobilization and engagement of the public civil society, private and political society. There are widely held beliefs that education plays a critical role in the emergence and maintenance of democracy. According to Freire (1985), in addition to being sites of instructions for developing workforce, the role of schools as sites for cultural and political development has at most been under utilized or even ignored by some political leaders. Also Heater (1999) argues that parents and public schools have a responsibility of making citizens acquire knowledge of the social, legal and political systems in which they live to be able to operate and advance democracy in their own society. In its education policy acts, South Sudan saw the role of education in democracy as one of inculcation: "education shall inculcate democratic values and practices through participatory learning, development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among the learners (SSEA, 2008: 8). Junn (2003) poses a question: "what good is education for democracy?" For her, education is capable of training people to think about the norms and goals of democracy and to adhere to the principles and basic values of democratic thoughts. In other words, education is believed to be potential of promoting democratic values and skills, political behaviour and attitudes among citizens. Furthermore, she claims that the importance of education for democracy derives mainly from the socialization roles it is bound to play. As agents of socialization, schools play a vital role of imparting values to young people and teaching them how to behave and what to know about politics and social values such as tolerance for peaceful co-existence in their society. It is noteworthy pointing out that democracy as a way of life takes place not only through teaching in classroom settings but also in everyday life practices within schools and perhaps outside the school sphere too. Teachers can be role models for the practice of democracy in schools and as such they can socialize children into how to practise democracy. It is in the specific interactions between pupils and educators in the school that children can possibly be socialized into the practices of

democracy. Knowledge on parliamentarism, voting, referendum or politics in general learned in classroom from the subject contents or the curriculum is not enough. It is the everyday life practice aspect of a democracy that matters most for both adults and children to engage in the advancement and maintenance of democracy. It is for this reason that I consider schools capable of training young people to interact with one another and with adult educators to raise awareness in social participation and support for democracy. This is in line with Glaeser et al. (2005) who argue that the uneducated man or the man with limited education is a different political actor from the man who has achieved a higher level of education. In my opinion, by teaching pupils reading and writing, the educators are imparting to them very important interpersonal communication social skills suitable for their engagement in democracy. Freire (1985) suggests that education is perhaps the most prominent and effective vehicle for getting young people to work together, to understand common problems and to critically analyze complex and controversial issues through discussion among themselves. In that aspect, teachers can facilitate students to the point of being able to discuss issues and even resolve disputes in a nonviolent way. The discussion, conversation and resolution of disputes all form part of a democratic school. However, this requires well trained teachers on democratic issues for their effective engagement of children in the discussion and resolutions of issues. Hence, by building a more politically literate population, schools are assumed to be in a position of placing more people to readily participate and engage in democracy (Glaeser, et al., 2005).

However, Salih (2001) cautions against expecting too much from the democratization role of the educational establishments. According to him, the democratization role of the educational institutions is possible only when the education institutions themselves are democratic and not fearful of empowering the younger generations to become a democratic future citizenry. For him, most schools are the guardians of the status quo rather than play an active role of democratizing young people. He also notes that it is hard to expect schools with no history of democracy and teachers with no background knowledge of democracy from teacher training institutions to enhance the spread of democracy and non-authoritarian political views and values among the younger generation for free engagement in public life and policy setting. Nonetheless, Dewey (1997) argues that education promotes the social continuity of life. If one of these continuities of life is based on the democratic principles of liberty and equality, then education can improve the

democratic system of institutions and structures. It is in the light of this argument that this study purports to offer contribution to an understanding of how primary schools can promote democracy in South Sudan. Stromquist and Monkman (2000) have succinctly put relevant questions about the role of education in democratization process:

Today more than ever, there is a need to ask, education for what [?]. Will it be only to make us more productive and increase our ability to produce and consume, or will it be able to instil in all of us a democratic spirit with values of solidarity? This solidarity will have to recognize the different interest among men and women and among the dominant groups and disadvantaged groups (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000:21-22).

This statement suggests that the role of education in a democratization process would be misplaced if educators are not guided by asking relevant questions that can target democratization of young people for peaceful co-existence by taking into account the interests of different groups in a multicultural, multi-ethnic or multi-religious nation. This statement is relevant in the context of Sudan where education systems has not been much utilized for the purpose of advancing democracy for its citizens due to a long period of civil war that has affected this multicultural, multi-religious or multi-ethnic country. Indeed, if schools are to be social agents for educating democratic citizens, then the kind of society and the values that the society need to embrace ought to be defined. Supportive of this argument is Dewey (1997) who maintains that the conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind. According to Green (2008), an international regional survey indicates that 69% percent of Africans believe that democracy is preferable to other political systems. He also argues that democracy is so important that its preferences are reflected in the international laws. According to UN (1948), article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) grants every individual the right to participate directly in the government of his country or through freely chosen representatives. This article stresses that the will of the people is the basis of the legitimacy of authority of the government which can be expressed in periodic and genuine free and fair elections by universal and equal suffrage held through secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. In a democratic system of government, participation in political matters is an important fundamental aspect of democratic skills that are expected of citizens for their involvement in public affairs. The right to political participation is an essential aspect of a human right

framework and a critical component for ensuring good governance and accountability (UNESCO, 2009). This right is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) where article 25 states:

Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity...without unreasonable restrictions:

- a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives
- b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors
- c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country (UN, 1966).

Under the international law (ICCPR), governments are obligated to ensure the meaningful participation of their citizens in fostering democracy. Hence, fulfilling this obligation is critical for fostering possible emergence and sustenance of democracies. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2006), Sudan ratified the ICCPR in May 2006<sup>1</sup>. It is interesting to note that Sudan ratified the ICCPR after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In that respect, I tend to believe that the Sudan's ratification of the ICCPR as an international human rights tool was a consequence of the CPA in 2005. Although Sudan had also ratified the Convention of Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, it seems as if this is one of the few conventions of human rights it has ever signed prior to the CPA. Consequently, it appears that the CPA was very instrumental for Sudan to embody human rights issues into its constitutions. In its Interim National Constitution and Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan, Sudan recognizes the need for the involvement and participation of all Sudanese in democracy for good governance (GoS, 2005; GoSS, 2005). In linking human rights to democracy, my understanding about human rights is that it is a value basis for democracy and I will use it that way for this study although such a stand point of view is contestable. This is because the document of the Government of South Sudan seems to suggest that human right is the basis for participation in democracy in South Sudan. In the Interim Constitution, human rights have been shown as an important part of democratic values because of the way they have been integrated in the CPA for citizen participation to promote good governance. It is also in the South Sudan

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<sup>1</sup> The total number of States parties to the ICCPR is 156 (as of May 2006).

Interim Constitution that the Bill of Rights has been included in the political legislations. The protection of fundamental human rights in democracy is an important aspect of pursuing good governance and this is an expressed democratic policy intention of the Government of South Sudan in its Interim Constitution document. According to UNESCO (2009), good governance is a condition for improved government service provisions where multiparty democracy, strengthened rule of law, enhanced participation and voice of citizens are encouraged. Freire (1985) argues in favour of schools to engage in the role of conscientization of students where the educational system will not be used as a tool for domination of other groups and mere transference of knowledge, but for liberation and creation of students with critical minds. Hence, democratic values which include freedom of speech as a tool for political debate needs to be fostered among children in schools. The engagement of schools to create in students the attitude of critical mind and value of freedom of speech as active participants in the democratic societies is important for my study because I believe schools can endow the larger proportion of the population with the skills of interaction between different groups within the classroom as well as the larger society. This is important for democracy because it is also concerned with how people can handle conflicts and disagreements in a peaceful manner given that the Sudan's history has been replete with civil wars. Since schools can engage in the dual role of developing in children their cognitive capabilities and valuable social skills, therefore, schools can play a crucial role of training children to be able to think and act democratically with due respect to their fellow pupils in the schools' diverse society (Glaeser et al., 2005). The above argument underpins the important role education can be called upon to play in promoting democracy which I consider very important for this study.

### **1.3 Historical and Political Background of Sudan**

Sudan has seen only a few years of democracy since its independence from Britain in 1956 given its history of war and military rule in the past five decades. According to Salih (2001), in the closing decade of the colonial rule, Sudan had witnessed the emergence of the democratic political parties such as the Umma Party (UP) and the National Unionist Party (NUP). Salih also noted that the early start of multi-party democracy and the relatively orderly transitions from colonial to national rule did not persist long. The transitional period towards independence began with the inauguration of the first parliament in 1954. With the consent of the British and



Egyptian Governments, Sudan achieved independence on 1 January 1956. The post independence period was much characterised by war between the North and the South and infighting among the political elites at the expense of resolving pressing national issues and extension of the political rule by the military rule (Salih, 2001). Other features of the early post-independence governments of Sudan include among other things political domination by the Arab Muslims who viewed Sudan as a Muslim Arab state. Indeed, the UP/NUP proposed 1968 constitution was arguably Sudan's first Islamic-oriented constitution (Jok, 2007; Alier 1991). According to Salih (2001), the Islamic elite in Sudan had used Islamic discourse ideologically as an instrument to transform religion into a political resource. In 1955, one year before independence, a civil war erupted between the Northern and the Southern parts of Sudan (Alier, 1991). After independence, the Southerners who were fearful of being dominated by the Northerners revolted against the Arab led government in the North. The first civil in Sudan between the North and South began in 1955 when the Southern army officers mutinied and formed the Anya-Nya guerrilla movement against the Northern Arab led government. This war was fought in the period of 1955-1972 which ended with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement<sup>2</sup> in 1972.

The breaking of the promise by the Arab led government in the North for the Southerners to create a federal system of government after independence contributed to the spark of another second civil war (Alier 1991; Ruay 1994; Salih 2001). The second civil war between the North and South was ignited in 1983 when the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) led a rebellion against the Arab led government in the North. Among the factors which contributed to the resumption of the civil war between the North and the South for the second time were the lack of serious attempts by the North to develop the South, the introduction of the Sharia law (Islamic Law), seen as the Arab led North government's Islamization policy and the mistrust between the Northern and the Southern politicians. The lack of investment in the South believed to have resulted as well in the lack of educational opportunities, access to basic health care services, and little prospects for productive employment to the many in the South. The civil war is said to have claimed 2 million

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<sup>2</sup> Addis Ababa Accord was a peace agreement signed in 1972 during the first civil war between the South under the gorilla Movement of Anyanya I headed by General Joseph Lagu against the Muslim North on a series of settlements such as powers of self-government for the autonomous South in relation to the Muslim North, Cease-Fire agreement, and Protocols on Interim government arrangement (Alier, 1991:124)

lives and displaced more than 4 million Southerners (Salih, 2001). Peace talks between the SPLA/SPLM and the Arab led government in the North aimed at putting an end to the war resulted in the signing of the CPA in 2005. The peace deal, however, opened a limited democratic space which was to allow the people of Southern Sudan to vote in a 2011 referendum for an independent South Sudan.

Following the signing of the CPA in 2005, the National Interim Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan has made a provision in its article 82 (b) that the Government of National Unity (GoNU) would establish a decentralized democratic system of governance which takes into account the cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, gender and linguistic diversity of the country (GoS, 2005). Also in the Interim Constitution for the Government of Southern Sudan, article 39 (1) stipulates that the Government of Southern Sudan shall promote democratic principles and political pluralism and be guided as well by the principles of decentralization and devolution of power to the people at the appropriate levels of government where they can best manage and direct their own affairs at the different levels of governments (GoSS, 2005). All these are the constitutional provisions and intentions by the Government of South Sudan for the practice of democracy.

According to Salih (2001), Sudan lies on the axis of a frontier between Africa's Arab North and Black Sub-Saharan Africa, South. Sudan has a huge ethnic and religious complexity with 56 ethnic groups divided into 597 subgroups speaking different sub-ethnic languages and some 115 major languages. In Sudan, Islam and Christianity are the main religions, with 27 different religious sects and Sufi orders and at least five Christian dominations. Sudan North/South division has often been presented as a clash between the Arab /Islamic North and Southerners who follow Christianity and traditional religions. However, this is not the whole story. There are Southerners who are Muslims for example and not everyone in the North is an Arab. But many in the South attributed the imposition of Sharia law or Islamic law as a major reason why they took up arms against the Arabs North. Sharia was brought in 1983 by the then president Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri helping transform a revolt by the disaffected Southerners' troops into a full scale rebellion but that only came to an end in 2005. However, the South disenchantment with the North goes back further than this. As pointed out earlier, the first civil war started in 1955, a year before the Sudan's independence and ran until 1972. So, religion is clearly not the only

factor for the Sudan's long conflict between the two parts of the country. The South underdevelopment is another. Many Sudanese say this goes back to the colonial times when the British rule the North and South Sudan differently and made movement between the two hearts of the country difficult. But even before this, Arab groups had used the South mainly as a vast reservoir for slave (Alier, 1991; Jok, 2007; Ruay, 1994). In fact, the South relationship with the Khartoum government is reflected in many of the Sudan's peripheral regions. Presently, there is an ongoing civil war in Darfur and tensions in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile State and in the East. Now, the South will clearly separate, but unless the Northern Sudan governing elite plans to satisfy the demands of the neglected parts from all over the country in a democratic manner, it seems clear there will be more problems ahead.

Considering the religious dichotomy of the country, it is no surprise that the North-South Sudan civil war has been casted as a microcosmos of that divide. Racism or tribalism is one of Sudan's biggest problems and has divided the nation for centuries, dating back to the slave trade (Jok, 2007). The word slave can still be heard in Khartoum's society as "abid", often referring to African tribes of the South and Darfur –an attitude which portray the South Sudan as second class citizen and thus has encouraged many Southerners to seek separation from the North (Ruay, 1994). On his part, Salih (2001) noted that the defining element of the South –North divide has been dominated by the discourse of ideological construct of the poor and the oppressed people of the South and the hegemonic Islamic government in the North. Salih argues that although Sudan is highly charged with regional, ethnic or religious tensions, these parameters themselves may not be a challenge to democracy. The real challenge to democracy could be political leadership who (in his argument) in this highly charged political and social atmosphere can be tempted to use their power as an instrument for oppression and marginalization of other disadvantaged groups (Salih, 2001). According to Ruay (1994), due to the geographical, political and cultural difference between the North and South, the joint British-Egyptian administration ruled the North and South separately. Compared to the South, more development was carried out in the North under the British rule in the area of education, social services and infrastructures (Ruay 1994; Sommer 2005). According to Alier (1991), the North-South Sudan conflict is an expression of a deeply rooted form of oppression, inequality, political exclusion of the South by the North. Hence, most people in the South viewed the recent conflict

as a fight of worthy cause that would bring them freedom from oppression, the right to equal participation in government, security and human dignity, all enshrined in the principles of democracy.

It is also important to point out that although the war story in Sudan has most of the time been narrated in terms of a problem of the North/South divide, however, this war story is more complex than it has always been told. A larger picture of the story is being missed out when the war story is only told in reference to the problem of the Arab Islam North and the Christian Animist African South. The difference between the South and North is more nuanced than that. It is a complex matrix with different denominations, cross cutting ethnic belongings or political belonging. The North/South problem is only a war fought among other things over differences of ideologies, religions and control of resources. I would suggest that the war story on the dichotomy of the Arab Islam North and Christian Animist African South Sudan is too simplistic. Not all Arab Muslims are enemies and it is only the elite Arabs in power who are trouble not only for the people of South Sudan but also to the rest of other parts of Sudan that have been neglected for decades. It is true that the South has lost a lot of people in the war, but is there one single family in the country that has not been affected by this war? I guess all families in the country have been affected in one way or another by the war, for example, the West Sudan's Muslim Darfurians who are of African origin have become victims of genocide in the hands of the now ruling Northern Arab elite because of the economic and political neglect. They too have suffered economic and political marginalization in the hands of the ruling Northern Arab elite despite their cultural identity oriented more towards Arabs in the North than to their fellow African tribes in the South due to their long exposure to Arab cultures.

#### **1.4 The Education System of Sudan in a Historical Perspective**

Sudan experienced a marked regional disparity in terms of educational and socio-economic development during the colonial regime and throughout subsequent successive governments since Sudan gained its independence from the colonial occupation in 1956 (Alier, 1991). When the colonial regime invaded Sudan in 1898, there existed already religious Islamic koranic schools in Northern Sudan although no Western educational organisation of any significance was developed there by then. As early as 1899, education development programmes drawn by the colonial government for the North were in place. Efforts were made to sensitize them about the

benefits and importance of education (formal schooling) to their children. Consequently, a number of elementary schools, intermediate schools and high schools such as Gordon Memorial College were established in the North (Ruay, 1994).

In the contrary, education in the South Sudan was left by the government in the hands of the Church missionaries and was characterised by poor quality, underfunding and lack of coordination of unified system because of lack of grants from the government. Education in the South was mainly handled by the Catholic Verona Fathers Mission for the purpose of evangelising the Southern Sudanese. Having realized the significance of educating Southerners before they could become Christians, the missionaries opted for involvement in education. The type of school provided by the missionaries was village or bush schools that provided only basic instructions in literary skills. That is, the schools were nothing more than catechism centres where most of the teachings were done by European and American missionaries who lacked any formal teacher training. While education for Northern Sudanese attracted far greater amounts of investment and generated considerably higher level of quality and access during the colonial rule, education provision in the South involved less than 300 missionaries teaching a few thousand children from a population of two to three million in which most of the children barely progressed beyond six years of schooling (Ruay, 1994; Sommers 2005). According to Deng (2003), the socio-economic disparity that was created by lack of development and education in the South during British colonial rule had widened between the North and South after independence and even after Addis Ababa Agreement was signed in 1972. Deng explains that, during the brief period of relative peace (1972-82) after the Addis Ababa peace agreement which granted self-government to Southern Sudan in 1972, the long-standing inequalities between North and South in terms of education provisions worsened further. The South failed to receive adequate resource transfer from the central government after the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement and the average realised budget for the Southern regional government during this period barely covered 20 percent of the budget for education for the whole of Sudan. With a population of 20 million during the inter-war period (1972-1982), the primary school enrolment rate was about 40 per cent in the North but less than 12 per cent in the South. According to the UNDP (2005) report on human development, no society can be flourishing and happy if the far greater part of its population is poor and miserable. When people are deprived of public goods

such as education, then they are denied the opportunities to contribute to the growth of their country. It can also result in them having a weak political voice due to their low representation in government as a result of low education attainment.

### **1.5 Language in Use Education Policy**

One of the expressed official policies of the Northern Arab dominated government after the departure of British colonial power was to build a national unity among the people of Sudan modelled in the Arab identity, culture and religion (Alier, 1991). Under this policy of national unity in 1957, a year after independence, the Northern government took steps to nationalize all mission schools and issued a decree that Southern Sudan was to follow the curriculum used in the Northern schools. The policy of nationalizing the mission schools was expressed in the view of the then District Commissioner in a letter to the Governor of Equatoria through the statement: “We have suffered a lot from the missionaries in the South, and so it may be time to limit their expansion and powers until the time we have a better control and grip on the present existing situation” (Yangu 1966, cited in Ruay 1994:98). In an attempt to implement the policy of Arabization and Islamization of the South, the government took further measures in expelling more than 30 missionaries from the South and converted missionary schools into government schools where the medium of instruction is Arabic instead of vernacular and English. Arab teachers from the North were transferred to South and that of the South who have been accustomed to teaching in vernacular and English were transferred to the North. More Islamic Koranic schools and institutions were established in both urban and rural areas to arabize and Islamize the Southern children and adults (Ruay, 1994).

One would wonder why discuss language issues in a research study that investigates issues relating to the promotion of democracy in primary schools. Language is important for democracy because it says something about values. The importance of language for communication purpose as well as for political participation cannot be gainsaid. The importance of language as basis for communication and political participation in governments has been acknowledged through language rights, which allows people to use official language of their own choosing when dealing with government and courts. Language right has to do with equal treatment of all spoken languages in a country. Its goal is to maintain and favour development of non-discrimination, freedom of expression, right to private life and right of members of a linguistic minority to use

their language with each other for communication (Patten & Kymlicka, 2003). According to Lintner (2007), conscious or not, spoken or not, languages can be used to confirm power and privileges a person has or to deny it from him. Since language is linked to ethnicity, hence it can be argued that exclusion of any language or language group from official use can lead to the marginalisation of the people or peoples who use that language for routine communication or for their political participation. Thus, language may be used as a tool for oppression and exclusion from socio-political participation. In the referendum that took place in January 2011, a huge population without literacy skills participated in the decision making process to vote for the secession of the South from the North. Although their participation was facilitated by signs or symbols, nevertheless, this can often be subjected to error of interpretation by the voters. Clearly, mastery of knowledge of the official language for accessing political participation in democracy is essential. How can one participate if he/she does not have a command of language in which political participation takes place? On signing the CPA in 2005, South Sudan adopted English as an official language for political participation as well as a medium of instruction in upper primary schools and above. In my view, the adoption of English as an official language by the Government of South Sudan can inadvertently exclude many people from political engagement because using a colonial language is even more problematic than using different local languages of the country. However, considering the contextual multicultural ethnicities in South Sudan, the use of English as the official language or medium of instruction in schools among the people of South Sudan without any other language in common use at the moment is no surprise. First and foremost, Arabic as an official language and a medium of instruction has been considered a language of the oppressor (Arabs) and loathed by many in the South. In this case, the use of English has a political connotation. English as a neutral language can be used by many in the South to avoid bad memories of Arabic language as a symbol of oppression of the Southerners and also to avoid giving any one indigenous language undue regard or advantage over others. But still it may prove an obstacle for democratic participation.

According to Parekh (2006), human rights principles provide a valuable framework for handling participatory issues in democracy. Language rights are fundamental human rights of individual rights to freedom of speech. The right to freedom of speech is a universal human right where everyone is entitled to use wherever/whenever one chooses without fear (Varenes, 2007). One

such right is the use of language in schools or in dealing with public officials. This is in line with Makalela (2005) who maintains that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. According to Biseth (2005), schools are important institutions in a democratic and multilingual society because they both mirror the wider society and act as a role model. Schools can influence the acquisition and practice of the democratic values and they too can as well be influenced by the democratic values. In schools, it is possible that people can learn in their own language of choice about democratic values and principles. It is within this context that the education systems can be an important dimension for the advancement of democracy through language issues. An important assumption underpinning the objective of this study is that there exists a relationship between democracy and language, especially the use of language for free speech in the participation for local and national democracy. A premise is that pupils should understand the teaching or language of instruction in a language fluently known to many.

### **1.6 Rationale of the Study**

In April 2010, Sudan went for election to democratically elect its president for the first time in more than twenty years. Yet opposition leaders voiced concerns about prepared grounds for vote rigging and human rights abuse as reasons for their pull out from the race of the presidential election (Sudan Tribune, April 10th, 2010). Accordingly, the opposition parties complained and demanded redress in the security and criminal handling procedure laws that allowed security forces to prevent public meetings for the opposition parties. Also, the Sudanese press was subjected to harsh censorship. Free political campaign and freedom of expression for the opposition parties in the country were obstructed and restricted by the ruling NCP (Tribune, April 10th, 2010). All these things spoke for a need to have citizens who would be willing to share power with fellow countrymen and also respect people's rights for political participation and freedom of expression. Sudan being a multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic country has about six hundred different ethnic groups, yet the Government of Sudan (GoS) driven by the Islamic fundamental idea of a united Sudan has failed to recognize the ethnic diversity in the country (Salih, 2001; Breidlid, 2005). As will be further elaborated, democracy in a multicultural environment demands the recognition of cultural diversity and the concomitant requirement of equal treatment of individuals for their participation in decision-making and to function effectively in a multicultural society. Therefore, this study has been designed to find out



how primary schools in South Sudan can facilitate learning experiences for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes for appreciation and respect of cultural and ethnic diversity conducive for the emergence and maintenance of democratic institutions while in schools and later in future out side the spheres of schools. A historical and political context of Sudan in the previous sections has already provided us with a framework of an understanding of why there was incessant but intermittent war in a multicultural Sudan in the last fifty years or so.

### **1.7 Objectives of the Study**

The main goal of this study is to gain an understanding of how primary schools can promote and/or facilitate the practices of democracy. The following specific research questions have been asked for the purpose of examining this goal:

1. What are the education policies of the Government of South Sudan on the promotion of democracy in primary schools?
2. What are the pupils and teachers perception of democracy?
3. How do primary school organizational structures contribute to the practices of democracy?

Citizen participation is considered to either mean a form of political participation in which citizens are directly involved in self-government and self-regulation or an aid to decision-making in which authority is given to those periodically voted into office to make decision on behalf of those who elected them (Held, 2006; Beetham, 1999). Therefore, in this study, I look at citizen participation and democracy with special attention paid to the roles schools can play in instilling in the minds of young people, democratic values. I also argue that although citizen participation is important for democracy, it nonetheless, may not be effective unless knowledge of democratic values such as equality, non-discrimination, freedom of speech as a way of life are applied to aid the functioning of democracy. In the theoretical framework presented later in chapter three, I will argue how citizen participation can facilitate the emergence and sustenance of democracy. Before I discuss the methodological issues in the next chapter, a brief outline of the thesis structure can be described to give a general picture of the layout of the thesis.

### **1.8 Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis covers five chapters. In chapter one, I have contextualized the study with a focus on the background information of the role of education; historical and political background of Sudan; the education system of Sudan in a historical perspective; language in use education

policy; rationale of the study and the objectives of the study. Chapter two covers methodology where issues of a qualitative research approach have been discussed together with the sampling. Chapter three highlights important theories deemed essential for data analysis and discussion to be presented later in chapter four. Chapter four presents analysis and a discussion of the themes that have emerged from the data. Finally, chapter five discusses the research questions of the study and draws conclusions.

## **Chapter Two: Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

A choice of research design reflects decisions about priority of what one intends to do with a research process. According to Bryman (2008), research design represents a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data collected. He defines research design as a "framework for the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2008:31). The objective of this study is to investigate how primary schools promote and influence the practices of democracy. In this study, my intention is to understand teachers and pupils' behaviour about democratic practices in their specific social context where these practices take place. In this case, the primary schools in South Sudan. Hence, I have chosen a case study as research design with a qualitative research approach. A case study entails the detailed exploration of a specific case, which could be a community, organization, or persons (Bryman, 2008). Robson (2002) suggests that if one's intention in a research study is to understand what is happening in a specific context and to get access and cooperation from the people involved, then the best option is to use a case study. In this case study, I have looked at three heterogeneous primary schools with an urban/rural divide. The reason being that, in an urban setting, both the teachers and pupils are assumed to have access to media (news paper, radio, television) and/or speeches from politicians informing their knowledge of what is going on in the broader societal context, especially in the pre-election period of the presidential elections and referendum for the sepearation or unity of the South from/with the North. The assumption underlying the rationale for this choice is that their exposure could be important incentives for the acquisition of democratic values and skills related to the elections when both teachers and pupils could use it to talk about issues of the elections in classroom or outside. While in the rural school setting, my assumption is to envisage to what extend is less access to news papers or exposures to politicians' speech by both teachers and pupils may influence their ability to acquiring democratic knowledge, attitudes and skills. This approach is in line with Kvale (1996) who argues that the purpose of the qualitative research is to obtain descriptions of the lived world of the interviewees which may render the researcher to talk and listen to the informants, to see and hear what happens from their perspective. Since my intention is to understand teachers and pupils' behaviour about the practices of democracy in their specific social context (the primary schools in South Sudan), the use of semi-structured interviews through a qualitative research approach suits a purpose for me

to conduct a face to face interview with individuals in the field. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will elaborate more on the qualitative research methods and the basic assumptions underpinning the rationale for the choice of methods of this study. In this same chapter, I will also discuss sampling of respondents, analysis, validity and reliability, ethical principles governing the conduct of research and some challenges associated with the data collection from the fieldwork.

## **2.2 A Qualitative Research Approach**

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) maintain that the word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on the quality of entities and on the processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. According to them, qualitative researchers are concerned with uncovering knowledge of how people think and feel about the circumstances in which they find themselves rather than making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid. Sofaer (1999) points out that qualitative research methods are valuable tools in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena with the aim of illuminating the experience and interpretation of events by actors with widely differing views and roles and also giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard. In that sense it can be argued that a qualitative research method is useful in conceptualizing research as the process of reducing our uncertainty about important phenomena. Therefore, the adoption of a qualitative research approach for this study implies that there is uncertainty not only about what answers am I going to get from the informants, but also about what kind of questions would be suitable for me to ask; how I should frame those questions to get meaningful answers; and where and to whom should I address those questions.

According to Mikkelsen (1995), the research questions to be answered are normally motives behind researchers' selection of research methods. Also Bryman (2008) suggests that if anyone wants to choose a research topic, then s/he has to consider the nature of the subject matter under investigation in tandem with research methods suitable for accomplishing the research objectives. It is for the above reason and argument that I have chosen a qualitative research method as appropriate for my study because democracy being an abstract concept is a contestable topic that requires participants to express themselves and explain their experiences on the issues of democratic issues in the primary schools. Since the focus of this research is on

the practices of democracy for peaceful co-existence of individuals and good governance of multicultural communities in a nation-state, therefore, I have considered imparting and promoting democratic values in young individuals by the primary schools for social cohesion as very important for my study. Research methods are a range of approaches used to gather data which are to be used as basis for inference and interpretation, explanation, and prediction. In other words, a research method is a technique for collecting data (Cohen et al., 2007). It can involve a specific instrument, such as self-completion questionnaires or structured interview schedules, document as source of information and observations which give the researcher a chance to listen, watch and establish dialogue with the participants. Moore (2000) likens research methods to tools of a trade. As tools, knowing how to use them is equally important as knowing when and where to use them for the right job. Therefore, in trying to determine how primary schools promote democratic values, I have used methods such as semi-structured interviews with teachers, pupils, and government officials; policy document as source of information; and non-participatory observations in classrooms and outside. In the next section, I will elaborate more on these methods and their relevance for this study.

## **2.3 Data Collection Methods**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

In this section, I will discuss techniques for collecting data, namely: interviews, observation and document as sources of information. Interviews involve collecting data by asking and listening to informants. Observation involves the immersion of the researcher in a setting of case being studied for an extended period of time that can involve observing behaviour, listening to what is being said in conversations both between others and even with the researcher. Document as source of information implies obtaining information from policy documents, journals, memos, manuals, catalogs and other forms of written or pictorial materials researchers need for analysis when studying the world (Bryman, 2008; Jones, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 1998).

### **2.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-report data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts or intentions. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us

to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit (Patton, 1990:278).

As noticed in this quotation, a qualitative interview is a form of discourse between a researcher and the interviewee. Kvale (1996) articulates that an interview is a qualitative research tool aimed at obtaining qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject. For him, it is a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. Thus, interview is a technique primarily used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations of people's attitudes, preferences or behaviour with reference to a particular phenomenon. Interviews can be undertaken on a personal one-to-one basis in an attempt of developing a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee for a free flow of information (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Bryman, 2008). The semi-structured interview aspect of conversation gives the interviewer that condition of laxity to fully interact with his respondents by continually probing them to seek for more clarification of unclear answers to questions posed. In other words, semi-structured interview provides opportunity for discussion between the interviewee and the interviewer for more elaborate answers on the subject under discussion (Patton, 2002).

Basically, in this study, I had one-to-one interview with respondents from three different schools (See details of interview guides in the Appendix A, B and C). In regard to pupils, the interviews focused on ascertaining pupils' understanding of the concept of democracy, pupils place in the school organizational structure in the matters of school governance and/or decision-making, their role in peaceful co-existence in multi-ethnic relations. Interviews with the pupils lasted between thirty to forty minutes. According to Kvale (1996), through qualitative inquiry, interviewee's lived meaning is accessible not only by words, but also by tone of voice, expression and gestures in the natural flow of conversation. Despite the fact that the pupils were initially encouraged to talk freely and without fear before the interview could even start, I had difficulty of getting my message (questions) across to some of the informants. I noticed that during my first few minutes of interaction with them. Some of them were not able to express themselves explicitly to answer questions I posed them due to problem of fluency in spoken English, especially those in primary four of the rural schools. Both I (the researcher) and some of the pupils lack fluency in spoken *Juba Arabic* language, a non-classical or less concentrated form of spoken Arabic language used all over the South Sudan. Therefore, having noticed their difficulties in expression during the

interviews, this gave me a chance to access their life world in a different medium of communication other than the medium of English or *Juba Arabic* language. My familiarity with the setting in which the interviewees live has helped me solve this problem of language. Being a native of the location of two of the three schools, I used my local dialect (Madi language) in order to continue with the interview after discovering that the pupils can communicate in my own dialect during the interview. Also during my face to face interview with the pupils, I noticed from the body language (fidgeting, shyness, facial expressions and voice tone), some girls were uneasy in answering questions that I posed them. The uneasiness of interaction between me and them (especially young girls) could possibly be explained through gender difference and age difference. While boys were forthcoming with answers to questions asked, girls were being probed at greater depths to elicit similar answers to those the boys have given. All these might have influenced the way the data was collected.

Interviews with three head-teachers and six teachers were to assess the extent to which primary schools governance practices engender a free atmosphere for the practice of democracy (see Appendix B for the interview guide). The interview with each respondent lasted approximately for forty minutes to one hour time period. Despite the wide usefulness of interview techniques in social research and their popularity in practice, however, interviews have their limitations too. According to Kidder and Judd (1986), interviews are a limited source of data collection and unlike observation, cannot solicit information obtained otherwise by watching behaviours of the interviewees through body language. This is because in interview, participants are bound to report only their own perception and perspective of their world view and such perceptions and perspectives are loaded with people's personal biases, anxiety and lack of awareness. During my face to face interviews, most teachers and the head-teachers indicated that their schools do encourage the practice of democracy. Interviews with government officials were conducted also on a one-to-one basis that focused on government policies for promoting democracy in primary schools.

### **2.3.3 Observations**

Kumar (2005) argues that observation unlike interview does not require the researcher to actively query the respondent. It is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening

to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place and is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual contexts. There is a belief that children learn as part of a community and that the nature of the community has a profound effect on their future actions as citizens in a democracy since citizens are not only individuals but also members of a particular religious, ethnic, cultural and regional community (Parekh, 2006). Therefore, paying careful attention to the ways of how school communities function in classrooms and outside through informal and formal meetings are important processes of observing school democratic practices such as respectful public discourse, informed decision-making and fostering of democratic thinking and values as ways to which schools give pupils the opportunities to practise democracy and acquire democratic skills and values. Observation as a data collection method for a researcher can provide a complementary description of the phenomena that would have not been possible by the use of other methods such as interviews and document as source of information. In this study, I have considered one question: Are schools naturally occurring situations or are they not? In my mind, since schools are organized activities, it could be possible that they may not be natural occurring situations. However, school activities connote something like a natural setting. Schools, by its nature of being commonly attended by children and where almost every child spends most of his/her time would be referred to as natural settings.

In that respect, by applying observation data collection technique in my study, I assumed the schools had provided a natural setting which helped me to see how they (schools) promote the practice of democracy. For instance, in order to find out what was going on in the schools, my observations included among others but not limited to the following:

- I observed the nature of multi-ethnic composition of the school teachers and pupils
- School environment- I observed how pupils participate in the school governance practices and their interaction with one another within and outside classrooms for the purpose of seeing how they are socializing democratically
- Teaching/learning materials
- Learning environment – I observed how teachers are handling fair and equal distribution of question among children in their classes.



One of the roles of participant observation in social research has been described as the (complete participant) involvement of the researcher as a fully functioning member of the social setting where his or her identity as a researcher is not known to members of that social setting (Bryman, 2008). My role in the observation was observer-as- participant. According to Bryman (2008), in this role, the researcher is mainly an interviewer although there are some observations taking place but little involves any active participation. Also, members of the social setting are aware of the researcher's status as a researcher. In fact, revealing my identity as a researcher to the relevant government authorities and school officials as well as the pupils was the first thing I did when I entered the fieldwork sites. As a result of my being introduced by the Payam Education Director (PED) to the head-teachers of schools I visited, both the teachers and the pupils knew that I was a researcher.

Initially, I had wanted to attend and observe how school meetings were being conducted by the head-teachers and their staff. This was not possible because by the time I was conducting my fieldwork study, the schools' second term was coming to an end and both teachers and pupils were busy preparing for the end of term examinations. Nonetheless, my observation took the form of sitting in class in addition to general observation of what was going on in the school compounds by moving around and interacting with members in the schools. In addition to general observation of the activities I mentioned above in the schools, each time I visit a class for observation, I find myself being re-introduced again and again. First, the head-teacher introduces me to the class teachers, and then later to the pupils in the class by class teacher as a researcher. In each of the three schools, I had two periods<sup>3</sup> of sitting in a class for classroom observation. In addition to providing data on the size of the classes, conditions in the classroom, teaching and learning materials available, teaching methods (how values such as fairness, respect, and tolerance are part of lessons in the classroom) used by the teachers, observation in the schools I visited further provided me with data on discipline and classroom managements.

This was invaluable information in getting the wider picture of the real situation necessary for this research study. It is always important to be aware of how the presence of the researcher influences the interaction in a social setting (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). How did my presence influence the interaction in the classroom? Due to beforehand introduction of me to

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<sup>3</sup> One class period observation is for duration of forty minutes.

both teachers and pupils, my assumption was that they were obviously more prepared for my presence in the conduct of observation during the lesson period. Hence, this in a way might have influenced how the data were collected as well as the reliability of the study.

#### **2.3.4 Documents as Sources of Information**

Documents as source of information tend to complement other forms of data collection methods since they contain information one cannot access from certain population by means of observation and interview (Bryman, 2008). According to Robson (2002), the word document as a method for data collection in research study could primarily refer to obtaining information from written document such as books, newspapers or magazines, notices, minutes of meetings and letters although the term can sometimes be extended to include non-written documents such as films and television programmes, pictures, drawing and photographs. For the purpose of this study, I checked minutes of meetings of schools, examined GOSS educational policies (SSEA, 2008), the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA, 2005), the Interim Constitution of the Southern Sudan (GoSS, 2005), the Interim National Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan (GoS, 2005) and other publications for subject matters, values or goals that might have been outlined in these documents which I thought were helpful for answering the research questions of this study. Prior to the review of the above documents, a negotiated access to the above documents of interest were made with the relevant authorities on the ground. For instance, with the schools and in collaboration with the head teachers, I checked records of school meetings. As part of the data collection method, checking documented records of meetings have revealed evidence of the existence of school prefectural bodies as pupils' representatives in the school administration structure and the regular election of these officials into these offices, enlistment of parents' participation in schools decision-making and budget planning. Access to educational policies documents have also made manifest the Government of South Sudan's educational policies in adopting legislation to facilitate the democratic formation of the education system. Also, issues of human rights in the education systems were similarly unveiled in the same document as well as in the CPA and in both the Interim Constitution of South Sudan and the Interim National Constitution of the Republic of the Sudan. However, Bryman (2008) observes that the criteria of authenticity, credibility and representativeness are of considerable importance when evaluating documents because it is problematic when documents are treated as a definitive

factual account of the real world. He argues that when people write, they are fully aware that their documents would be of considerable interest to some other people. His argument is that with these people as audiences in mind, writers make sure that they convey a front which they want to project to the audiences. Hence, in agreement with Bryman, I need to remind my reader that indeed much caution needs to be exercised when reading official documents because they are not necessarily representatives of reality and they may be merely describing the intentions or goals of the official institutions and writers.

All the above factors were taken into consideration when I was reading policy documents for getting relevant information regarding the government policies on promoting democracy in South Sudan. Besides, politicians as policy makers are not the same as those who implement policies. For example, a lot of policy documents may say nice things about intentions of actions that need to be implemented. In regard to education policies, the implementers of actions on the education policies are the teachers. If they disagree with the policies thereof and even though they do not air out that disagreement openly, as implementers of these policies in classrooms they can choose to avoid a little bit of this and that. They may also interpret the policies in their own way and in the context they find themselves in. So, policy document is never a description of reality, rather it is a description of ideals (Bryman, 2008). Hence, a researcher to some extent needs to be aware of what policies implementers know or may not know about government policies in regard to how they can interpret policies when reading documents for a research study purpose.

## **2.4 Sampling**

According to Grbich (1999), sampling is a process of selecting individuals, groups or texts for inclusion in a research project. She argues that the choice of sampling technique in most cases varies with the questions and the demands of the position from which the researcher would like to conduct the research study (Grbich, 1999). In the similar vein, Bryman (2008) argues that even if it were possible, it would not be necessary to collect data from everyone in a community to help get relevant information for a research study. Hence, in qualitative research, only a sample which is a subset of a larger population is selected for a given study. It is the research objectives and the characteristics of the study population (size and diversity) which help determine how many and what kind of people are to be selected for a study (Bryman, 2008;

Patton, 1990; Robson, 2002). For my research study, I have used snowball sampling. It is a type of purposive sampling in which participants or informants with whom contact has already been made can use their social networks to connect other people with the researcher for their possible inclusion and participation in a research study (Bryman, 2008). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research method focuses on selecting information rich cases for an in depth study. Here, the researcher carefully selects those who will provide the best representation of the research question's definable aspects. In that aspect, the choice for information rich cases can afford the researcher a great deal of opportunity to learn about issues significant to the purpose of the inquiry and thus yielding an in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalization (Tashakkori, 2003; Grbich, 1999; Kidder & Judd, 1986; Patton, 2002).

During the planning phase, that is, before I could go for my fieldwork, I was bothered alot about who could best be able to provide the information needed for this study. As well as asking these questions, there were many other decisions that I needed to consider when selecting the participants for my study. In the following quotation below, Pelto explains one factor researchers have to consider when making decisions on recruitment of participants for study:

We noticed that humans differ in their willingness as well as their capabilities for verbally expressing...information. Consequently, the anthropologist usually finds that only a small number of individuals in any community are good key informants. (Pelto, 1978, in Patton, 2002:321)

In a qualitative research study, the challenge of gathering relevant information remains on finding out who can give what information. As Pelto has succinctly put it in the above statement, a sample for research study should have a willing informants who are knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and whose knowledge and perceptions are useful for a researcher to understand what is happening and why for a case under investigation. Therefore, for this study, the selection of the participants was done with the purpose in mind of identifying only those who are willing with relevant information and experience on the topic of the research. As such and in consultation with the payams<sup>4</sup> education authorities on the ground, three schools coded S1, S2 and S3 respectively were purposefully selected. The choice of these schools were made on the basis that they have a functioning SMCs and PTAs as the school governing bodies as well as

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<sup>4</sup> Payam is a sub-county in which a decentralized lower level of local government operates.

active pupils representatives in the school governing structures. Additional reason for the choice of the sample was made on the basis of their locations as urban/rural divide (see section 2.1 for the reason of sample choice of the urban/rural divide). Hence, this study aims at drawing conclusions about the three schools in South Sudan in an attempt to examine what government policies are in place for the promotion of the democratic values, pupils and teachers' perception of democracy and the practices of democracy in primary schools.

How was the sample selected? According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), the exploratory character of a research study is that at the beginning, it is often not clear where within a given population interview and observation should start and which actors should be contacted for the research study. He also maintains that in the case of interviews, access cannot be assumed automatic. Getting people to be interviewed must involve establishing relations and constructing identities with gatekeepers before even starting to collect data. In other words, decisions about who to interview, when and where will have to be made with relevant authorities before interviewing the individual participants. For my case, the schools participating in this study were contacted by and chosen in collaboration with the education officials in the payam education office on the ground. Also in collaboration with the head-teachers of the selected schools, individual pupils in upper primary classes and with leadership roles in the school were chosen as informants to participate in this study. The choice of the pupils in the upper primary classes was made on the basis of their ability to communicate well in English. It was also assumed that the leadership positions held by the pupils as representatives of their peers in the school governing structure might have given them relevant experience for the practice democracy in everyday life when carrying out their responsibilities in the schools' daily activities. On the other hand, teachers with teaching experience from social studies background were identified and selected also by their respective head teachers to participate as informants in this study. One assumption underlying the rationale for the selection of teachers with background knowledge in social studies to participate in this study was that social studies is a subject taught from the perspective of social aspects of democracy. Hence, the concepts of citizenship, participation and systems of government that form the bedrock of the content of the curriculum of social studies subject might have informed teachers' knowledge and experience in democracy. Consequently, these concepts were considered to be in the main reflective of the democratic ideals. According to Howe and

Marshall (1999), Social Studies emphasize among other things, social participation and good citizenship knowledge aimed at imparting values, attitudes and skills to pupils necessary for their understanding of modern life and participating effectively as responsible citizens in a democracy. In other words, it is thought that social studies can provide the kind of moral education, knowledge, skills, and values conducive to the development and maintenance of cohesive and stable democratic societies.

The government officials were chosen based on the theory that by virtue of their job positions held in the ministry of education as administrators, they may be well informed about education policies and leadership roles essential for the practice of democracy. A short contextualization and mapping of the schools where fieldwork of the study was done would be necessary here.

**School S1** is a rural school, located in Nimule Payam of Magwi County in Eastern Equatoria State. The pupils constitute a heterogeneous group in the sense that they hail from multi-ethnic tribes comprising of Lotuka, Didinka, Bari, Kuku, Acholi, Madi and Nuer and Dinka speakers. The pupils from some of these tribes are returnees recently repatriated from exile in the neighbouring Uganda to be housed in the transit camps at Nimule awaiting further resettlement in their respective home areas although some of them still have internal tribal conflict in their home areas. In this school S1, some of the children seem over-aged for their grade. According to the head-teacher, school S1 is a government owned school but heavily supported by Catholic Church and thus has a strict school discipline because of embracing the Church moral values as its philosophical values. Hence, this gave a good impression of the school making most parents wanting to send their children to this school to get good education on moral values and good disciplines. Most of the teachers are also speakers of the languages of some of these different tribes. The school buildings are made of concrete materials and the classrooms are equipped with a black board. The scholastic materials in this school are supplied mainly by a faith-based organization called Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), a Catholic Church organization. These materials include text books, stationeries and sanitary materials for girls. JRS not only supplies scholastic in this school it also offers scholarships for some of the teachers to be trained in the neighbouring Uganda. On the walls of the office of the head teacher one can see both drawn and scientific posters.

**School S2** is in the same location as that of S1. Its demography in terms of pupils and teachers is also similar to that of S1. Like school S1, school S2 has some of its children seemingly over-aged for their grade. Unlike school S1 which has its buildings made of concrete materials, school S2 has its classrooms made from local wood materials such as poles and mud for the walls and pole and grass and poles for the roof. School S2 is also a government owned school and is similarly supported by JRS in matters of scholastic materials and scholarship for teacher training. Also like school S1, school S2 has both drawn and scientific posters in the head teacher’s office.

**School S3** is an urban school located in Juba, Central Equatoria State. Its ethnic heterogenic composition in terms of the pupils and teachers seems greater than those in schools S1 and S2. It has concrete buildings surrounded by a barbed wire fence. This school is also supported by a faith-based organization called Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA). Like school S1, school S3 has strict moral conduct and disciplines that made it attractive to most of the parents because of the good moral values upheld in the school according to the information from the head teacher. The following tables describe size of the school samples and the informants per category.

Table 2.1 –Number of pupils and educators in the schools, distributed on gender and in total

Schools	Pupils			Educators					
				Trained			Untrained		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>S1</b>	810	845	1655	11	3	14	14	5	19
<b>S2</b>	368	337	705	4	3	7	9	4	13
<b>S3</b>	374	390	764	5	2	7	4	5	9

Sources: Fieldwork report

Table 2.2- Number of informants per category for interviews, distributed in gender and total

Categories	Male	Female	Total
<b>Pupils</b>	7	2	9
<b>Teachers</b>	4	2	6
<b>Head Teachers</b>	3	0	3

<b>Government Officers</b>	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>	16	4	20

Sources: Fieldwork report

## 2.5 Data Analysis

At the outset I need to point out that as a novice and an inexperienced researcher, I felt intimidated by a concern whether I will be able to correctly sort out and piece together information from the huge amount of raw data that I have collected and make sense out of it in an attempt to answer the research questions. In feeling apprehensive about the daunting challenges of working on the research data, little did I recognize that analysis is a natural process of thinking learned from early childhood along with language in one's social life. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), the difference between everyday life and doing research analysis is that, in research analysis, the researcher takes a more self-conscious and systematic approach to knowing. In that respect, in order to transform raw data into new knowledge, a researcher must engage in active and demanding analytic processes, meaning that data analysis begins with the formulation of research questions and the manner in which it is phrased that could lead to data gathering and their eventual analysis. The research questions set the tone for the research project and helps the researcher to stay focused, even when there are masses of data (Bryman, 2008). It must be recalled however, in section 2.3 that data are materials in forms of interview transcripts, participant observation, field notes and documents information collected by researchers in the life world being studied. In data analysis, a researcher is involved in examining something to find out what it is and how it can work. To do this, the researcher must break apart a substance into its various components and then examine those components to identify their properties and dimensions. The knowledge acquired from examining those components and their properties can now inform the deduction he can make about the object as a whole (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Blunner (1969, in Corbin & Strauss, 2008) conceives of analysis as involving interpretation and that interpretation implies a researcher's understanding of the events explained from the perspectives of the participants. Denzin (1998, in Corbin & Strauss, 2008) argues that although



researchers are to some extent translators of other person's words or actions and also mediators between participants and the audiences that they would want to reach, yet their role as interpreters of words for meaning is much more difficult than that of translators. The difficulty surrounding the nature of the work of data analysis has been well captured by Thorne (2000) in her explanation that the language of analysis can be confusing for readers of qualitative studies. According to her, it is sometimes difficult to know what the researchers actually did during this phase of research. She claims that the research analysis process becomes more complex to understand when researchers use phrases like "their findings evolved out of the data that were collected or constructed" and many other similar phrases. In her understanding of how the analysis process is being described, she explains that the use of such phrases mentioned above often accentuate the sense of mystery and magic associated with the research analysis process. She also says that even some researchers may claim their conceptual categories emerged from the data. For her, this is almost like as if the raw data was left out overnight and only to awake to find that the data analysis fairies had organized the data into a coherent new structure which explained everything.

Indeed, being aware of the difficult nature of the work of data analysis and despite the enormity of the size of this work, I persevered painstakingly to transcribe the recorded audio tape by playing it back and forth, listening closely to what the interviewees had said and how it was said. After transcription, came the daunting task of reading the transcript. Here again, what I did was to read the text, line by line, sentence by sentence and word by word for the purpose of coding the data to generate themes or patterns. In fact, in an effort to code the data, continuous listening to the audio tape as well as reading through the transcript line by line has helped me a lot in noticing things that I was able to label, underline or highlight in the passages heuristically to facilitate the discovery of concepts and further investigation of the residue data. This is in consonant with Corbin and Strauss (1998) who argue that careful scrutiny of data line by line can enable the researcher to uncover concepts and new relationships between them in order to systematically develop categories. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), the initial stage in analyzing qualitative data is to find some concepts or categories that can help one to make sense of what is going on in the case or cases documented by the data. In connection to this, Corbin and Strauss (1998) also maintain that doing data analysis requires one to

conceptualize and classify events, acts, and outcomes. Then, the categories that will emerge along with their relationships are the basis for developing theories.

Basically, in this study the inductive use of category has guided me to search for phenomena in the data. According to Corbin and Strauss (1998), a phenomenon is a term used to answer question like “what is going on here?” Therefore, the search for phenomena, guided me to check for repeated patterns of happenings, events, or actions/interactions that represented what people say, alone or together in response to the problems and situations in which they found themselves. This is supportive of Gall et al. (1996) who argue that the process of examining case study data closely is for one to find constructs, themes, and patterns that could be used to describe and explain a phenomenon being studied.

## **2.6 Reliability**

Bryman (2008) refers to reliability as the consistency of a measure of concept, meaning that if one administers a measure of concept to a group and then later readministers it to the same group, there should be little variation over time in the results obtained. This is in line with Yin (2009) who argues that reliability in a qualitative research study implies that in a given case study, if a later investigator followed the same procedures as that described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the similar conclusions/findings as that drawn by the first investigator. However, in qualitative research, this is far from calling for exact replication or uniformity of the conclusions to be drawn from findings obtained by two or more researchers studying a single case for their findings to be reliable. As Kvale (1996) explains, in an interview, there may be as many different interpretations of the qualitative data as there are researchers. Bryman (2008) also notes that there are difficulties associated with reliability in qualitative research because of the inter-observer consistency. For example, according to Bryman (2008), if a researcher interviews an informant for the first time and some years later the researcher interviews the same informant again, it is most likely that he may not get exactly the same answers. There are many factors involved here because experience, knowledge or life itself can have impact on the perspectives of the interviewees’ response to questions. There could as well be subjective judgment linked to activities such as the recording of observations or the translation of data into categories even if

one or more than one observer is involved due to the observer's fatigue and lapses in attention during interview. Consequently, the kind of reliability in qualitative research which is subjective is different from the objective reliability demanded by the natural science. Guba and Lincoln (1994, cited in Bryman, 2008:377) are at unease on the use of the terminology "reliability" as means for assessing the quality of qualitative research. A major concern of Guba and Lincoln for their uncomfortability on the use of the term was that the term suggests only a single absolute account of social reality as feasible. Instead, they embrace the use of the term credibility that stresses the multiple accounts of social reality. For them, it is the feasibility or credibility account that a researcher arrives at which determines the acceptability by others of the conclusion drawn from a research study. In other words, credibility increases transparency so that other people can judge for themselves whether the conclusions drawn about the research findings is credible or not. In my case, one way of increasing reliability or for that matter the credibility in this study was the use of multiple methods. The use of triangulation as means for enhancing credibility on the research findings has been well documented. According to Bryman (2008), triangulation involves the use of various data collection techniques such as interviews, direct observation, field notes and documents as sources of information that are meant to increase the credibility/reliability of research findings. In other words triangulation is application and combination of more than one research perspective in the study of the same phenomenon. Obtaining information from more than one informant can also create a triangulation of perspectives that helps clarify issues better than they given one person. The assumption underlying the use of multiple methods or informants is that the use of different methods or informants provides additional sources of valuable insight that cannot be gained from the use of one method or informant. It also minimizes the inadequacies of getting information from a single source. Two or more sources complement and verify one another and thus reduce the impact of bias. In choosing to study about promotion of democracy in primary schools, I was well aware of what challenges the nature of the topic of my study would pose in regards to the issue of credibility/reliability. Therefore, in enhancing credibility/reliability in this study, I did my best to avoid leading questions that could have influenced answers given by the informants. I also used local language<sup>5</sup> which many of my informants understand well to seek for more clarification and probing of more elaborate and unambiguous answers to the research questions.

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<sup>5</sup> For more details see section 2.3.2

Bryman (2008) argues that credibility of research findings can also be enhanced by making sure that research is carried out according to observed rules/regulations, good practices and sending back the findings to the respondents that have participated in the study to seek their corroboration on the findings. It can be recalled that in this study, strict ethical norms for conducting research has been well observed. I also made sure that the raw data collected in the form of audio tape recordings or transcripts of conversation were jealously guarded against any tempering by other persons. All these attempts were made to ensure the safety and credibility of the data. Furthermore, I promised to send back the findings to the schools and ministry that have participated in this study.

## **2.7 Validity**

Alongside the issues of reliability, qualitative researchers give attention to the validity of their inferences drawn from the findings. It is apparent in qualitative research, particularly in observational studies, that the researcher himself can be regarded as a research instrument. Since there is an inescapable fact that purely objective observation is not possible in social science research studies, then, how can a reader of a research report judge for herself/himself the credibility of the observer's account? Huberman and Miles (2002) explain that within the last few years, the issue of validity in qualitative research has come to the fore and all field work done by a single field-worker has been subjected to the question, why should it be believed? Validity is the degree to which the findings of a research study is interpreted in a correct way (Patton, 2002). That is, it is the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion (Kvale, 1996). The purpose of qualitative research study is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participants' eyes. Therefore, in order to ensure the validity of the interpretation of the findings of this study, I did my best to be true and honest in avoiding giving exaggerated or distorted account of what the participants have said during the interview conducted in English language. In doing so, the accounts of what the participants have said were audio taped and transcribed in such a way that their original versions of statements or words were not in any other form modified. Robson (2002) argues that one of the requirements of qualitative research is to provide a valid interpretation. This, therefore, calls on a researcher not to impose on his own term a framework of meaning on what has been said or happening

during a field trip. In the contrary, s/he should allow meaning to emerge from what has been learned during her/his involvement with the social setting of the case being studied. Asking relevant questions is another way of enhancing validity in qualitative study (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, before embarking on my fieldwork trip I made sure that I read extensively to acquaint myself with important issues on the research topic so that I could ask relevant questions and probe as well appropriately the informants for answers on issues at hand in an unbiased manner.

## **2.8 Ethical Issues and Practical considerations**

Research ethics has been invoked to address the role of values in research study processes. Regarding ethics as a topical issue of concern on research studies, the National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) of the Norwegian Government maintains that:

... [I]t is illegal to subject research subjects to harm or suffering. Researchers who perform research that an administrative agency has supported, approved, or provided confidential information for, are ... bound by confidentiality if they gain any information about informants private lives ... [I]n many cases, there will be a legal requirement or consent on the part of those who actively participate in a research project ... [T]his is ... an important ethical consideration (NESH, 2006:7).

In an attempt to ensure the non-violation of the ethical principles governing the conduct of the research study while in the field, I decided that I should act in a manner that does not cause harm in whatever form to any of my respondents. Invariably connected to the issue of cause of harm to participants are ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity of the participants. Bryman (2008) maintains that a social researcher should try to minimize disturbance both to the subjects and to their environment. Therefore, on arrival at the sites of the fieldwork, the immediate and first thing that I did was to seek permission verbally from the PED for me to carry out research. After the permission was granted, I was then given a letter of introduction by the PED to take to schools which were supposedly to be involved in the study. During introduction to the head-teachers of the schools, I and the PED made clear verbally to them the concerns of informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of the anonymity of the respondents. That is, teachers as well as the pupils during the data collection process would be addressed those concerns and that I (the researcher) would commit myself to adhere strictly to

observing them as well. In the following sections, details on issues of participants' informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity will be discussed.

### **2.8.1 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The issue of cause of harm to participant in this study has been addressed by informing all the participants that whatever has been discussed during interview would be kept confidential and their identities kept anonymous too. Hence, in this study, protecting the identity of the participants involved the use of pseudonymous titles, names or symbols for both the schools and the informants. In fact, the names of places and/or titles of persons mentioned in this research study may or may not be true identities of the places and/or names/titles of the persons. And also who said what and where during the interview was characteristically made not identifiable purposely for keeping the information confidential. That is to say, the informants introduced themselves before the tape-recorder was switch on and all the transcribed materials were closely guarded and kept in a secure location. Moreover, the informants were asked beforehand if they would like to be interviewed in any location of their choice. An empty private room had been secured through discussion with the head-teacher of respective schools as a venue for the interview. However, some informants chose rather to be interviewed under trees in the open air due to hot weather at the time I was conducting the interview.

### **2.8.2 Informed consent**

Patton (2002) posits that one of the requirements for the proper protection of human subjects during a research study is an issue of an informed consent. For him, informed consent implies that participants should understand both the risks and benefits of being involved in a research study and choose own their accord to either participate in the study or not. Bryman (2008) also added that prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed for them to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study. He also said that the principle of informed consent demands that it is not enough to let people know they are being asked to participate for interview in a research study and they should be fully informed about the research process and its requirements. For this study, informed consent was sought from all respondents and it was made clear to them that what this research is all about and their participation in the study was purely voluntary and thus they can choose to decide to participate in the study or not. They were also told that they are free and have the right to refuse to answer any questions that they deemed could delve into their privacy. In regard to

seeking the consent to interview the pupils, I discussed with the head-teachers of the respective schools who I should seek approval from for interviewing the pupils, they (the teachers) or the parents of the pupils. In the discussion, the head-teachers have assured me that most of the children were overaged and old enough to sensibly consent to speak for themselves. As a result of this discussion, there was no need for me to seek parents' approval to interview the pupils. In that aspect, my study has complied with the guidelines of research ethics given by NESH (2006). Furthermore, seeking the approval of the education authorities in South Sudan for me to conduct research was another way my study had complied with the guidelines of the research ethics.

## **2. 9 Limitations of the Study**

This study is designed to contribute to an understanding of how primary schools can promote the practices of democracy in South Sudan. Limitation of this study has been summarized in the following areas. Since one of the objectives of qualitative research is not to generalize but rather to offer analysis from the researcher's own perspective of the interpretation of the data at hand, therefore, this study is not exhaustive and can not be generalised to a larger or similar context in South Sudan. This is because the study focused on the practices of democracy in three primary schools. It must be remembered that democracy as a type of government is only one component of the various type of leadership styles for governance. Different schools can decide either to adopt only one type of leadership style for governance which in this case can be democracy or they can adopt a mixture of different type of governance styles. Each of these types of governance or a mixture of them could have different impact on participation in democracy for the the day to day smooth running of the schools.

Second, in conducting a study when both the researcher and many of the informants do not have a common language as medium of communication (either Arabic language or English) as their mother tongue, then it becomes obvious that language poses a problem to access information. In spite of the fact that *Juba Arabic* is a commonly spoken language all over the South Sudan, still both the researcher and many of the informants lack proficiency and fluency in speaking this language to allow free flow of conversation that could have been afforded by the use of mother tongue as medium of communication known to both the researcher and the informants. Thus, English and Arabic being foreign languages were a limitation to describe and discuss issues at

hand as thoroughly as it would have been done in a language understandable in the researcher's own mother tongue and that of the informants.

Third, time constraint was also a limitation for this study. The study was conducted mainly in the months of July and August which was the period for the end of term examinations for the primary schools all over the South Sudan. Pupils and teachers were busy engaged in doing the examinations. Thus, it was difficult to interview more of them as alternative when it became apparent that some of them were having problem of language barrier as means for communication. In this chapter, I have given an account of the methodological issues of this research. Before moving on to the findings and analysis, an elaboration of the theoretical framework informing this study will be given.



## **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The main objective of pursuing this study has been to determine how primary schools can promote the practices of democracy. Theory involves constructing abstract interpretation that can be used to explain a wide variety of situations. Many times, researchers have been guided by knowledge of theories to be able to understand the complexity of human behaviours or actions. From the research point of view, without theoretical approach, it would be hard to know what one is looking for in the beginning of the study or when trying to interpret the results of the study because theoretical thinking responds to the problems posed by the study of the human social life (Giddens et al., 2007). In that regard, the assumption underlying my argument for this chapter is that forms of democratic governance at all levels of society positively contribute to peace, stability and development. As such, they must open up broader opportunities so that more citizens may be able to participate. One way to achieve this is through educating young people to gain more knowledge about democratic values (Green, 2008). This is in accordance with Coleman and Earley (2005) who maintain that cultural transmission is one aspect of school functions of passing values, knowledge and beliefs that represent the culture of a particular community or society. One such example is schooling which nurtures students into a particular religious tradition (McClelland, 1996, in Coleman & Earley, 2005). In many countries, the goal of the government to use education as means of preparing young people to understand their respective societies, how it works and to effectively contribute to their communities through handling societal issues cannot be refuted. Education is conceived as contributing to liberal emancipation by developing or nurturing in students the skills, aptitude and attitude that enable them to make choices and think for themselves. One assumption based on this argument is associated with the idea that education is most essentially about developing people's ability to reason and know themselves better so that they are able to decide for themselves what kind of persons they wish to become and what kind of live they would want to lead (Coleman & Earley, 2005; Freire, 1985). Based on this brief argument, I would like to discuss in this chapter the following theoretical concepts: democracy, citizen participation and socialization.

### **3.2 Towards Understanding the Concept of Democracy**

In the last few years, there has been a shift in global discourse towards greater recognition of the importance of democratic governments and institutions, including an explicit support for the

development of democracy and citizenship through education (UNDP, 2002). This recognition is based on the assumption that democracy puts emphasis on everyone with a stake in education to have the opportunity to participate in its governance. Besides, educational institutions are seen as being responsive to stakeholders' values and preferences (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Democratic values are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In this declaration, basic principles of democracy namely equality, freedom, participation and other subjects related to democracy were outlined as a universally recognized values common to all people everywhere regardless of cultural, political, social or economic differences (UN, 1948). This implies that democratic principles have inherent needs to protect and promote the fundamental human rights and freedom of individuals. Hence, it offers an opportunity for individuals to have specific inherent rights to participate in the management of public affairs including the right to vote for government officials in exchange for services. People everywhere want to be free to determine their destinies, express their views and participate in the decision-makings that can shape their lives and lead lives they value (UNDP, 2002).

Democracy may be a word familiar to most people, but it is a concept still misunderstood and misused when regimes of all kinds claim popular support by pinning democratic labels upon themselves (Beetham, 1999; Orwell 1957 in Oyugi et al., 1988). While most people may agree that democracy is the most familiar word connoting a political form of government, but when getting specific to what democracy requires and what kinds of school curricula will best promote it, much of that consensus will fade away (Green, 2008; Boadi, 2004; Salih, 2001). According to an online Encarta dictionary, democracy is defined as government by the people where supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free and fair election. Elections are an integral ingredient of democracy. Elections are generally accepted as key and basic mechanism for democratic participation. Nonetheless, other possible ways do exist for citizens to play active role for their engagement in democracy. The aspects of citizen participation in democracy may comprise but not limited to the following forms of participation: joining a political organization; standing for an office; staying informed about currency issues in parliament and other legislatures; being informed about government policies, programmes and budgets; engaging in public discourse through media such as news paper; participating in civil society organizations like youth organization, women group, school

governing bodies and human rights advocacy group. It is to be remembered here that earlier on in chapter one it was argued that human right is a value basis for democracy. Nonetheless, as I have just highlighted here, different ways in which citizens can participate in democracy is not only by voting but also as right activists through women group, youth and human rights advocacy. There are times human rights become abused not because people may be ignorant of its knowledge or may be not ignorant about it. In a time when human rights are being abused, human rights advocacy groups act as a kind of watch dogs or whistle blowers to check or point out what is going wrong or right about human rights. The point being that democracy is a process which steadily increases democratic aspects of conduct of everyday life process. According to the online Encarta dictionary, democracy is like the experience of life itself-always changing, sometimes turbulent and all the more valuable for having been tested in a time of adversity. Human rights advocacy group is needed due to the fact that democracy is not something fixed that you either have it or not. It is a process.

Commonly, it is through election that citizens can participate to decide by themselves how and by whom they should be governed (Held, 2006). Democracies fall into two basic categories, direct and representative. In a direct democracy, all citizens, without the intermediary of elected or appointed officials, can participate in making public decisions. Such a system is only practical with relatively small numbers of people, for example, in the classical ancient Athens democracy. Today, the most common form of democracy is representative democracy where citizens elect officials to make political decisions, formulate laws, and administer programs for the public good on their behalf. Representative democracy has been defended by many political theorists e.g. (Held, 2006; Dahl, 1998) as the most realistic option for modern democracies. Representation is defined as the process by which political power or influence which an entire citizenry or a part of it might have upon governmental actions (Beetham, 1999; Diamond, 2004). This political power or influence is exercised in decision making on behalf of the entire citizenry by a small number of elected officials (Grugel, 2002). The decisions thus made can have a binding effect upon the whole community being represented. Nevertheless, the ultimate power in a representative democracy remains in the main with the people themselves. The representative officials are chosen through periodical elections and they have to be accountable to the citizens in all their actions and decisions and also to stand the critical judgement of their performance by

the people who elected them. Thus, the power exercised by representatives is delegated, temporary and conditional (KAS, 2010).

As a political concept, democracy stipulates that every citizen has certain basic rights that the state cannot take away from them. These rights are enshrined in the international laws as well as in the national laws of most countries, for example, the laws related to the rights of freedom of religion, cultural practice or speech (UN, 1948). Thus, everyone is free to choose their own religion and worship in the way they see fit as long as those actions do not violate the individual rights of others. In democracy, majority rule is described as its important characteristic feature. However, in several countries, it is difficult to have one political party that has the majority of votes. Hence, a coalition government of political parties formed to rule jointly are quite common occurrence in democracy. It is noteworthy pointing out that a majority rule may not necessarily be democratic. Can a system be called fair and just when the minority groups are oppressed under the rule of the majority? According to Held (2006), without constitutional protection of the liberties, safety, rights and needs of the minority or marginalized groups from the democratic power of the majority, it is possible that the minority or marginalized groups could be oppressed by the tyranny of the majority rule (Held, 2006). Hence, the need for a majority rule be coupled with the guarantees of individual human rights that in turn should serve to protect the rights of minorities--whether ethnic, religious, or political, or simply the losers in the debate over a piece of controversial legislation issues of the government. KAS (2010) asserts that the protection of the rights of minorities does not depend on the goodwill of the majority and cannot be eliminated by the majority vote. They are protected since democratic laws and institutions protect the rights of all citizens. In that context, democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. In democracy, a government is only one element coexisting in a social fabric of the many and varied pluralistic institutions such as political parties and independent judicial institutions (Parekh, 2006; KAS, 2010).

The need to have an independent judiciary system is necessary for democracy. According to World Movement for Democracy (W.M.D., 2008), democracy must mean more than having legislatures that sit and simply endorse the wishes of the executives and perpetuate their personal interests. Democracy must also mean more than having judges sitting all decked up on a raised

bench but afraid to make decisions that upset the executives. Moreover, for democracy to work, a paradigm shift from forms of democracy to substance of it is necessary. It is here that a functioning and effective parliament must be created. It is here that a proper justice system, from policing to prisons and judiciary is critical. And it is here that legitimate spaces for independent media and civil society are to be provided. All these structures depend on sustainable and sensible constitutional and legal frameworks that have the people they serve at their core, rather than leaders and political elites. It must not be forgotten that democracy is about people. In the main, it is about shifting power from leaders to people themselves especially in the periods between elections (W.M.B., 2008).

Within each social institution, there is diversity since citizens are members of different religious, ethnic, occupational, familial and friendship groups (Gutmann, 1987). According to KAS (2010), the concept of pluralism is central to the practice of democracy in a diverse society. Allowing political pluralism means addressing human rights issues, managing dissent, and promoting positive relations between different groups. Pluralism acknowledges the differences of interests and considers it necessary that members of a diverse society accommodate each other by engaging in a meaningful negotiation. Through negotiation, it is assumed that members of different groups can achieve a common good which allows everyone to participate in power sharing and decision-making process. In pluralism, the most important values for democracy are mutual respect and tolerance for free interaction and peaceful coexistence among the different groups or individuals. Such values are an integral part of a functioning democracy because it enables all people with differing ideologies, opinions and values to freely connect to each other. This is crucial for my study because in most respects schools are diverse societies. Hence, mutual respect and tolerance are very important democratic values for different groups to co-exist and interact peacefully together.

According to Giddens et al. (2007), there is a direct connection between education and democratic values because in democratic societies, educational content and practices are geared towards the support and habits of advancing and maintaining the democratic governance of that society. Schools intend to provide not only ability to read and write but also provide social and political literacy skills for the vast majority of people. This may help them to stay informed

about societal and political issues through the use of, for example, news papers and books. Prah (2007) suggests that the transition from predominantly oral cultures (traditional mode of accessing information through story telling) to literate ones runs parallel to the shift from pre-modernity to modernity. One assumption underpinning his suggestion is that where the informed knowledge base of the citizenry is limited and challenged by illiteracy, civil society is unable to fully develop and participate in the issues of modern democratic institutions. In that aspect, he ascribes illiteracy as militating against the development of democracy by structurally excluding prospective learners in the educational, political and social issues. The questions remain: How can the vast majority of people be expected to understand socio-political and democratic issues when they cannot even basically read and write? How can citizens who cannot read and write be expected to access printed information in order to meaningfully engage in public debate and discourse for the purpose of holding their elected representative officials accountable as well as questioning them on decision making issues affecting the rest of the people? Literacy helps people overcome the challenges of inability to accessing necessary printed information and questioning the representative officials for the purpose of holding them accountable. Literacy is important for democracy since it can increase the flow of information as well as putting more people to access printed information for their engagement in public discourse and in particular when literacy is done in the language (s) known and spoken by the majority of the people (Prah, 2007).

It is in schools that many people get an opportunity to read and write. In the social aspect of it, schools enable students to freely organize clubs or students representative council where democratic practices can be experienced. For example, election of the student leadership representatives is one such empirical democratic experience which can encourage students' participation in democracy through voting as well as standing for election to function as a representative outside the sphere of the school. Therefore, in the context of school, students can use their rights and responsibilities in a democratic manner to be actively involved in making decisions that affect their life. It is important to note that this would not be possible if they do not learn the processes of getting involved in the conduct of democratic practices. As part of learning democratic practices, it may be possible for students to participate in school decision-making bodies such as the school governing bodies or the Parents and Teachers Association group

meetings to observe the workings of democratic processes in schools. By having some knowledge of how the democratic process works at school, it is assumed that pupils will be able to participate in the democratic process in the wider community of their respective localities outside the sphere of the schools. In my opinion, children need to learn the skills for questioning decision-making processes and to offer constructive criticism and alternatives as well. Democratic nations value free speech, tolerance and respect. These values can be acquired by pupils through socialization in schools with their fellow pupils as well as with teachers. Dialogue as a problem solving skill is also vital for the working of democracy. For peaceful co-existence in democracy, people need to understand that there are many viewpoints, solutions or perspectives that exist. Through upholding human right values, democracy aims to aid people work together through deliberation of issues to find amicable solutions. These are values I consider relevant for participation in democracy and also for my study. In the next section, I will discuss citizenship participation.

### **3.3 Citizenship Participation**

In this sub-section, the concept of citizenship and participation will be explored because of the special role schools can play in imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes about citizenship participation. Education is of vital and strategic importance in building people's capacity to participate in nation-building (Coleman & Earley, 2005; Green, 2008).

#### **3.3.1 Meaning of citizenship**

In its simplest meaning, citizenship is used to refer to the judicial status of being a citizen. Citizenship in this sense involves rights, duties and privileges of persons which are defined in laws, such as the right to vote and the responsibility to pay tax (Osler & Starkey, 2005). The inference drawn here about the concept of citizenship is that citizenship describes the relationship between individuals and state. The state protects the citizens through laws and provides services such as education, health care, transport infrastructures, and so forth. The citizens in return contribute to the state by being law abiding persons and becoming government employees (Held, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 2005). If citizens are to become genuinely law abiding persons and involved in public life and affairs, then schools is one such starting point of training them to do so. Schools like family institutions are social institutions where good social and emotional skills can be acquired to help young people make friendships, work in teams, solve problems, deal with conflict, respect each others' rights and value diversity. Thus, schools

develop in children the knowledge and experience needed for them to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities as citizens of their nations. It also prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of adult life to be able to work in democratic societies. It is to be noted here that in as much as the concept of citizenship is not specifically used in the subsequent discussion of the findings, I have used it here as backdrop knowledge in my understanding of what citizenship is and how it relates to democracy.

Citizenship may also refer to a feeling of belonging to a community of citizens (Osler & Starkey, 2005). According to Katz et al. (2008), democracy has been written as a history of continuous quest for inclusion. “Social movements such as the women’s movement and the labour movement have mobilized around demands for the oppressed and marginalized people to be included as full and equal citizens” (Katz et al., 2008:10). It is my argument that although democratic states aspire to treat all citizens alike on the basis of equality, some individuals or groups can nevertheless have difficulties in accessing public services, for example, education services. If that happens, then, individuals are likely to feel excluded from accessing the public services. Equality and fair treatment of citizens for equal chances to access education and government services are perceived to be features of democratic governments. If citizens are denied access to the full range of rights to government services that are supposed to be available for all, it will be likely that they would be aggrieved. If that happens, there are chances that conflicts and/or tensions would arise (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Let us not forget that democracy is about unity through inclusion of everyone as exclusion of any section of the population would prove to be divisive. It is also important to note that in democracy, citizens are concerned about the welfare of others, care about the rights of others not being discriminated against in terms of access to government services and above all their identity, the feeling of belonging to a particular community or nation as capable of influencing or contributing towards decision making in that community or nation.

### **3.3.2 Decentralization as Facilitating Participation**

Coleman and Earley (2005) maintain that one of the main feature of political decentralization is to give citizens or their elected representatives more power in public decision-making and to support democratization process by giving citizens or their elected representatives more influence in the formulation and implementation of policies. It is argued that through political



decentralization, government can be brought closer to the people. Thus, empowering them to be capable of holding elected officials more accountable for the successes and failures in the provision of basic government services, maintenance of order, and the fair resolution of local issues and disputes (Diamond, 2004). Decentralization comes in a variety of forms such as political, administrative or fiscal decentralization, deconcentration and devolution (FAO, 2004). In the deconcentration form of decentralization, the central government disperses a number of its functions such as planning and finance from the centre to regional branch offices while still retaining overall control. Deconcentration is primarily an administrative arrangement with the decision-making authority still residing with the central government. In devolution, the central government transfers certain powers and responsibilities to lower levels of government. It is the later form of decentralization which has some aspect of real transfer of power in bringing government closer to the people and capable of increasing transparency and accountability.

In a world where most governments have experienced the pitfalls of centralized service provision such as opaque decision-making, administrative and fiscal inefficiency and poor quality and access to services, the theoretical advantages of decentralization have become extremely appealing (FAO, 2004). In general, the process of decentralization is viewed useful for improving efficiency, transparency, accountability and responsiveness of service provision as opposed to centralized systems of government. Decentralization is an essential part of governing where member of local governments have an active and important role to play. From the policy perspective, decentralization should improve the planning and delivery of public services by incorporating local needs and conditions while at the same time meeting regional and national objectives (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Decentralization has two principal components: participation and accountability. Participation is chiefly concerned with increasing the role of citizens in choosing their local leaders and in telling those leaders what to do—in other words, providing inputs into local governance. Accountability constitutes the other side of the process; it is the degree to which local government officials have to explain or justify the question of what, how and why things have been done or failed to have been done in a certain way. Improved information about local needs and preferences is one of the theoretical advantages of decentralization, although there is no guarantee that leaders will actually act on these preferences unless they feel some sort of accountability to citizens (FAO, 2004). Elections (provided they are

free and fair) can provide the most obvious form of accountability. Election, although exercised only once at widespread intervals, offers a broad citizen control over government. Through election voters can retain or reject their governors, a decision that can certainly have useful effects on governance although it may not be a specific method to correct particular acts or omissions by the elected government officials. This is important for my study because in the context of school, it is possible that members of the school board can be held accountable for their policies by the voters. Gutmann (1987) argues that in schools the line of accountability is very short. Thus, enabling voters to have easy access to information about the school board policies and how the school is run on the basis of those policies. In that sense, the elected officials who set policies or standards for the operation of the schools and at the same time oversee its implementation are directly held accountable to the electorate for the perceived shortcomings of these policies.

### **3.3.3 Models of participation in school governance**

UNESCO (1999) identifies three models of decentralization of governance which can be used for analyzing participation in the governance of educational institutions. The three models of governance proposed are political legitimacy; professional expertise and market efficiency. For the purpose of this study, I will only discuss political legitimacy and professional expertise as forms of participation in the governance of educational institutions. The discussion that follows defines each position with respect to social actors and their participation in decision making.

Political legitimacy holds a view that governance of education is by persons who have been selected through a political process to which groups in the society can express their preferences. This model of school governance is based on the premise that even persons who are not education professionals can govern schools effectively. In this model of governance, a view commonly held is that authority is inherent in the position itself, not in special attributes of the occupant of the position. This position also stipulates that action is right or correct because the authority takes them, not because authority agrees with expert knowledge (UNESCO, 1999; Whitty & Seddon, 1994; Coleman & Early, 2005). According to Perris (1998), suggestion for decentralization encouraged by a concern for political legitimacy are calls for democracy which demands that schools or education systems be governed by communities (locals, regional, national) or by their elected representatives. Perris also maintained that by extending educational

authority from the centre to the periphery, the communities are presented with the opportunity of capacity building in matters of school governance. Hence, through this model of governance, it is envisaged that the community can acquire, through apprenticeship, the capacity to govern by learning how to set policies, manage properties, personnel, finances and curriculum as well as creating good learning environment for the pupils. A recent educational reform in Australia and New Zealand indicates that in this system of school governance, elected community members have a final authority for decisions of all aspects of education, including curriculum except instructional practices (Perris, 1998).

However, it is important to note that not all forms decentralization can result in greater political democracy. It is argued that shifting authority from ministries to districts or even to schools can increase the participation of principals or teachers in decision making without increasing the participation of the community members. According to Rugh and Bosert (1998), success of school-based management in a political legitimacy model of school governance system depends on the ability of school administrators (at district and school levels) to maintain the involvement of community in decision making. They argue that many communities are heterogeneous. If one community is able to dominate school board or council to the exclusion of other groups, school loses experiencing the practices of democracy.

The professional expertise model of governance assigns authority chiefly to those with expert technical knowledge who know about how best to operate the education system. In this model, the knowledge that is considered important for governance is about what to do and how to do it, rather than about the end to be pursued. According to UNESCO (1999), proponents of the professional expertise model of school governance have argued that teachers and educational leaders due to their expert knowledge and experiences can be responsible for learners' behaviours on moral and ethical principles. In that context, at school governance level, teachers and the school leadership are expected to conduct school governance in such a way as to advance democratic values and principles. This position of school governance also holds the view that community and especially parents' participation in the school governance can make an important contribution to the school administration. However, critics of this model of school governance argue that the kind of community participation sought is not in school governance or

management in proper. They argue that the contribution sought from parental participation in the school activities is mainly support by the community for what the school (that is the teachers, principal) is attempting to do. This support from the community is expected to take place in forms of labour such as cleaning in the school, securing materials for construction or maintenance of school buildings, fund raising, ensuring that students do their homework and attend schools regularly as well as monitoring teachers' attendance. In that regard, Rugh and Bossert (1998) report that professional educators may encourage the formation of the parent teacher organizations only to support decision of the professionals with very little influence on what the principal and teachers might have already decided on. Hence, in this model of governance, control of critical decision making rests in the hands of the professional while parents participation are restricted to less important matters in the school. Nevertheless, Govinda (1997, cited in UNESCO, 1999) argues in favour of the possibility of the non professional and experts (uneducated parents) to be jointly involved in decision making since the presence of the professional expert can aid the capacity building process of the parents in the matters of school governance.

The professional expertise position is the most common way of thinking about school governance. Almost everywhere, education is seen as an activity best left to the professionals. That is, persons with special training, skills and knowledge (UNESCO, 1999). According to Murphy and Beck (1995, cited in UNESCO, 1999), within the professional expertise position, authority is transferred to the smallest units in the education systems which are the schools. In this case, it is referred to as the school-based management (SBM). Here authority can be transferred solely to the principals, called administrative control. They argue that teachers attitude to school based management depend on how it will affect their participation. On one hand if teachers believe SBM increase the power of the principal, they may resist the power of the principal. On the other hand, SBM has been regarded by some teachers as a means to ensure their participation in decision making (Murphy & Beck 1995, cited in UNESCO, 1999). It is argued that in SBM, although authority is shared with community members (parents, employers, teachers unions, student councils, political associations, and religious associations), but in most cases it ends up with experts making all important decisions. This is mostly seen as the responsibility of the principal (Govinda, 1997, in UNESCO, 1999). In SBM, there are a number of reasons why power is concentrated in the hands of the principal. Among them are teachers

growing tired of the extra burden of participation in decision making and external stakeholders (higher levels of expert authority) seeking a single person (the principal) to hold accountable makes it possible for central government taking control away from parents and teachers and give it to the principal (Hanson, 1995, in UNESCO, 1999).

### **3.4 Socialization for Accommodating Diversity in Democracy**

Diversity describes a wide range of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious variation that exists within and across groups that live in a multicultural nation-state (Parekh, 2006). Governance of cultural diversity is part and parcel of contemporary politics in both domestic and international aspects. According to Gabor (2003), accommodating increased cultural diversity by balancing the recognition of differences with the promotion of equal participation in the common public sphere is a task that political actors shall not run away from in the contemporary world. Gabor explains that diversity is the very substance of both nature and culture. It is an inherent attribute of life, which the new generations must maintain and improve on. Furthermore, diversity of ability and talent derived from diversity of differences is part of the human condition that any society should seek to value and take advantage of through human development policies. A close look at the labour market indicates that the workforce of the twenty-first century is becoming more and more diverse in terms of factors such as race and ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation and political and religious beliefs. Therefore, with the growing diversity of workforce in ethnical and cultural terms, diversity is increasingly being acknowledged in politics as well (Gorman, 2000, in Gabor, 2003). According to Gorman (2000), institutions known for successfully promoting cultural diversity would attract and absorb the best and brightest minority and female candidates while those institutions that do not develop sound diversity practices now and do not learn how to deal effectively with it would find themselves dragged down with internal conflict in the future. Gorman further explains that the amount of time they will spend on internal conflicts at that time will surely deflect key management energies from focusing on their external competitive issues. From this argument, it is clear that diversity can no longer be seen as a choice but a requisite for any successful government strategy to sustain and improve both the political and economic performances and the changing expectations/aspirations of its society. Therefore, developing the ability to interact productively in a multicultural context is not an intuitive act. It must be acquired or learned. In that respect, Gabor (2003) reports that the Council of Europe and its member countries have called upon

education to support effectively the achievement of the basic values of human rights, pluralist democracy, and the rule of law. His emphasis is that in a world characterized by diversity and complexity, people have to be prepared to live together. For him, any education system that neglects the education of its people to live in an ethnically and culturally diverse society and in a socially and technically complex world fails to do its task, not only in moral or political form, but also in practical terms. Hence, with an increasing number of people living and working in multiethnic and multicultural environments, intercultural skills become indispensable life-skills for individuals. Gabor (2003) further argues that living in cities with the increasingly heterogeneous populations, doing daily business with culturally different people and seeking friends within and across borders has become an unavoidable everyday experience in the contemporary world. Therefore, education that espouses the value of diversity and complexity would be seen as not only fulfilling a moral obligation stemming from its commitment to peace, human rights and democracy, but also as a practical necessity resulting from concrete social demands.

According to Giddens et al. (2007), socialization of children is the process whereby they are able to learn the ways of their adults. In this process, values, norms and social practices in a society are perpetuated. That is, socialization is the process of preparing individuals for the roles they are to play in their society. Socialization of individuals is aimed at providing them with the necessary repertoire of habits, beliefs, values and knowledge for functioning well in that society. In the socialization process, Giddens et al. (2007) explain that by role playing others, children can achieve an understanding of themselves as separate agents as well as seeing themselves through the eyes of others. In so doing, they learn to grasp the general values and moral rules of the culture in which they are developing in order to be able to interact with each other.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) report two phases of socialization, namely the primary socialization and the secondary socialization. They describe primary socialization as the phase at which in the early childhood, children learn languages and basic behavioural patterns that form the foundation for later learning. In fact, in this definition, it can be seen that primary socialization is where newly born babies receive from the family members and other immediate significant others in their environment some teachings and values. As a result of this teaching, children learn about gender-roles and their social roles in the wider communities. According to

Agbeko (2007), in the African traditional societies, boys are taught gender roles of being breadwinners of the families and brave fighters while girls are taught to be caring. This is in line with Gyekye (1997) who asserts that home education in Africa addresses among other things, the cultural responsibilities of the family members in the society. In South Sudan, Buk (2008) also points out that like many other tribes in the country, Dinka tribe has a patriarchal culture. Buk argues that irrespective of the differences in the male and female initiation rites among the Dinka community, one noticeable thing about socializing boys and girls into adulthood is that boys and girls are educated into adulthood responsibilities by their respective gender elders. In other words, men mentor boys and women mentor girls on socio-cultural expectations of manhood and womanhood respectively in the Dinka culture. He also says that in a typical Dinka culture, socializing girls into the management of household chores such as cooking and baby sitting is one means of preparing them for motherhood. According to him, preparing girls for motherhood is a very important responsibility of the family with economic benefits. This is because getting married and having children is a cultural expectation of any members of the Dinka tribe since having many children means more manpower in the family particularly in the days of cattle raiding. Consequently, among the Dinka community, women are viewed as God's deputies, in the sense that life of any human being starts in the womb of a woman. On the contrary, boys are socialized into adulthood by managing agricultural activities such as preparing land for cultivation by clearing off shrubs and tree stumps as well as being prepared into bravery activities of defending cattle raiding from potential enemies.

In South Sudan, there are people from different ethnic, cultures, languages, and religions living side by side with each other within a common border. Due to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) during the war time and even after the CPA was signed in 2005, the issue of ethnic diversity in South Sudan became more salient than before because people had to find ways of not only dealing with a next door neighbour whose language you cannot speak and whose culture is totally different from that of your own but also the way children from very different tribes have to learn to intermingle with each other in the same school environments regardless of their gender, religious, language, or tribal background. To any South Sudanese, tribal intolerance among some of the tribes in South Sudan is quite common. Owing to the fact that many of the tribes in South Sudan are pastoralists, it is common to find tribal clashes between cattle owning

tribes due to cattle raiding or over grazing land space between the pastoral tribes and farming tribes. Therefore, among the Sudanese cattle owning tribes, it is possible that through primary socialization, children are socialized into brave fighters or bellicose attitude/behaviour for the purpose of defending their cattle from cattle raiding tribes. As a result of this, tension may develop among them due to the attitude of seeing other pastoral tribes as potential enemies. Dong (1995) describes ethnocentrism as a lack of acceptance of cultural diversity and intolerance for out-groups (the “other”, the “not us” group). He argues that this lack of acceptance of cultural diversity has a strong tendency to lead to negative stereotypes toward other ethnic groups and negative prejudice and behaviours against these group members. However, when children regardless of their tribal origin meet in school, they can discover that they are all coming from different cultural, ethnic, religious, or gender background. But, how can these children cope with each other in school?

According to Reynolds and Miller (2003), during the early childhood years, family is essentially the major socialization source for a child. The transition from home to school marks a critical socialization period for all children and perhaps more so for culturally and linguistically diverse children whose ways and languages are different from those of the mainstream. They further argue that families from different ethnic backgrounds may have different values, goals, and practices concerning what they consider as important early child experience. The variations of what is considered to be important early child experience can reflect differences of cultural belief systems of different ethnic groups about the status /role of children in the society and the perception of how children should learn. In addition to that Darnell and Hoem (1996) emphasize that when the cultural climate at home differs markedly from that of school and the society at large, the child will be caught in the middle of the home-school value conflict. What Darnell and Hoem are stressing here is that if at home through primary socialization, a child from one tribe has been socialized to be having a very bad attitude towards other tribe, then, what happens in school is that this child is faced with the value conflict of peaceful co-existence and at the same time having that mind set of negative attitude towards the other tribe. According to Banks (2004), an education that relates to instruction or teaching designed for the cultures of many different races in an educational system with an approach of teaching/learning based on consensus building, respect and fostering of cultural pluralism within a multicultural society is



very important. For him, multicultural education suits the purpose because it aims at educating children to be able to function well in a multicultural society. For Hogg and Vaughan (2005), one central feature of prejudice and conflict is the existence of unfavourable stereotypical out-group attitudes due to social ideologies and which are further maintained by lack of access to information that may help improve negative attitudes. It is in schools that secondary socialization takes care of accommodating diversity. By teaching children about moral implications of discrimination or facts concerning different groups, schools can most likely be seen as agents promoting tolerance of diversity. According to Giddens et al. (2007), secondary socialization takes place later in childhood and into maturity. In this secondary socialization phase, agents of socialization such as educators and peers in schools become socializing forces in the lives of individuals and take over some of the social responsibilities of the family. Interactions in the secondary socialization context help people learn the values, norms and beliefs that make up the pattern of their culture. Banks (2004) points out that teachers are important agents of socialisation as role models because of their special teaching positions in the schools' learning environment. As a result of their special teaching functions, teachers can apply content integration in classroom lessons relating to prejudice reduction by targeting lesson activities in helping students develop positive attitudes towards one another. It is to be noted here that research studies indicate that lessons, units and teaching materials that include content about different racial or ethnic groups can help students develop more positive intergroup attitudes (Banks, 2004). In addition to that, Hogg and Vaughan (2005) suggest that *contact hypothesis* provides useful guidelines for helping students develop attitudes and actions that are more positive in contact situations. They stated that contact between different groups help improve intergroup relations where students become acquainted with each other and establish cooperation rather than competition among them. In that context, schools socialize children in realizing the importance of peaceful co-existence and respecting each other regardless of cultural difference. Hence, I argue here that school is not only a place in which children socialise and interact with one another to peacefully co-exist, learn values, norms and beliefs but it is also the place where all the children are to be treated and given equal opportunities to participate in the school activities without discrimination, regardless of their religious, gender and ethnic origin. In doing so, schools could be seen as socializing children to be accommodating diversity by giving every school child equal opportunity to participate in the school activities without discrimination

regardless of gender, religious or ethnic background. These values of equal opportunity for all and non-discrimination of individuals are democratic values that are important for schools to promote. According to Parekh (2006), there are tensions within a democratic multicultural society that confront its citizens for a peaceful co-existence. First, there is a need for the citizens to devise a political structure that will foster stronger sense of unity and common belongings among them in order to enforce collective binding decisions and to regulate and resolve conflicts. Second, there is greater need for strong unity and cohesion required to hold together and nurture a diverse society because of the greater and deeper diversity in a multicultural society. Also, there is a common belief that a weakly held society feels threatened by differences and lacks the confidence and willingness to live with these differences. So, for that reason a multicultural society cannot ignore the demands of diversity since they are part of society which has to be accommodated by democracy. Parekh (2006) also maintains that human beings are attached to and shaped by their culture where their self-respect is closely bound up with respect for it. As a result of that Parekh argues that respect of other people's culture earns their loyalty and gives them the confidence and courage to interact with other cultures. In my mind, this is good for democracy and for my study as well.

## **Chapter Four: The Research Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I am presenting findings and discussion in an attempt to explain how democracy is promoted and practised by the primary schools in South Sudan. Discussion of findings of the data and its analysis are simultaneously done together here in this chapter. The discussion and analysis of the findings have been organized under three main themes. These are understanding democracy, citizen participation and socialization into democracy.

### **4.2 Understanding of democracy**

The controversy surrounding the definition of democracy has made it not a simple concept that can be easily or clearly defined in a single word or sentence. Democracy means different things to different people although there are basic principles, practices and values associated with its meaning (Held, 2006; Orwell, 1957, in Oyugi et al., 1988). In that context, in this section, I will discuss pupils and teachers understanding of democracy.

#### **4.2.1 Pupils' Perspectives**

In an attempt to determine pupils' understanding of democracy, I established a dialogue with them. Consequently, responses were elicited on the meaning of democracy from this interaction. The findings of this study has shown that many pupils conceived of democracy as a form of government in which there is choosing and replacement of government officials through free and fair elections to govern community. For example, in the following statement below this is how one respondent understood democracy:

Democracy, the way I am hearing about democracy and my understanding about it is as if it means a government..In that type of government there will be election, LC (Local Council) I, LC II, LC V...selected to control the community (male pupil -S1).

Here, the pupil associated the meaning of democracy with the election of the local government officials at the lowest level of government called the local council in their community. A similar concept of democracy was also given by a pupil in school S3 as: "In democracy, there is election and voting (male pupil, S3)"

Also another pupil understood democracy as a form of government in which there is participation of citizens.

I don't know what is called democracy, but I am hearing people are talking about democracy. Democracy, the way I understand it is how leaders stay with people through participation (female pupil, S3)

The definitions given on the meaning of democracy by some other pupils were similar to those ones outlined above. I consider two things “*control*” and “*participation*” at least eye-catching in the definitions given by the pupils in regard to their understanding of democracy. My understanding is that pupils view democracy as a form of government in which a leader plays a pivotal role in making key decisions. In that regard, their view of leaders of the democratic government is typical of what Senge (2009) describes as the traditional view of leadership. At the centre of the traditional view of leadership is the leaders assumption of people's powerlessness, their lack of vision and inability to manage problem which can only be fixed by a great leader who knows it all (Senge, 2009). In that context, my opinion is that the pupils' view of democracy contrasts sharply with most scholars' understanding of democracy in modern age. In other words, their understanding of democracy does not reflect on democracy as a form government in which power belongs to the people (Held, 2006; Oyugi et al., 1988). However, their knowledge of the concepts of participation and elections gives somebody an impression that they have some basic knowledge in their understanding of democracy in modern terms.

In trying to explore further pupils' understanding of democracy, there were some indications that most of them expressed lack of understanding of the concept. However, their understanding of the concept of democracy is associated with terms such as election or voting and referendum. During an interview one pupil, was asked the following questions:

Interviewer- Did you hear anything about democracy?

Interviewee- No, I did not hear anything about it.

Interviewer- What about election? Did you hear anything about it?

Interviewee- Yes, now we are in the process of preparing ourselves to vote in a referendum for the separation of the South from the North. In that election, we will vote for the South to be alone or we will continue to cooperate and remain united with the North (male pupil, S2).

In this dialogue although the pupil could not explicitly explain what he understood or heard about democracy, at least he has shown some knowledge in the concept of election as a means of decision making for an issue affecting the fate of South Sudan. In this case, the issue is referendum in which people can take part in deciding whether to vote for the South to break away from the North or it should remain united with the North as one country. Another pupil conceived of democracy in terms of the 2010 presidential election. This is how he describes election: "election is the selection of one person who can rule all over the Sudan and do good things like providing security for his people" (male pupil, S3)." Furthermore, pupils' understanding of democracy is about election that involves the voting of prefects into the office of the prefectural body to serve as students leaders as one pupil explains:

We are soon going to elect new prefects so that the current prefects are given chance to prepare for their primary leaving certificate examinations. A teacher has told us in the assembly that we should write application for the posts of prefect (male pupil, S1).

Many pupils expressed similar views about election as a means to participate in decision making through voting someone into an office to act on behalf of the rest of the people. One of the most basic elements of democracy is citizen participation in government. Citizen participation may take many forms including standing for election, voting in elections, becoming informed, debating issues, and so forth. In my view, pupils' concept of election is one means for people's participation in deciding by majority vote to choose a leader. In the aspect of prefectural election, pupils view election of prefects as an opportunity to select a school leader of their own choice who can represent their interest. This view was confirmed by one pupil as:

"We will not allow a teacher to choose for us a class prefect. If a teacher happens to choose a class prefect, that class prefect chosen by the teacher cannot be allowed to serve because the teacher does not know the character or the behaviour of the person he chooses better than we know ourselves (male pupil, S1)."

This to me is a democracy since democracy is a means of appointing a government through election by votes (Held, 2006; Beetham, 1999; Dahl, 1998). In their case, they are appointing members of a body of pupils' representative in an election to serve as student leaders. In democracy, people choose their own leaders by deciding in a free and fair election through voting those who can represent them in parliament as well as in different offices in the local,

regional and national governments. In other words, government is based on the consent of the governed. Nevertheless, one may suggest whether it is necessary for all the governed to agree on any government voted into an office. I guess not. In a democracy, legitimacy of a government is at least based on the majority votes but not necessarily based on the consent of all the governed (Held, 2006; Diamond et al., 1988). However, what is important in a democracy is that a system in form of legislation or constitution needs to be in place to protect the rights of the minority. Democracy has often been associated with a multiparty system where there are always problems because somebody somewhere in another party has voted for a candidate of a party that did not win in the election. Then, how is this elected democratic government legitimate for this person? For example, it can as well be asked “how is the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) legitimate for those who voted for unity with NCP in a referendum despite the fact that they themselves are the Southern Sudanese citizens?” Now here comes the problem of multiparty systems in a democracy. People who are not members of the same tribe or political party that has won an election can fear that they will be subject to oppression, marginalization and neglect. This is the first thing in democracy that should be taken account of through legislation whereby the rights of the minorities (minorities not necessarily of not belonging to a tribe, religion, or party in power but minority in the sense of simply voting for a party that did not win in an election) need to be protected. In multiparty system democracy when an election is carried out, it is possible that the outcome of the election is such that certain candidates preferred by some people to win in that election did not win. But, how can these people whose preferred candidate failed to win in the election still see the election as free and fare as well as a legitimate means of putting in place a government? Regardless of whoever or what party has won in an election, what is important for democracy is not what people can say “this is a democratic way of doing things because a majority wanted it this way or that way.” It may be true that a candidate with most votes can win election, but that is not enough for the election process to be called a democracy. What is important is that the rights of the minority (whoever they are, whether women, children, or any other person who voted for a party that did not win) ought to be protected.

Based on the above argument, it can be deduced that voting in elections is an important civic duty of all citizens. Through voting, people can participate in an election to authorize others to act and serve on their behalf as their trustees although not all who participate in an election have

their preferred candidate elected as explained above. According to Beetham (1999), democracy is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power by means of a competitive struggle for people's vote in an election. Hence, being voted into an office gives the elected officials the chance to decide on behalf of the rest of the people. In that sense, through periodical election, people can continuously authorize the use of political power in their name by elected representative government officials and/or institutions that can still remain accountable to people themselves. Should elected officials not perform to the will and expectations of the people, then people have the power to remove them peacefully out of office through elections (Dahl, 1998). In that aspect, citizens need to be informed on public issues and current affairs for not only watching carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers in regards to the implementations of policies but also to express their opinions and interests. Based on that context of the above argument, my deduction is that pupils' understanding of democracy have adequately explained how in democracy power belongs to the people which power they can periodically use for the authorization of either placing elected officials into an office or peacefully unseating them from office when their tenure of office expires.

#### **4.2.2 Teacherss Perspectives**

The research finding has revealed that teachers have different perspectives on the concept of democracy. Some teachers see democracy as an institutional arrangement where those in power are held accountable to the people. Others conceive of it as a form of government where the majority rules. Still others understand democracy as a process of peaceful and periodical transfer of power in election from one group to another. The rest of the teachers I interviewed have similar views of their understanding of democracy as those outlined above that I am going to discuss below. One teacher explains democracy as a type of government where people have power in deciding what goes on in that government, either directly or indirectly through elected officials:

In our school here, the SMC and the PTA are the school governing body officials elected by the parents to get involved in decision making. For example, as part of democratic practices in this school, the PTA is very effective in a number of issues. In our school budget, we have a school development fund. When there is need to use the money in the school for the purchase of stationeries for administrative use, the school applies to the

PTA chairman to seek his approval towards the release of the amount of money requested. After his approval the treasurer releases the money and copies this to PTA chairperson, head teacher, and the treasurer himself as part of transparency and accountability (head teacher, S1).

In the above statement, the head teacher's concept of democracy is a matter of his school being held accountable to an elected school governing bodies such as the SMC and PTA. According to him, the SMC and the PTA have not only knowledge of financial transactions taking place in his school, but are also involved in decision making process about what goes on in the school. One of the principles of a democracy is that elected officials are to be held accountable to the people who elected them when making decisions or performing their duties to meet the expectations and demands of electorate. In my view, the fact that the head teacher seeks the consent and approval of the PTA in the school's financial transaction is a procedural requirement of the principles of accountability and transparency in democracy.

A head teacher of another school explains the meaning of democracy as:

Democracy is the will of the majority. For me, democracy is sometimes good and sometimes bad. Democracy is good because it is a way of changing government by peaceful means through voting. Another reason for democracy being good is that it does not allow people to use violence in a change of government. Democracy is bad because in it, the minorities are oppressed by the majority. If the majority wins the election, the minority will not have a voice (head teacher, S3).

In the above statement, the head teacher regards democracy as a form of government where the majority rules and there is peaceful transition of governments. His fear is that in democracy when the majority rules, the rights of the minority is not protected and respected by those in power. Another teacher in a different school refers to democracy as:

When you talk about democracy, in it you find the protection of human rights, participation of people in decision making, voting is also there, just name them...As I said before, democracy has a problem. Take the issue of human rights; in this school we have both children and teachers from different ethnic tribes. Just as individual students have rights of expression of their culture, the school as an institution has its own rules and objectives whereby each and every individual must follow or abide by. But if you claim that you have to follow your own cultural rights in this school, you will find yourself being directed by the school regulations to do this and that because the school needs people to behave in a certain good manner. Therefore, you must be required to do "A", "B" or "C" in this school in order not to fall a victim of the school rules. May be you can say, in my tribe, our culture allows me to walk naked and now I am in a school I have the right to walk naked. Let me tell you, the school regulations will say no, you have to put on clothes. And what kind of clothes you have to put on? This is the school



uniform. The school regulation says you must put on a pink shirt and a kaki short. Regardless of where you come from, you must follow these regulations. You know, the role of school is to educate. S/he came here to be educated and since there are so many ethnic groups in this school, so we cannot allow the practice of all cultural activities of every individuals from the different tribes available here (male teacher, S2)

In this statement, the teacher views democracy as a form of government in which there is protection of human rights and the responsibility of citizens to participate in the political life. He also notes that school is a place where children are taught values which include observing the rule of law. His emphasis is that school provides an environment of a heterogeneous society where pupils from different ethnic groups can experience living and learning with others in a pluralistic community. Returning to the issue of protection of human rights this teacher has raised in his perception of democracy, he just mentions protection as an issue of human rights but then talks about different ethnic tribes and culture. He never returned to explain how different ethnic tribes and culture can impact on the issue of protection of human rights. In his explanation of how he understands democracy, it is not even clear whether his understanding of putting on school uniform violates human rights or not. There is nowhere in any of the human rights instruments anything that points to wearing of a school uniform as a violation of human rights. It is obvious that there are hierarchies of human rights. Of course access to education and rights to life is more important than the clothes one puts on. One can choose not to go to school and walk naked in the village but still there is no gross violation of human rights in doing so and if the school requires one to wear clothes as uniform, to me that is not a violation of human rights too. Hence, in his argument, this teacher exhibits a limited perspective on what human rights is all about compared to my understanding of human rights. In taking human rights as an example in his argument, indeed he is touching on an important issue when it comes to balancing respect for one's culture versus respect for participation in a larger society, which in this case is the school. He is indicating here that wearing a school uniform may to some extent violate cultural rights of some tribal group in the school, but still I do not find this as a problem of violating human rights. Indeed what he is saying here about culture is interesting because he sees respect of culture as an important part of protection of human rights. However, wearing a school uniform is no violation of a tribe's human rights (in this case, the culture of a tribe).

Based on his statements, an inference which can be drawn here is that the teacher's perception of democracy is more of a method. It is about government, voting and the school as an institution

with democratic organs like the school administrations, prefects, parents and teachers associations as democratic instruments for maintaining law and order in the school. Whereas in my mind, democracy is more than that, it is about engagement in societal affairs and the kind of values a society needs to have for leading a daily life. Torres (1998) talks of democracy as a method and content. Democracy as a method is the structure for governing society where there is election, division of power, democratic systems, legislatures and parliament. Democracy as a content in education is a way of life. It is concerned with democratic values, how we lead our lives and what kind of virtues do we display in our everyday lives. Based on the discussion above, this study has revealed that both the pupils and the teachers have to a certain degree displayed knowledge about how democracy works as a governing method but how to live it in everyday life has not been explicitly exhibited in the explanation of their perception of democracy. Although this teacher mentions human rights in his perception of democracy, it looks as if his perspective of human rights is a kind of value basis but not about how knowledge of human rights should be practiced in everyday life. No wonder, after so many years of war without democracy and teachers with little background training on issues of democracy, it is not easy to expect informants to have clear understanding of the concept of democracy.

### **4.3 Citizenship and Participation**

This section focuses on the description of South Sudan education policies and its school practices in the perspective of the participation of stakeholders in primary school governance. Here stakeholders refer to elements such as the PTA/SMC, teachers and pupils.

#### **4.3.1 South Sudan Education Policies on the Democratic Governance of Primary Education Systems**

Democratic governance of schools is becoming an increasingly important issue as Government of South Sudan begins to realize how crucial it is to empower the stakeholders in the governance of any educational system. The Government of South Sudan believes that the more stakeholders are empowered and involved in decision making process about the education system, the more they can take joint responsibility for governing and managing their own schools in a democratically accountable and transparent manner. With the signing of the CPA in 2005, it was the policy of the Government of South Sudan to adopt legislation to facilitate not only the democratic formation of local governments, but also the democratic formation of the education

systems with the intention of bringing government in the hands of the local citizens. According to GoSS (2005), it was stated that:

Government of South Sudan shall establish a local Government Board ... to review the local government system in South Sudan and recommend the necessary policy guidelines and actions in accordance with the decentralization policy enshrined in the constitution...[Its] objective is to promote self-governance and enhance the participation of people and communities in maintaining law and order [for] promoting democratic, transparent and accountable local government (GoSS, 2005:70)

From the above statement it can be seen that bringing government in the hands of the people at the level of the local government is one objective of the policies of the Government of South Sudan for the democratization of forms of governments to be transparent and accountable in delivering services to its citizens. Education has been seen as being crucial and instrumental in achieving this. According to Uemura (1999), schools are institutions that can prepare children to contribute to the betterment of the society in which they operate, by equipping them with necessary skills important for their society. She argues that schools do operate within a society and since each group in a society plays different role in contributing to children's education, then there must be efforts to make a bridge between the different groups in order to maximize their contributions to the school. Hence, in its preamble of the South Sudan Education Act, one of the core strategies of the GoSS is to uphold a vision of democratic and decentralized government development through broad public participation of the stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education systems (SSEA, 2008). In schools, this policy was seen to envisage a decentralization approach of the democratization processes of the education systems where power would be transferred to lower levels in an attempt to include stakeholders in the governance of schools through SMC for the improvement of students' learning. In that context, there is a provision in the South Sudan Education Act that allows parents of students of a school to set up a Parents Association. The Act states that:

Parents and teachers shall, with the assistance of the County Education Authorities, and in accordance with the regulations made under the South Sudan Education Act, form associations to be known as Parent-Teacher-Associations at all primary schools... whose objectives shall include the promotion of the interests of the schools by bringing parents, members of the community, learners and teachers into close co-operation. (SSEA, 2008:54).

In this SSEA policy, the involvement of parents in a cooperative manner with teachers and learners for their participation in the school governance for the improvement of the quality of education is one way of practicing democracy. The PTA in a school is expected to work with the head-teacher, teachers and board of management commonly referred to as the SMC to build effective co-operation and partnership between home and school in delivering education services. The role of the PTA is set down in the Education Act as the promotion of the interests of the school through close cooperation of parents, members of the community, learners and teachers. Under this policy, the role of the PTA is to advise the head teacher on matters relating to schools' daily activities and adopting as well programmes of activities which will promote the involvement of parents in the operations of the school in consultation with the head teacher. In pursuance of this role, the school governing body in the form of PTA and SMCs in collaboration with the head teacher has been set the following specific functions to execute:

- Administer any funds the community may have mobilized or the school may have raised by way of fund raising;
- Organize parents' contributions;
- Administer the property of the school whether movable or immovable;
- Provide for the welfare and discipline of learners
- Plan and formulate guidelines for income generation activities for the benefit of the school (SSEA, 2008).

From the above listed functions of the SMC and PTA, it is clear that parents' involvement in the school governance and management structure is for the improvement of the quality of education. Their participation includes contribution of cash, labor, oversight responsibilities in the management of funds raised by the community, management of school properties and welfare/discipline of teachers and learners. Based on those listed functions of the SMC and PTA as part of their role in school management, it appears that the role of parents in those activities as described by the South Sudan education policy is more than parents acting as a resource for funds and other resource mobilization. According to Lopez (2003), besides training community members in the skills for mobilization in support of their schools, the community participation component in the school management structure also trains parents and other community members in gaining opportunities to exercise various leadership roles in the work of organizing

resources. According to her, the effort to conduct community meetings for fund raising, speaking in rallies for the fund raising, attending school events and planning for those events gives parents a unique chance to assume formal leadership roles on the organizing groups' committees and boards. Also attending school board meetings that involve parents, teachers and the school administration can provide parents the opportunity to access information on the activities of the schools, deliberate on issues as well as committing themselves to finding solutions to problems facing schools. In my view, this is an aspect of practicing democracy because democracy encourages people to be involved in decision making on issues that affect their lives. Moreover, the involvement of parents in the income generation, financial management and service provision from local levels of government in the schools are also aspects of democratic principles of accountability and decentralized participation which I tend to believe the education policy of South Sudan aims to achieve (UNESCO, 1999).

#### **4.3.2 Parents Involvement**

Here I will present the participation of the parents as part of their involvement in the primary school governance. The election of stakeholders as a key structural component of governance systems to ensure the involvement of parents in the governance and management of schools is one aspect of the democratic practices. My study has found out that parents representation in the school governing body in the form of SMC and/or PTA is an important component of their participation in school governance. One head-teacher explains how his school has democratically established SMC and PTA bodies through elections:

After a wide consultation was done with the relevant educational authorities both at the county and payam levels for the formation of SMC and PTA governing bodies in the school, a general meeting was called for the parents to elect members who would serve on the SMC and PTA to oversee the running of the school (Head teacher, S1).

Membership of parents in the SMC and PTA through election is seen as a democratic process which can give them a voice in the school governance. The involvement of community or in this case the parents as an authority in the governance of the schools was confirmed by a government officer in the ministry of education science and technology – GoSS as:

There is in the CPA and even in the interim constitution of the Government of South Sudan articles on the issues of decentralisation that obliged the ministry of education to

democratically decentralize power for the empowerment of the locals to participate fully in the management of the day to day governance of the primary schools. Education governance is at different levels. Governance of primary schools is upon the communities and we believe that the community, being represented by the PTA(s) and SMC(s), can participate in the governance of the schools. Our approach in school governance is participatory where the community can be heavily involved. In their participation, we expect the community to design school programmes. If they design the programmes, it will be their own and they will execute the plan. Coordination of opinions for school governance is also done at the Payam level by the community. This is because we believe the community members are the owners of the school (Government officer, MoEST).

The statement of the government officer reflects much on the GoSS education policies of engaging SMC and PTA as the community's democratic tool for the governance of primary schools. Although it is not clear in the education policy what specific roles the community may get involved in for the improvement of students' learning, but in my view, the formation of school management committees and parents teacher associations in school are tangible ways for parents' involvement the governance of the schools. Through SMC and PTA, parents do participate in the supervision and monitoring of teachers attendance and performance for the improvement of the quality of learning in the schools. This is in accordance with the South Sudan education policy which stipulates that one of the aims for parents' participation through the SMC and PTA in the governance of schools is to improve the quality of learning for the children (SSEA, 2008). However, many interviewees reported that parental engagement in the democratic governance of primary schools are mainly supportive, limited to consultation for a need on the part of schools' administration to build classrooms and fund raising for meeting the schools' daily administration costs. One informant observes that "the goal of parent-teacher association is to support their schools by encouraging parent to support payment of the teachers' stipends and other school needs (male teacher, S3)." According to SSEA (2008), the role of the governing body of a public school is to support the head teacher, teachers and other non-teaching staff in the school in the performance of their professional functions and supplement the resources supplied by the state to improve the quality of education provided by the schools. In that regard, parents may be asked to provide support in kind or cash by paying school fees which is to be administered and supervised by the school governing bodies. One head-teacher confirmed to me that the SMC and the PTA are engaged in supporting the schools:

We do involve parents in the activities of the school in the matters of school fees collected from their children. So, this is their support to school. Should we have problems in school, for example in the area of construction of more classrooms, we bring them in. We do call a meeting and tell them, this is what we are missing and this is what we want to be done in this school. And they do respond quickly to our request of what is to be done in the school. Among them, some contribute cash money. Others can say I am a carpenter or a builder or a brick layer, I am going to do this and that. Still others can say, I am an engineer and I can set a foundation of the school class building or I am a business man and I can contribute iron sheets or nails. This is how we do involve parents in the school activities directly (head teacher, S3).

While Government of South Sudan can have as its education policy the SMC and PTA as structures designed to facilitate community and parental involvement, there are times that these bodies are not effectively involved in decision making in the schools. One informant noted in the following statement that the participation of parents in school governance varies a lot depending on the management of the school and the leadership style of the head of the school:

The participation of parents is ideally through the school management bodies such as the SMC and the PTA. It is particularly at the level of SMC and PTA that the participation of parents is expected to be very high in the activities like construction, handling issues related to disciplines, discussing teachers' welfare such as payment of stipends for them. In a well organized school, basically these are the roles expected from parents towards the schools although some schools operate without the presence of these bodies. In some of these schools, the name of PTA exists, but sometimes what is referred to as PTA is only the PTA chairperson because the whole of the executive body of the PTA is not there. This has to do with how the people elected to the executive posts see their role in terms of leadership style of the head-teacher (male teacher, S2)."

What this statement is saying is that membership in the bodies of SMC and PTA may only just exist in name and not being capable of exercising influence over decision-making in the school governance. Their role can be fund raising for the schools but without having a say of how the money should be used. One informant reported that: "Some head-teachers do not want to work in collaboration with the parents. This is because they fear a strong SMC or PTA body keeps a strict check and balances on their day-to-day school activities (male teacher, S1)." Asserting the dominant role of the head-teacher over how school finance is managed, one head-teacher informant reported that:

I am the manager, director as well as the financial controller of the school. By virtue of my position as a head-teacher it becomes automatic for me to be the secretary for both the SMC and the PTA. The human resource management in the school falls directly under my authority and anything to do with decision makings in matters of human resource management and finance is none other than me the head teacher because at the end I will be held accountable in making any decision regarding these issues (Head teacher, S1).

In this statement the head teachers has asserted his role in school governance as a final decision maker with little or no room given for other stakeholders in matters relating to the use of funds in the school. It can be argued that although the head teacher is accountable for all that goes on in the school, it is also important to involve parents in decision making on the use of the school funds. Parents have a stake in knowing how the school fund should be spent in order to be able to hold the school authority accountable in cases where misappropriation of funds is reported. As argued earlier, parents are involved in mobilizing resources not only for the smooth running of the schools but also for building classrooms in schools. Hence, they have a right not only to know how their money is spent but also to hold school authority accountable in cases whenever there is misappropriation of school funds. In my mind, involving parents in decision making on school funds does not alter the claim of the head teacher's position of remaining in charged. It is rather a democratic means of holding school authority accountable for any decision-making made on the use of school funds.

However, a head teacher in another school disagrees with the view expressed in the above statement that the school head teacher is the financial controller with PTA and SMC playing minimal role in the affairs of finance. For this head teacher, the PTA and the SMC are the executive bodies of the school. According to this head teacher, "parental involvement in the school governance is one means of making schools' authorities more accountable to the society from which the schools draw their funds in the forms of school fees and other contributions. As a result of this financial contribution and support to the schools, the SMC and the PTA are involved in the school administration and management about decision making in the proper use of funds and other resources of the schools (head teacher, S3)." A teacher in the same school shared this view too:

Decision is made here jointly with parents and teachers. No one person makes decision by himself in this school because it belongs to the community. We have the SMC and the



PTA who we usually call in a meeting to sit together and plan jointly for the provision of services in the school. We depend on the contribution of the parents through the collection of school fees from their children. All the school expenditures which also include teacher incentives are being met through the contributions made by the parents and the collection of the school fees. That is why we involve SMC and PTA in the school budget to make sure the money we have got from them is properly spent (male teacher, S3).

This finding indicates that parents are involved in the school governance in decision making through attending regular meetings and giving financial support to the schools. Therefore, it is through meetings and contribution of funds in the form of school fees that parents get involved to participate in the school governance. By so doing, they make sure that records of activities are kept and monitoring systems developed for proper accountability not only towards use of school funds but also for monitoring and improving the quality of education service delivery by the head-teachers and teachers for pupils' good performance.

Based on what those informants and some others have said, it is important to point out here that the involvement of parents in the governance of schools is practised differently at different schools. It is clear that there are differences in the participation of parents as well as the interpretation of the education acts regarding the involvement of parents in the school governance. In as much as there are education policies stating the roles of parents in the school governance but, when these policies are not explicitly stated and not very detailed, it may be up to the individual heads of schools or authorities at the local government levels to interpret. Consequently, there may be different interpretation and practices of the education policies by the relevant authorities of various schools. Obviously, from what the informants have said, it is clear that some individual head teachers have so much power that they can define how democracy is to be practiced in their schools.

Another area in which parents are involved in school governance is in the area of disciplinary committee. In the education policy document, it has been stated that the governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct and determine admission policy for learners of the schools (SSEA, 2008). My research findings indicate that part of parental involvement in the democratic governance of primary schools were in the area of disciplinary policy making and

formulation of school rules and regulations. The inclusion of parents in formulating codes of conduct for helping schools handle cases of indiscipline has been confirmed by the head-teacher of one of school.

There are procedures we take in developing discipline guidelines in this school. First, teachers sit in a meeting to design and draft the school regulations with the specific penalties for punishing the students for the violation of any of these rules and regulations. The rules and regulations include measures that can be carried out even against any teacher who breaks them. After drafting the discipline guidelines, the PTA and the SMC members are then called in for a meeting to discuss and amend the details of the rules and regulations in the guidelines (head teacher, S2).

From this statement it can be inferred that there is power relation between teachers and parents. In my view, the fact that teachers themselves first draft discipline guidelines shows that parents do not have influence on the design of the discipline policy but to endorse whatever has already been discussed by the teachers. Another teacher informant talks positively about the involvement of parents in working with the school authorities to maintain discipline in schools.

Parents are also the educators of the children and they can engage individually in monitoring the behavior of their children. It is a good idea also to have their inputs for the development and implementation of school discipline code (female teacher, S1).

Here the involvement of parents in the design and maintenance of school discipline was seen as facilitating the devotion of teachers' instructional efforts for the improvement of the quality of learning in schools. One assumption is that there would be fewer problems in classroom management and children misbehaviour if parents could be involved in the discipline of their children from their respective homes. Thus, teachers devote more time in dealing with instructional activities in the schools. As part of parental involvement in the school discipline, it has been reported that regular teacher monitoring and fear of being disciplined for failure to come to teach in the schools have resulted in lower teacher absenteeism. According to one head teacher, "we involve PTA in the monitoring of teacher attendance as part of school management. With-holding stipend of a teacher who absents himself from teaching in the school for two or more times without justifiable reasons has made teachers to come to school regularly (head teacher, S1)." It can be argued that the involvement of parents in the school discipline is a positive development in the learning of the pupil. This can motivate pupil to show more interest

in academics and their engagement in school activities. It can also be argued that PTA engagement in school discipline is one means for them to enhance pupils' social development in the matters of interpersonal skills which can provide them with experiences necessary for full participation in a democratic society. PTA being represented by both teachers in schools and parents at home can keep careful eyes on the activities of the pupils. In doing so, the PTA can oversee how pupils behave towards each other in a responsible manner. Hence, in that way, PTA can play an important role in creating social awareness among the pupils and thus teach them to behave responsibly towards one another.

### 4.3.3 Teacher Involvement

According to UNESCO (2009), getting children into primary school is a first step forward to equipping them with skills needed to participate in social, economic and political life. Human resource development is one aspect of the challenges South Sudan is now facing as it prepares for a new independent state. Among other challenges, shortage of qualified teachers is one of the greatest educational problems South Sudan is now facing (Brophy, 2003). Teachers are the single most important education resource in any country. The presence of a qualified, well-motivated teacher is vital for effective learning and what students can achieve in school and outside the school sphere is heavily influenced by the classroom practices and teachers' skills (UNESCO, 2009). My research finding has shown that in each of the three schools, more than 50% of the total numbers of teachers teaching in these schools are untrained as shown in the table below.

Table 4.1: Showing Numbers of Trained and Untrained Teachers in Three Primary Schools in South Sudan

SCHOOL	TRAINED TEACHERS		UNTRAINED TEACHERS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
<b>S1</b>	11	3	14	5
<b>S2</b>	4	3	9	4
<b>S3</b>	5	2	4	5
<b>Total</b>	20	8	27	14

Source: Field notes

Also, a study of the South Sudan education document has revealed that there are only 13% of trained teachers teaching in primary school out of the 26,575 enrolled teachers in South Sudan for the period 2007-2009 (MoEST, 2009). Furthermore, Brophy (2003) points out that the vast majority of teachers in southern Sudan are poorly educated and untrained. Nearly 70% of them have only a primary school education. Many have not completed the full eight year primary school curriculum, 30% have secondary education and less than 2% have a diploma or higher certificate. He further maintained that out of the total number of trained teachers, 48% were reported as having received some in-service training, although this could be as little as two weeks of in-service training. For JAM (2005), the estimate number of primary school teachers in South Sudan is 25,000. Out of this total number of teachers, only 7% represents women. From these data, it is evident that there is lack of trained teachers who may not have the necessary knowledge and skills to handle democratic issues pedagogically in classrooms. According to Harber (1995), much discussion on education quality has avoided the question of goals. For example, what kind of individual persons and societies should the quality education aim to produce? Is it to produce democratic citizens for a peaceful society? Although there is no definite answer for this kind of question, nonetheless, on her part Gutman (1987) views education as a builder of moral character of citizens. Her assumption is that the role of education as moral character builder combined with laws and institutions can form basis for democratic government which in turn through its education policies can shape the moral character of its future citizens. Hence, to enable citizen involvement in democratic politics, Gutmann stresses that education must cultivate the morals, virtues, knowledge and skills that are necessary for political participation. She argues that one of the most important skills is rational deliberation which can be taught to pupils by teachers in the classroom debate through critical independent thinking. Based on that argument, a deduction that can be made is that teachers' knowledge or content mastery of the democratic issues is one aspect they can contribute to what and how much students will learn to become democratic citizens. In that aspect, curriculum and classroom methods are avenues for students to engage in the discussions of democratic issues. They can also help students participate in activities which can give them not only knowledge on concepts of systems of government, but also experience engaging in the discussions of controversial topics presumed to be creating democratic exchange of ideas capable of instilling civic virtue of respect for opposing viewpoints (Gutman, 1987). Hence, the professional teaching knowledge and skills

of teachers are necessary in imparting democratic values through the pedagogy of modeling so that students can experience tolerance and respect for one another. These are the values on which democratic nations thrive on. They are the values which I believe schools ought to practice and impart to young people. However, my classroom observation has shown that much of the teaching and learning in the classroom has not been based on a variety of teaching methods. For example in school S2, in my classroom observation, a science teacher was teaching a lesson on science as if telling a story for someone to listen. Indeed, the teaching method mainly used by most teachers in the classroom is lecturing. Apart from lecture teaching method, discussion where the students themselves are influential in shaping the direction of the topic under discussion rarely takes place in the class.

In school governance, head-teachers are key players by virtue of their position as heads of institution. By the nature of their positions, the structural arrangement which has placed head teachers as heads and secretaries for both the SMC and PTA in the school is a clear evidence of their dominant role in the school governance. One head teacher described his role as “The direct controller of the human resource management, right from the support staff up to the teachers, these are directly under my control” (head teacher, S1).” Another head teacher shared the view of the dominant role a head teacher plays in the school governance: “as an administrator of the school and the one in charge of leading that institution, the head-teacher is required by the nature of his responsibility to direct as well as delegate his teachers to perform duties in the school” (head teacher, S2). The dominant role of a head teacher in the school governance was also confirmed by one female teacher as: “the problem associated with teacher involvement in decision making is that there are times teachers offer their views and some of these views are not implemented. In the areas of financial management, I can see that teachers are not involved in decision making. The problem I can also see here is that most teachers do not even know the budget of this school” (female teacher, S3).

What is depicted in the statements above of the role of the head teacher in school governance shows an assumption that teachers must be controlled, directed and managed. It also reveals unequal power relations in the participation of all the stakeholders in school governance and decision making. Nonetheless, teacher involvement in the democratic governance of schools in decision-making role had taken a form of serving on the school governing body in their capacity

as members of SMC or PTA. As one teacher notes, "being members of PTA, we play a role in the school governance in the lobbying and mobilization of resources, holding the school accountable through the leadership role of the SMC and the PTA although our major role is to teach (male teacher, S3)." In addition to teachers playing a governing role by serving on the school governing body, teacher involvement at leadership levels was also reported. One head teacher explained:

Teachers are involved in the leadership governance of the school. We have teachers involved on the SMC and PTA. Teachers are also involved through their work as heads of departments, class masters, school officers or heads of clubs such as the drama club or HIV/AIDS club etc. Here, teachers do engage in the administrative role for school governance by actively participating in designing and implementing learning program, school rules and regulations, drama and other programmes (head teacher, S3).

It can be argued that teacher involvement in school governance is very limited and does not go beyond the status quo of teachers teaching and the head teacher making policy decisions. This view was confirmed by an interviewee by saying that: "not all teachers can be involved in the governing of schools. In the school governing structure, we have the head teacher, the deputy head teachers and the heads of departments. These are the people who make real decisions and the work of the rest of the teachers is to teach. That is why the teachers do not have much to do with influencing how decisions are being made (teacher, S1)." What this study has revealed is that teachers get involved to serve democratically in the school governance as elected members of the body of SMC and PTA or through appointments by their respective head teachers as heads of departments and class masters. Indeed, teachers get involved to serve democratically, but research findings evidence detailed above have shown that there are differences of how much they can participate in the school governance. Although I see tendencies which are not in accordance with common democratic practices or values, but the mere fact that they serve in those democratically elected formal school organs such as the SMC and the PTA is an indication they may be on the right tract of becoming able to practice democracy.

#### **4.3.4 Pupils' Involvement**

A review of the education policy document reveals a South Sudan government policy that requires prefect systems to be formed in a democratic manner at every public primary school for establishing formal channels of communication between learners and the school administration.

As the South Sudan Education Act reports: "a head learner shall be elected in a democratic process to represent the student body (SSEA, 2008:50)." It is through the prefect system body that democratic skills are expected to be acquired by pupils as part of being involved in the governance of schools. In all the schools involved in this study, there is evidence of use of the democratic process such as meetings and voting for periodical election of the prefects as means for involving pupils in the school governance. The prefectural bodies are a kind of *representative* democracies. Every year, pupils elect prefects into a new office. They elect head boys/head girls and other members such as the health prefect, food prefect, environment prefect and class monitors. All head-teachers included in this research study indicated to me that the participation of pupils in school governance practices is grounded on democratic principles. This is true in the sense that as illustrated by the statement of the head-teacher in one school below that the participation of pupils in the school governing practices does reflect the practices of democratic principles through shared responsibilities. According to the head teacher, "pupil representatives elected are the head boy, head girl, health prefect, game and sports prefect, food moderators and the class monitors. They are elected democratically through votes (head teacher, S3)." One pupil in school S1 explains the role they play in democratically electing a head girl as pupil representative. In answering the question, "how do teachers participate in choosing a head boy or a head girl as pupils' representative?" The pupil responded, "we cannot accept a teacher to choose for us a head boy because the person the teacher can choose as head boy may be someone who cannot manage to lead us. It is our responsibility to choose the head boy by ourselves because we know whether that person is qualified enough to lead us and meet our interest or not (female pupil, S1)." As part of their responsibilities in the school governance, prefects serve as a link between the pupil body and the school administration. This was confirmed to me by a head teacher in the school S1 that "the pupil representatives like the head boy and head girls are the eyes and the ears of the whole pupils' body. They are charged with the responsibility of bringing the complaints of the pupils to school administrations (head teacher, S1)." The prefects also supervise and represent the views of the pupils to the school administration and vice versa as another head teacher in school S2 puts it:

"Any information that the school administration intends to pass to the pupils' body can be channelled through the prefects. Even problems arising in the midst of the pupils can be forwarded to our office by the prefects because we do not encourage them to present

their problems individually to us. There are established channels for them to voice their concern to the office. They can communicate to us through their prefects (head teacher, S2).”

As a means for open communication between the schools and the prefects for channelling pupils’ problems, the head boy and the head girl as pupils’ leaders are required to regularly call meetings among themselves with the pupils as one pupil in school S1 report: “Through a meeting with girls every Fridays, the head girl tells us, we study hard. She also tells us that when coming to school, we must put on school uniforms. In addition to that she also tells us to participate in work at home to help our parents and we must ask parents to give us time to revise our notes” (female pupil, S1).

In general, what this study has revealed is that pupils are involved in the school governance through pupils’ representatives in forms of prefectural body. In that sense, this finding reinforced Barnes et al. (2007) view on citizen participation where it has been argued that citizen participation in public affairs promotes good citizenship, develops civic skills and educate about democratic processes and practices. The findings also attest to the view of Crooks and Jerve (1991) that participation of stakeholders at grass root level is emphasized for the development of individuals with a focus on increasing their awareness to serve the objective of empowerment for increased efficiency in governance for decision making. In that regard, it is my suggestion that the involvement of pupils in a shared responsibilities of the school functioning empowers them with the knowledge and skills of democratic governance process in the schools. The inference that can be drawn from this finding is that schools do encourage aspects of democratic governance practices for pupils through elections and meetings which provide them with an opportunity to develop their capabilities in governance. As Harber and Meghan (2007) point out, if the school’s form of government has elements of democratic ideology, there are possibilities that students will learn behaviors of democratic conduct of government through the principles of “agreed rules” where order is obtained and maintained by appealing to rules already agreed upon. In this way, schools can play a critical role in the development of childrens’ capability of playing by the rule of the game. They also argue that the task of schools in educating individuals/groups in the community is to serve the wider purpose of empowering the community to regenerate its own social or cultural development.



Although children have been positively involved in the school governance in the area of responsibility sharing with the school authority, however, there are indications in the findings that they have also faced challenges in the expression of their voices effectively in the influencing of decision making matters of the school. These challenges were expressed through comments by several informants here below: Explaining the roles of pupils in school, a senior woman in school S1 remarks that:

Pupils have also a committee called prefectural body. Some of their issues can be handled by them in this body. If they fail to solve some of these issues there, then, they can report the problem to the duty master. And if the duty master fails, the case can further be forwarded to the school disciplinary committee. Since pupils have their own prefectural committee at their own level, there is no need for them to be involved in the school's disciplinary committee. The disciplinary committee is not only for pupils, it is also for the teaching and non-teaching staff. If any teacher or non-teaching staff has a problem or an issue which need to be corrected, it can be handled by the school disciplinary committee. That is why pupils cannot be part of it (female teacher, S1)

Also another informant describes the role of pupils in schools as:

You know, children have their part to play in the school. Keeping the school clean is upon the pupils. They have to clean the environment, slash grass, collect papers around the compound, and clean the latrine as well (head teacher, S3).

Apart from the participation of pupils in the school governance through prefectural representation, all indications are that pupils play a minimal role in their participation in school governance with no influence on decision making. They are neither represented on the SMC that governs the school nor the School Disciplinary Committee (SDC) that settles disciplinary issues in the school as one interviewee noted:

Pupils are not involved in the SMC and SDC because these bodies are high level governing organs in the school. The pupils have their own committee, the prefects. So, there is no need to involve them in the SMC and SDC since they have a committee at their own level (female teacher, S3).

The above statements show that the pupils do not participate in decision making although their representatives (the prefect bodies) are elected democratically as an arm of management in the school governing structure. In South Sudan Education Act policy it was stated that:

Education shall inculcate democratic values and practices through the encouragement of active and participatory learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in all learners (SSEA, 2008: 8).

One can question how education can be an instrument to inculcate democratic values and development of critical thinking for problem solving in learners through participatory learning if the learners themselves do not participate in decision making along side the SMC or SDC in an attempt to acquire critical thinking and problems solving skills essential for the practice of democracy. According to many informants, pupils are involved in the activities of maintenance of discipline, conducting assemblies and doing some cleaning on the school compound. As one pupil reports:

We have prefect for late coming. School rules and regulation says no late coming to school for all pupils. If a pupil comes late to school, the prefect for late coming punishes that pupil by giving him some work to do. The pupil will then be allowed into the class after finishing that work. The prefect for late coming tells all the pupils in the assembly everyday no one should come late to school. You find that he is always the first person to come to school very early in the morning everyday (male pupil, S1).

In the above statement, the informant describes the role of pupils in the school governance as maintaining discipline, punctuality and cleanliness in the school compound which is being exemplified by their student representative ever being punctual in the school. In maintaining discipline in school, another pupil representative describes the reason why he was elected a class monitor: “they chose me because of my good behaviour. When I tell the class not to make noise, they listen to me. If they do not listen to me, I report them to the teacher so that the teacher can tell them not to make noise in the class (male pupil, S3).”

Another pupil reported that one of the reasons he was voted for the health prefect as pupil representative was because during campaigning as a prefectural candidate he told the pupils, “If you elect me as your health prefect, I will make the compound clean, build urinary shelter and pit latrine (male pupil, S2).”

This view of involving pupils in the cleaning activities in the school was also shared by a head teacher in one of the schools when he reports:

”We involve pupils in school activities in the classrooms and outside classrooms through their representatives, the prefects. As you can now see, we have communal work of cleaning the latrines, cleaning the environments, removing the papers or rubbishes on the compounds. These communal works are all done by the pupils. We have the pupils’ leaders, the prefects, leading them to do all this. So, the prefects are the ones directing them to do some of the activities which will make it easier for the teachers to move on with their particular instructional work in the school (head-teacher, S2).”

What this statement is saying is that in the school governing structure, pupils were allowed to participate in the traditional role such as cleaning the compound of the school, maintaining disciplines and punctuality. In other words, they do not have power or influence in the school governing structure. In a sense, what this means is that pupils’ involvement in the school governing structure is a reinforcement of primary socialization. So, from the above comments, the inference which can be drawn is that children have a limited role in school governance and this role is mainly about doing cleaning work, maintaining school discipline and keeping punctuality on the school compound. The views of these respondents typically reflect much on how in a traditional African society children are being socialized from early years of childhood. According to Torimiro and Kolawole (2006), moral and ethical values, norms, obligations, rules of etiquette and standards of correct conduct of behavior in African traditional setting are learnt almost as a by-product of the normal social relations between the growing child and older/adult people in his environment. As the child develops, what is usually considered proper behavior is expected of him. For example, children are not allowed to come into the proximity where peer adults themselves discuss issues or socialize let alone questioning decisions often made by these elders. This could possibly be one reason why female informant in school S1 argued that it is not right and necessary that children should form part of disciplinary committee because the disciplinary committee is a forum not only for discussing pupil issues but also for discussing the issues of the teaching and non-teaching staff who are adults compared to children, the minors.

In the Education Act policy of the Government of South Sudan, it was stated that the governing body of a primary school is the School Management Committee (SMC) headed by the head-teacher. The body comprises parents, teachers and members of the community (SSEA, 2008). The issue of stakeholder involvement has been an important consideration in the education policy of the government of South Sudan for school governance. This is because it is believed

that schools can benefit much from the input of different stakeholders in such things as the empowerment and localization of decision-making at the school level. From the above education policy and also from what the teachers are saying about the role of pupils, it is clear that pupils do not form part of the school governing body especially in the area of decision making. Their roles are confined to maintenance of cleanliness and disciplines through the prefects. This evidently points out further that pupils voice in the school governing structure in influencing decision making does not matter. Thus, alienating them from experiencing the acquisition of democratic practices of critical thinking and problem solving skills advocated for in the South Sudan Education Act. Therefore, if the pupils are not part of the school governance structure, then how can they effectively practice participation as a core value of democracy in school governance in the area of influencing decision making and their full engagement in learning about democracy and leadership role? Yet, Giddens et al. (2007) argue that the school being a social agent has an important social role of imparting, instilling and forming in pupils those values found in the society. In other words, schools can socialize young people into learning the ways of their adults. In that way, values, norms, and social practices in a society are not only perpetuated but can also provide the young people with the necessary repertoire of habits and values, the requisite skills and knowledge for functioning well in that society. It is not in itself enough to engage pupils in the school governing structures as prefects to do school compound cleaning and maintaining punctuality for class attendance although this is far from say keeping punctuality for class attendance is a bad thing among the pupils. It is to be noted here that the democratic principles of being able to influence decision making and taking responsibility cannot be acquired in a vacuum. It has to be learned. In that context, the school has a task of preparing and passing on those values to pupils for their participation in society. And the school cannot do this job effectively if the pupils are excluded from meetings and membership of SMC or SDC.

#### **4.3.5 Rights to Education**

By giving boys and girls opportunity of rights to access education to be able to gain knowledge on issues of human rights such as the right to vote, right to participate in public affairs and the right to freedom of speech or self-expression, schools would be seen as promoting the practices and advancement of democracy. The realization of human rights takes place on multiple levels of society. In many ways it is a life-long process in which human rights education plays a major role (Reilly, 1997). Boys and girls, young men and young women need to be made aware of the

issues of human rights from early age. People need education to access knowledge about human rights issues and to use this knowledge for holding politicians and other government officials accountable to people for the services they provide. People also need education to learn how to use human rights as lobbying tools. Human rights documents and conventions are not written in everyone's dialect, thus making it not accessible to many in the world. Hence, people need education to learn those languages in which human rights documents are written to be able to gain knowledge of human rights issues. It is in schools that children are taught literacy skills and knowledge of those languages in which human rights documents have been written. Therefore, it is for this reason that I find right to education important for my study. According to Reilly (1997), there are "no hard rules" for defining democracy, but from the perspective of women "it must mean equality." Her point of argument is that democracy is not just about politicians. It is all about people in general and in particular about equal rights for men and women including equal rights to access education. For her point of view and which is also similar to mine, the validity of any democracy is undermined if it does not reflect the diversity of the people living within the same boundaries, which in this case is the right to access education as a platform for further opportunities of life. According to UNESCO (2009), education brings a smorgasbord benefits to both individuals and societies. It is considered so important to individual development that the right to access basic education is legally adopted in most countries of the world. The argument presented as a result of the above statement is based on the thesis that basic education increase literacy and numeracy levels of girls which can result in a country's increased human resource capacity seen as essential for their participation in democracy. The Education for All campaign (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have focused the world's attention on ensuring that no child is left behind or excluded from receiving primary education. However, despite global efforts to promote universal primary education, there are still 115 million children of primary school age out of school in 2001/02. Globally, 61.6 million girls of primary school age were not in school, accounting for 53% of the total number (UNESCO-UIS, 2005). Gender equality in education is seen as girls' basic human right. Significant for democracy is the notion that when girls are educated their ability to equally participate and influence decision-making policies at higher governmental positions and also to shape their own lives could be improved. Consequently, they can be able to make their voices heard inside and outside their home countries. Educated women are also believed to be knowledgeable about

basic human rights in fending themselves against assaults on sexual and gender-based violence in order for them to lead a live free of violence and molestation (UNICEF, 2006).

The international human rights conventions recognise a child's right to education (UN, 2010). The Convention on Rights of the Child besides affirming the right to education also outlines certain entitlements within education that obligates States to make schools accessible, acceptable and adaptable to children without discrimination (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Sudan is one of the countries that have ratified the CRCs<sup>6</sup> (UN, 2010). UNICEF reports indicate that the CRC was the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in history. Only two countries, Somalia and the United States, did not ratify this celebrated agreement (UNICEF, 2006). Sudan has reaffirmed its commitment to children's rights to education and political willingness to build a democratic society by encapsulating in its National Interim Constitutions, the rights of children to education through the following statement:

“Education is a right for every citizen and the State shall provide access to education without discrimination to one's religion, race, ethnicity, gender or disability. Primary education is compulsory and the State shall provide it free (GoS, 2005:17).”

South Sudan is still reeling from the effect of the recent civil war that has been fought for over two decades beginning in 1983. It is obvious that one of the challenges of the government of South Sudan is the restoration of the basic education systems and services after the war ended in 2005. It can be argued that the challenge the government of South Sudan is facing in education sector now mounts a formidable and significant obstacles to the access of education to many, particularly the girls. First and foremost is the fact that most of the infrastructures were obliterated during the war leading to many children walking long distance to the existing and available nearest neighbouring schools. Another reason is the structural aspect of culture that has excluded, marginalized and disadvantaged girls from access to education services in society. According to Brophy (2003), despite a number of attempts to promote gender sensitization, boys are still preferred to girls when sending children to schools. Although the Government of South Sudan prided itself for advancing free and compulsory basic education with gender equity as one of its top priority, the table below reveals substantial differences in gender disparities of boys and girls enrolled in primary schools.

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<sup>6</sup> Sudan had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Child in 1990 (UN, 2010)

**Table 4.2: Statistics of pupils enrolled in primary schools in South Sudan**

Year	Total	Number of boys and girls enrolled		Percentage of boys and girls enrolled	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2009	1,380,580	871,804	508,776	63.1	36.9
2008	1,284,252	809,519	474,733	63.0	37.0
2007	1,127,963	710,703	417,260	63.0	37.0

Source of Data: GOSS, MoEST (2010)

**Table 4.3: EFA education reports: statistics of gross enrolment ratio of primary pupils in primary education in Sudan**

Year	Total	Male	Female
1999	49	53	45
2006	66	71	61

Adapted from UNESCO (2009) EFA Global Report on Statistic of Primary Education

Table 4.1 shows that the percentage of boys enrolled in primary school is about twice that of girls in the successive three years. In addition, table 4.2 of EFA global report on statistics of primary education has confirmed that gender disparity between boys and girls with the ratio of boy enrolment in primary school being higher than that of girls. The two tables all have shown gender disparity between boys and girls in their access to primary education. Although the data on disparity of gender education in primary schools are from two distinct and separate sources, nevertheless, they all show that the number of boys in primary school is more than that of girls. In table 4.1, a data from the GoSS ministry of education shows that the percentage of boys in primary schools almost doubles the percentage of girls. Similarly, table 4.2 (data from UNESCO' EFA report) illustrates that the ratio of female pupils in school is less than that of the boys. Less ratio of the number of girls in school than that of boys means greater number of out of school girls compared to the number of out of school boys. In other words, the UNESCO's report on gender disparity in education confirms gender disparity in education in the South Sudan although the report of the UNESCO is for the whole of Sudan where many numbers of females have enrolled in the North than in the South. Based on this evidence, the right to access

education for many girls in South Sudan remains a far cry issue although its education policy stresses children's equal right to access education regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, race and disability. Based on that account, if South Sudan is to achieve its goal of equal rights to education for all and to narrow that gender disparity in the education gap, it must do more to make education accessible to the girls.

In spite of the girls' low enrolment number in primary schools of South Sudan my research findings indicate that some of those already registered girls in schools do encounter problems of school exclusion by the nature of their sex. Social exclusion is understood as a dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in a society (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Considering that Sudan has its history replete with war, many girls enrol in primary school at late age. Therefore, owing to the age factor, truancy of girls from schools due to pregnancy remains an issue of concern (Thon, 2010). In the primary schools I visited, informants reported cases of girls' pregnancies in schools. One informant in school S1 explains:

A senior woman after identifying a school girl was pregnant notified me. We had to call her in the office for questioning. Through questioning her, we confirmed that she was pregnant. Questioning her was done on Friday. Over the weekend, the girl went and aborted the child. The following Monday, she failed to turn up for school and stayed away at home. The issue related to abortion, marriage and so forth are not handled here in school. When we identify a girl as pregnant, we call the parents and hand over to them their daughter so that they can go and settle the issue at home (female teacher, S1).

Another female teacher in school S3 also reported an incident of pregnancy involving a school pupil and a teacher in the same school by saying:

There was a family who said one of the teachers has gone with their daughter. The case was taken to police and it became difficult for us to decide whether the girl is to come back and continue in the same school or to be dismissed. So it took us time to discuss it because the teacher was again in the same school. Later we decided that the case should be handled at home (female teacher, S3)

From the above statement, the informants reported that the issue of pregnancies are not handled in school. But the fact that a girl is threatened with expulsion from school is indicative of the school handling the pregnancy cases. In my view, the girl's fear of expulsion from school which has led to the abortion could be the school's method of handling pregnancy. In that aspect, the



act of abortion is the girl's reaction to schools method of handling pregnancy through expulsion. It is the school repudiation of liability. It looks like the schools do not take responsibility for this. They are distancing themselves from the situation, while in fact upholding these regulations is an exposure of girls to abortion. If they do not handle it in school, then they should have taken a stance of ignoring the pregnancies, and leave the matter entirely in the hands of the family. In fact, they actually do handle pregnancy cases in school. This is a democratic problem because the schools are violating girls' right to access education. There is no statement in the CRC document saying once a girl is pregnant, she must be sent home and hence denied chance to access education. Neither is there a law also in the South Sudan Education Act that states girls' pregnancy is a serious offence punishable by expulsion. Yet, the schools are so strict in upholding this regulation to such an extent that they expel pregnant girls from school without any person daring to question even if it is violating the girls' right to access education. The SSEA (2008) has a statement about girls' pregnancy which points out the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs in discouraging cultural practices which inhibit school attendance and completion for female students such as early marriage and pregnancy. This to me is a vague statement with little or no hope for preventing pregnant girls in school from dropping out of schools or being expelled. When the CPA was signed in 2005, it was evident that many children born at the beginning and during the war had grown up into young adults (adolescence or teens) at the end of more than twenty years of war. The opportunity presented in education by the lull of peace as a result of the signing of the CPA inspired hope of a brighter future through getting education and subsequent employment. The age and sex of a child are the most important variables to be considered when it comes to a child's school attendance or non-attendance although other parameters such as child's socio-economic and cultural background need to be considered for this phenomenon too (UNESCO, 2009). According to Grant and Hallman (2006), young women entering in school at the age of puberty are exposed to the risk of becoming pregnant and their subsequent drop out. She argues that although pregnancy was not the source of all dropouts among girls from schools, but it is one of the greatest contributors to the gender gap in educational attainment.

When asked about the age range of pupils from primary five to primary eight who are deemed eligible for voting school head (prefects) as pupil leaders, one head-teacher reported that the age

range of pupils lies between thirteen and twenty from class five to class eight. Clearly this is the age range most girls are either at the onset of puberty period or even have passed that period. As part of my findings, the education policy of the government of South Sudan shows that any staff member who has made a learner pregnant shall be suspended not the pregnant school girl to be expelled (GoSS, MoEST, 2008). In my view, the challenge in tackling pregnancy in schools is enormous because of the many factors involved, given the nature of the post conflict situation of South Sudan. Among this factors could be poverty and lack of awareness of parents and girls' right to access education. The bottom line of this discussion is that girls lack voice and power when it comes to matters relating to their bodies or marriage. If girls are pulled out of schools because of pregnancy, not only will they be deprived of their rights to education but they will also live a consequence of unemployment and little prospect for equal participation in democracy for future life.

#### **4.4 Socialization for Democracy**

##### **4.4.1 Education for Democratic citizens**

Held (2006) argues that citizenship (membership of a political community) bestows upon individuals the rights and responsibilities to work towards the betterment of their community through participation in public service to improve life for all citizens. When I interviewed some of the pupils in the schools I visited, their responses point to me how they have been engaged in issues relating to resolving problems affecting them (pupils) in general. Commenting on how pupil can engage in a democratic deliberation to solve their own problem, one pupil cited to me a particular case of erecting a sanitary shelter. In this case, a sanitary health prefect during a prefectural election campaign promised to erect a pit latrine and urinary shelter if elected into the office of health prefect. This is what one informant described to me what happened after that prefect was indeed elected to be the health prefect of their school.

There is a pit latrine behind there. We are the one who build that new pit latrine by ourselves. The pit latrine was built as a result of contribution of money between the pupils and the health prefect. In that contribution, each one of us has given money of one Sudanese pound<sup>7</sup> for the building of that pit latrine. We have done this because we want a new latrine since the old one is about to get filled up (male pupil, S1).

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<sup>7</sup> One Sudanese pound is an equivalent of about 50 cents US dollars

Also one government official told me how the children can work in partnership with local authority and law enforcement organs such as police to improve security in their community.

Youth are trained in schools as law abiding citizens because of the school rules and disciplines they are required to observe. In the school, they know each other by name and can help the police to protect their community. If there are criminals in the community, the police may not know to access the person who might have committed a crime. In this case the youth can help the police to locate that person and take him into custody (government officer, MoEST).

The above statements underscore how children can responsibly develop agency in problem solving when given the right conditions and chance by adults to act. In my opinion, such involvement can inspire in them interest in politics and possibly improve on their critical thinking and communication skills. Berger and Luckmann (1966) maintain that people do not acquire character formation on their own but rather through dialogical interaction with significant others in their lives. They argue that contribution of significant others in the character formation of the young ones continues to impact heavily on them for good or bad even when the significant others are no longer there. In the context of primary schools, the significant others in the lives of children are the teachers. Schools play a crucial role in providing an environment of significant others where children can experience the acquisition of civic skills and behaviors such as problem solving and freedom of expression when interacting with teachers and peers and thus become skilful and confident in handling not only daily life issues but also political issues towards advancing democracy. However, in primary schools in South Sudan, democratic values and skills are not explicitly taught in schools as a separate subject. Nonetheless, knowledge of facts on systems of government, history and laws has been integrated to form the content of curriculum in Social Studies. Although through social studies children can acquire knowledge of facts on governments, history and laws, one cannot be sure how this knowledge they acquire can translate for their effective participation in politics and civil society. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that no individual is born a member of a society but, s/he is born with a predisposition towards a sociality and becoming a member of society. Similarly, it can also be said that every individual is not born a democrat but with right condition and willingness it may be possible for anyone to become one. Hence, any development of democratic government must not only look on adults to serve its government but should also pay attention to developing in its

young people the civic skills, habits and attitudes necessary to participate in democracy. Skills needed by children as future citizens for advancing and maintaining democracy cannot be instinctively developed. They have to be learned and children need to be taught and socialised into acquiring them. They also need to be taught critical thinking so that they can be able to argue and see things from the perspective of others. Unless they learn the value of tolerance for peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society, they will not be able to show concern to those outside the sphere of their life.

#### **4.4.2 The Role of the School as a Socializing Agent**

Multi-culturalism is a term used to describe social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their original identity (Hesse 2000; Parekh 2006). To address the challenges of multiculturalism, South Sudan in its education policy intended to promote tolerance among its diverse groups of people through the following statement: "Education shall foster the development of Southern Sudan through...respect and tolerance for other cultures, traditions, opinions and beliefs (SSEA, 2008:7)." Tribalism is one of the major problems in the politics of Southern Sudanese because most Southern Sudanese in power tend to favor people from their own tribes in employment opportunities (Akol, 2007). One of the challenges of multiculturalism is to address the issue of unity-diversity tension. That is the issue of equality, justice, and non-discrimination among people with different social and cultural background (Banks & Banks, 2001). In that respect, Southern Sudan education policy aims to educate its multicultural society members how to handle conflicting civic values such as equal treatment and respect for tribal/cultural differences. In other words, the aim of the education is to teach the school children that they may need to treat each other equally without discrimination regardless of their religious, cultural or gender background. This is important for democracy because for people to coexist in a multicultural society they should be able to learn how to handle issues of equality and differences.

On its fiftieth anniversary, 16 November 1995, UNESCO's Member States adopted a declaration of principles on tolerance. Among other things, the declaration affirms that tolerance is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of the world's cultures, forms of expression and ways of

being human. The declaration also affirms that tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and that people are naturally diverse, but only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe (UNESCO, 1995).

Along with outright injustice and violence, discrimination and marginalization are common forms of intolerance. The role of schools in instilling the virtue of tolerance among children with the aim to counter influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others is not a new phenomenon. Tolerance is considered a moral virtue. Propelled by the virtue of tolerance, individuals are bound to appreciate diversity, to peacefully co-exist with others, to enjoy their rights and freedoms without infringing on those of others. Tolerance is also the foundation of democracy and human rights, intolerance in multi-ethnic, multi-religious or multicultural societies lead to violations of human rights and/or violence (UNESCO, 1995). How diversity is dealt with in Sudan is a major issue of concern. Hostilities among some tribes in Sudan are common things. Some of these hostilities are also reflected among pupils in schools. One teacher reported that:

“If a member of one tribe happens to pick up a quarrel or fight with another person from a different tribe, then some of the members of either tribe would just join in the fight without first enquiring the cause of the fight. This is a problem, but as teachers we have now managed to bring it under control (male teacher, S3).”

The view of this teacher reveals that in the context of a quarrel involving two pupils from different tribes, some of the members of either tribe make ethnicity relevant even if ethnicity has nothing to do with the issue of the quarrel or fight between the pupils. In my findings, both teachers and pupils have emphasized that school is a place where people must learn to co-exist with each other regardless of tribe, religion, gender etc. One pupil reports that “school is a place whether you like it or not there must be different tribes because it is a place for learning for all children (male pupil, S3).” For this pupil, learning is a motivating factor essential for making pupil to adapt not only to the school life but also to learn from other pupils from different culture. According to this pupil for the sake of learning and being at peace with other pupils, it is very important to be tolerant to others. This is what he says “school is where you get knowledge for your future life. If you don’t come to school, there is nothing you can gain in life. Even if some tribes are bad, one can tolerate them because he wants to learn and also because there are schools laws that make it compulsory for us to live together (male pupil, S3).” How pupils relate

or behave towards members of other tribes was narrated by one head-teacher. According to this head teacher, by the time he was brought to his current school where he is now based, pupils used to move or associate in groups of tribes or fight along tribal lines. This is how the head-teacher described the situation of the pupils by the time he was posted as a head-teacher to school S2 in the year 2000:

Some other tribes are rude, others are just calm and there are many different things happening, but as a teacher one needs to know how to handle cases of intolerance... The other time, they just associate only with members in their own tribe and move separately in groups of members of their own tribes. It was the other year when I came in, I found that fighting among them was the order of the day. So, with the experience we have, we managed to teach them to know how to interact with other students from different ethnic groups. When a teacher enters a class, he has to talk about discipline. Then also outside in the assembly, the teacher has to train the children by telling them about how to live in a community. Now they are peaceful, that is why you can see them playing, playing anyhow jointly with other students from different ethnic groups and most of the children are alright now. (head teacher, S2).

During my interview with the head-teacher, he made it clear to me that it was one of his administrative objective to change the way pupils had been associating with each other by working against pupils moving or associating in groups of their own tribes or fighting each other along ethnic lines. He told me that his objective was achieved because the way pupil associate with each other had changed. The head-teacher stressed to me that this result could be seen by pupils playing and associating with each other regardless of tribal origin. In his comment, the head teacher also emphasized that the change in behaviour of pupils associating, moving or fighting along tribal line came when during school assembly or in classrooms, they do stress to the pupils the importance of living with each other in peace and friendly manner.

My findings also indicate that both teachers and pupils have emphasized that once the pupils are in a school, they are required to observe the school regulations for peaceful co-existence regardless of their cultural or ethnic origin because the school needs all the pupils to abide by its regulation. One informant explained the role of school in socializing children to get along with each other despite ethnic differences through the following statements:

School is a place for everybody regardless of race, gender, religion or tribe. School is also a place where teachers can mold children. If a parent sends a child to school, that child is not sent in the school for a teacher to beat or harm. If a child goes wrong, the teacher has a responsibility to correct him or her for the purpose of molding him or her to become a good child. Considering the issue of tolerance, whenever a child goes wrong, we mold him by telling him or her to learn how to behave well with other pupils (female teacher, S1).

However, despite their ethnic differences in schools, pupils do not use tribal card when prefects or teachers are disciplining them whenever they go against the normal routine discipline procedures in the school. One pupil pointed out that they are aware that school has children from many different tribes. Hence, being a member in a school requires one to conduct himself/herself appropriately with others. As result of that kind of attitude towards a fellow pupil, even if a teacher punishes a child, that child can not consider he is being punished because of belonging to a particular tribe. They just see it as a way of molding them into good behaviour of staying well with each others. In that regard, pupils have come to see school as a place where one can learn language or culture of other tribes as well as a place of making friends. This scenario has been described by one informant in the following statement below:

I am from Acholi tribe. There are many tribes in this school, for example, we have Dinka, Didinga, Acholi, Madi, Latuka, Nuer, and so on. Having many tribes in school is a good thing because we can be able to learn some of their language, like me, I am now trying to learn Madi language. There is also friendship among the pupils, not lovers but just friendship. Now for me because of friendship, I feel like I am a Madi (male pupil, S2).

In the above quotes it could be gauged how schools have played a role of making pupils handle diversity. Schools like other social agents such as the family, community, media and peers can impart in children knowledge and values that can help guide their conduct in everyday life as they grow up to become full members of their communities. For example, equality is one of the values underpinning principles of democracy when it comes to handling diversity. In the context of diversity, equality as a democratic value means people should be willing to treat each as equal without discrimination of any person regardless of religious or cultural background as the above informant reports "I feel like I am a Madi." It can also be argued that in addition to being a fundamental principle of democracy, equality as a democratic value for equal protection of human rights before the law the importance of recognizing diversity of a society. A school is a microcosm community that reflects nation-state at least demographically. It is in school

institutions where learning takes place both informally and formally, particularly the provision of intellectual and social experiences from which individuals develop knowledge, skills, customs, beliefs, interest, and attitudes that characterize them and shape their abilities to perform adult roles (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to Giddens et al. (2007) the term socialization refers to the process of inheriting norms, customs and ideologies. They further maintain that socialization provides individual with the skills and habits needed for participating within their own society.

#### **4.4.3 School for political socialization?**

If we don't transcend the idea of education as a means of pure transference of knowledge that merely describes reality, we will prevent critical consciousness from emerging and thus reinforce political illiteracy (Freire, 1985:104)

In that statement, Freire (1985) calls on schools to do more than just teach literacy and numeracy in order to make students politically literate. The issue of socialization is crucial to political scientists and other social scientists in the discipline of sociology. According to Mott (2006), political scientists call the process by which individuals acquire their political beliefs and attitudes as a political socialization. Mott believes that what people think and how they come to think it is of critical importance to the stability and health of popular government since the beliefs and values of the people are the basis for a society's political culture and also that culture to a greater or lesser degree can define factors of political life and governmental action. In agreement with Mott, the argument I am putting forward here is that children can acquire a wide range of attitudes such as respect for authority, a sense of duty to obey the law and to participate in the political process. These attitudes in my mind, if carried into adulthood, tend to produce citizens that are supportive and active in the political system of their government. My research finding indicates that the establishment of pupil representative in schools as an empowerment to explore issues and act in the interest of their peers is one means of creating in them the consciousness of political literacy. The election of school prefects and class monitors is an act demonstrating the practices of democracy. The responsibility to make the best choice, rather than just vote for the most popular prefectural candidate, encourages children to seriously consider to ask questions like "who can make the best leader and why?" "Can the prefectural candidate prove to represent the pupil body fairly?" The responsibility to make the best choice of candidate to represent them can indicate the capability of pupils to assume agency in deciding what is best



for themselves. In that context, pupils can learn necessary skills that can even apply to the wider society when they are old enough to vote. One head teacher describes what issues pupils consider important when voting for a prefectural candidate for a leadership position to represent the pupil:

In their prefectural electoral campaign, the candidates spell out some promises to the pupils. For example, the candidate can say if you elect me, I will advocate for you since I am good in speaking English. I will also do such and such things for you. After they have done the campaign, then the pupils will consider who should I vote for? Can I vote for a person who can speak good English so that he/she can persuade the school authority to listen to our problems or should I vote for my brother? They also focus on who can do something for them when voted into the prefectural office as pupils' leader (head teacher, S1).

According to this head teacher, this is but one school activities in which pupils are engaged that could form basis for their political socialization. Many respondents (head-teachers, teachers and pupils) in the primary schools I visited for my research study similarly pointed out that elections are periodically held in schools for the selection of prefects as pupils' leaders. Describing the election of the prefects as pupils' leaders to be incorporated in the school governing administrative structure, a head-teacher gave the following comment:

“We ask them to apply for the positions of prefect. In assembly we announce those who are interested in becoming prefects should apply. This is now the month of July, so we need to have new prefects because from August no primary seven class pupils should handle the position of the prefect because they are now moving towards doing their external examinations. So, we have to elect new ones. They have already applied and the successful ones have been short listed for interview. Then those who pass this interview will be brought to the general assembly, for the pupils to vote them. This is how the voting process goes, we call their names. After calling their names we line them up and ask the pupils to vote by standing behind a candidate (head-teacher, S2).”

The remarks of the head teacher above were also confirmed to me by one of the pupils in the same school S2 through the following dialogue:

*Interviewer:* How did you become a prefect?

*Interviewee:* The process for me to become a prefect began when the school electoral commission calls for applications from the willing and competent pupils to become prefects for the various posts. For me, I applied for the post of head boy. We were many who applied for that position, but three of us qualified to contest for the post. We campaigned and the pupils voted me through” (male pupil, S2)

Interviewer: What criteria were used to elect competent candidates from all the applicants who contested in this prefectural election?

*Interviewee:* “The electoral commission puts the criteria very clear for the pupils to understand so that no one is disenfranchised.

- 1) The candidate must be a disciplined pupil with no records of bad behavior in the school.
- 2) The candidate must have a good command of language (English)
- 3) Candidate must be a primary six pupil (for the post of Head Boy and Head Girl).
- 4) The academic performance of the candidate must be good.
- 5) The candidate must have been a pupil of the school for at least two years. This is to avoid the new comers whose behaviours are not fully known in the school yet” (male pupil, S2)

The upbringing of school children in the role of voting which can be seen as role playing leaders and followers (citizens) in the context of primary schools is a likely part of school role in politically socializing them. In that sense, pupils at primary schools can become actively involved in their roles as leaders or as followers and which of course can form a background of their predilections for political ambitions in relation to their future perception, development and decisions. This involvement in election through campaigning in one of the schools I visited has resulted in solving problems like water scarcity in the school compound. A brief account of their problem solving skill is illustrated in the following story below: As part of political socialization, children aspiring to serve as pupils’ leaders in the prefectural body are required by their school regulations to openly campaign as candidate to be elected for the prefectural post. In their campaign, the pupils, although they make rhetorical statements about their ambition of what they intend to do when elected into the prefectural office, some of their ideas have been converted into action by their schools. In his election campaign for prefectural post, a pupil in school S1 in his campaign promised to solve the problem of water scarcity in their school by saying “if you elect me as your head boy, I will lobby on your behalf for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to drill water borehole in this compound” (male pupil, S1). According to the head teacher of school S1, the idea of this pupil was picked up and acted upon by the school authority in a meeting involving the SMC and PTA where the issue of water scarcity was a central agenda. After thorough deliberation, it was agreed among the members that a water project proposal (drilling water bore hole) was to be drafted and handed over to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for possible action. The proposal was later

approved and the drilling of the water borehole was soon to be started by the time I was doing my field work study.

In my opinion, the ability of pupils to engage in the lobbying activities to help solve school problem like the water scarcity described above is citizenship training aspect of the process of political socialization that I believe can expand their interpersonal skills and moral qualities for cooperation and participation in the civic activities of the wider community. This is good for democracy because it is a point of departure for the pupils to stay informed about public affairs (for example, what are the problems facing the community and how can it be solved?) as well as taking active part in the national politics of their country. In this chapter I have described the findings and discussion of this research under the broad themes of understanding democracy, participation and socialization into democracy. The next chapter presents highlights of the findings of this research.

## **Chapter Five: Bringing It to a Close**

For a study to be useful to the public or professionals, the researcher ought to analyze and discuss the research questions and objectives in relation to their findings, which in this case, was done and presented in chapter four. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the education policies of the government of South Sudan on the promotion of democracy in primary school?
2. What are the pupils and teachers perception of democracy?
3. How do primary school organizational structures contribute to the practices of democracy?

These research questions will be used as titles in the following subsections of this chapter. This is done in order to summarize the content of findings and discussion presented earlier on in chapter four. Reflecting on the findings of this study and areas measured, it seems evident that the research questions were answered. This will be illustrated shortly in the next section.

### **5.1 What are the Education Policies of the Government of South Sudan on the Promotion of Democracy in Primary Schools?**

Indeed the Government of South Sudan has education policies that seem to promote democracy. These are the policies: One of the education policies of the Government of South Sudan is to inculcate democratic values and practices in learners through the encouragement of participatory learning and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (SSEA, 2008). This policy has been reinforced further by a policy in the interim constitution of South Sudan that require Local Government Board (LGB) to review the local government systems in South Sudan and recommend the necessary policy guidelines and action in accordance with the decentralization policy enshrined in the constitution. Its objective is to promote self-governance and enhance the participation of people and communities in maintaining law and order for promoting democratic, transparent and accountable local governments. In this policy, decentralization as a form of democratic governance is seen as viable for bringing government closer to the people at the local government level aimed at making governance democratic, transparent and accountable in delivering services to its citizens. Also in this policy, democracy is regarded as an important feature of governance to which the education system is being called upon to advance.

Another aspect of the South Sudan education policy is the involvement of local community (which commonly is referred to in this paper as the school governing bodies in the forms of SMC and PTA) in the democratic governance of the schools. This policy stipulates that the governance of every public school is vested in a governing body known as the School Management Committee at primary school level (SSEA, 2008). According to this policy, the school governing body consisting of parents, teachers and members of the community is established by a head teacher of a primary school in consultation with the County and Payam Educational Authorities. The principal role of the school governing body is that it is an authority in matters relating to the management of public schools whose managerial powers include among other things the following: financial management; academic management; disciplinary management; co-curricular activities management; teacher and learner welfare management. Other roles of the governing bodies include overseeing the creation and implementation of Parent Teacher Association/activities aimed at promoting the interests of the school by bringing parents, members of the community, learners and teachers into close co-operation. In performing this role, the PTA oversees the mobilization of the resources from the community on behalf of the school; monitoring and evaluating school performance. There is also a South Sudan government education policy that requires a prefect system to be established in a democratic manner at every public primary school for establishing formal channels of communication between learners and the school administration. Under this policy, democratic skills and knowledge are expected to be acquired by pupils in the school governance through democratic process such as voting for prefects in elections. Based on the above argument, it is evident that democratic ideals have been incorporated within the educational policies as well as in the policy of the interim constitution of the government of South Sudan. Hence, there are deliberate attempts by the government of South Sudan to promote democracy in primary schools.

## **5.2 What are the students and teachers' perceptions of democracy?**

Findings of the study indicate that both pupils and teachers have similar notion of their perception of democracy. Most pupils see democracy as a way of governing society. In that regard, their understanding of democracy is related to how to rule a country. In explaining the meaning of democracy, the pupils relate it the governing situations and the organization structures they have in the schools. In that context, they conceived of democracy as a form of

government in which there is choosing and replacement of government officials through free and fair elections to govern the community. They also associate democracy with voting and election of the local government officials at the lowest level of government, voting in presidential election, referendum and prefects to serve as students leaders.

Teachers on their part conceive of democracy as an institutional arrangement where those in power are held accountable to the people. Other teachers conceive of democracy as a form of government where the majority rules. Still others understood democracy as a process of peaceful and periodical transfer of power in election from one group to another. In general, there is coherence in the pupils' perception of democracy with that of the teacher in the sense that both the pupils and teachers see democracy as way of governing. This is because in several of the statements of the informant's perception of democracy, it seems they understood democracy as a method. For them, democracy is all about voting, school organizational structures such as the SMC, PTA and the prefects. Their view of democracy is also about knowledge of the democratic systems of government, legislative power/structure or parliament. Clearly from their stand point of view, they do not view democracy as a way of life or process but they see it as a way of governing. Whereas in my mind, democracy is more than that, it is about engagement in society and what kind of values a society needs to embrace. Torres (1998) talks of democracy as a method and content. Democracy as a method is the structure where there is election and division of power for governing society. Democracy as a content in education is a way of life. It is concerned with democratic values, how we lead our lives and what kind of virtues we need to display in our everyday lives. Hence, although both teachers and the pupils have to a certain degree displayed knowledge about what democracy is and how it works as a method of governing society, their understanding of democracy is limited. Thus, in their understanding of the concept of democracy, they were not able to adequately relate it as a process of how to live it in everyday life.

### **5.3 How do Primary School Organizational Structures Promote the Practices of Democracy?**

The key phrase in this research question is “schools’ organizational structures” in the promotion of the practices of democracy in primary school. The organizational structures identified in the primary school in this study are mainly the school administration comprising the head-teacher,

the deputy, heads of departments and class-masters; the SMC and the PTA; and the prefects consisting of an elected head and members to represent the interest of the pupils. In this section, I will discuss the organic role of these structures with reference to the practices of democracy. All schools I visited had a number of pupils/students who are elected or chosen to represent the views of the pupils. In each of the schools, pupils are elected to serve in the school governance structure as a prefectural body. This is in line with the South Sudan education policy that requires schools to form prefect systems at every public primary school for establishing formal channels of communication between learners and the administration. According to the policy, a head learner and members of the learners association is to be elected in a democratic process to represent the student body. Before a prefect candidate can be elected into the office of the prefectural body, he or she has to provide information about the personal qualities or competency skills s/he can bring in to serve in this office. The information regarding the qualities of the prefectural candidates is presented to the larger body of the pupils at the assemblies prior to the election time. Any candidate aspiring to run for the post of prefect as a student leader must meet certain criteria of competency skills or knowledge stipulated by the electoral commission to be able to function in this office. For example, the following are the qualification criteria for any candidate intending to run for the post of a prefect. The requirements for the qualification are:

- (1) The candidate must be a disciplined pupil with no records of bad behavior in the school.
- (2) The candidate must have a good command of English language.
- (3) Candidate must be a primary six pupil to qualify for the post of Head Boy or Head Girl.
- (4) The academic performance of the candidate must be good.
- (5) The candidate must be a pupil of the school for at least two years or more. This is to avoid the newcomers whose behaviors are not fully known in the school yet

An electoral commission (consisting of a group of members of students and teachers) set up to monitor voting and the smooth running of the prefectural election is in my mind a democratic activity. Furthermore, what I consider also to be a democratic activity of the prefectural body is the role of students in keeping law and order in the school environment by maintaining discipline and punctuality among the pupils. Therefore, by allowing pupils to engage in a democratic

process of the kind of activities outlined above, my deduction is that primary schools seem to facilitate the promotion of the practices of democracy.

However, pupils' participation in the school governance is actually limited. The prefects do not participate in the meetings and decision making process of the school governing body. Consequently, their role as a prefectural body in the school governing structure is but with little power to influence directions of activities except maintaining punctuality and disciplines among the pupils. A question may be asked: How can pupils experience the practice of democracy if they themselves do not form part of the decision making process of the school governing body? To me, this is a kind of recreating hierarchy already present in the society. One reason put forward by some informants for the lack of inclusion of pupils in the decision making process of the school governing body is that pupils are minors and therefore not eligible to be part of decision making process in school governance.

This study has also revealed that democratic practices are being promoted through the participation of the SMC and the PTA in the school governance. According to SSEA (2008), the school governing bodies (the SMC and the PTA) are authority on matters relating to financial management, policy formulation, disciplinary management, teachers and learners welfare, resources mobilization and collection of school fees. Interview with the informants have confirmed that the SMC and PTA are democratically elected members who actually participate in the governance and support of the schools. Indeed, elements of democratic practices emerge through the promotion of SMC and PTA as part of the school organizational structures. There are democratic practices in primary schools. First and foremost, there is a joint governance of the schools which involves the school administration, the SMC and the PTA. Second, the SMC and the PTA are democratically elected members serving on the school governing structure. Third, the fact that the SMC and the PTA are organic representation of parents to participate in the governance of the school and to have a say in the day-to-day running of the school activities is a feature of the practices of democracy. Fourth, parents' participation in the school governing structure makes educational authorities to be seen as promoting diversity of participants in the running of the activities in the schools. This is important for support of democracy as it promotes local participation to solve local problems. Moreover, parental involvement in the education



activities can also be seen as a right or an outright democratic value as enshrined in the South Sudan education policy (SSEA, 2008). School support given by the SMC and PTA as the school governing body through mobilization of resources in cash and in kind has been confirmed by several informants. Parents' role in financial management and monitoring of school performance as a means of holding school authorities and teachers accountable has also been confirmed. In that aspect, it can be argued that SMC and PTA participation in the school governance through resource mobilization is a democratic means of promoting good quality education service delivery for the learners. Parents' participation in financial management and monitoring school performance gives them a voice in school governance structure and thus encourages accountability and transparency in the delivery of the education services. This is consistent with the South Sudan Education policy which requires that School Management Committees and Parent Teachers Associations be formed by the communities at school levels as a means of engaging parents to commit themselves to the delivery and management of education services to the citizens of Southern Sudan. The requirement of this policy is that the SMC and PTA are to play a supervisory role of the financial management to ensure accountability and transparency of school expenditures and also the supervision of the quality of the delivery of education services in the matters of school environment (teaching performance, school facilities, condition, records, and stores) and education personnel performance (SSEA, 2008). It can be deduced from this argument that the involvement of parents in activities such as those mentioned above is in accord with the democratic principles of accountability and transparency that I believe the schools in South Sudan are attempting to promote. In that respect, I argue that such democratic engagement of the SMC and PTA in the school governing structure is in line with the South Sudan education decentralization policy aimed at bringing government closer to the locals as a means for them to manage their own affairs. Decentralization has been hailed as the most suitable democratic means for the parents to participate in the school governance and management (UNESCO, 2009).

On the contrary, the dominant role played by the head teachers in decision making to the exclusion of other groups in school governance has also been confirmed. In some schools, the SMC and the PTA as the school democratic organs can just exist in name. In the schools, the head teachers make most of the decisions on matters of finance with little influence or voice

from the teachers and the PTAs. In that aspect this study assumes schools lose experiencing the practices of democratic values if other players in the school governance are not given equal chance. Hence, in spite of their involvement in the school governance, parents like the pupils do not have a much voice and influence in how the schools are run. Their participation in the actual school governance is limited. Interviews with the informants have confirmed that in the school governance structure parents play mainly a supportive role in forms of providing labor and materials in the construction and maintenance of school buildings. When it comes to actual decision making in the school governance, most parent are considered untrained and not expert in decision making. Shaeffer (1994) argues that in order to facilitate the formulation and the implementation of the education policy processes, understanding barriers of participation for stakeholders in the school governance is very important. In other words, involving communities in the education service delivery as part of the school governance structure has many challenges. Participatory approaches in school governance tend to overlook complexities and questions of power within school communities. No community, group, or household is homogenous. Thus, in school governance structure, it is crucial to examine and understand community contexts, characteristics and power balance (Crewe & Harrison, 1998, in Uemura, 1999). Hence, this study assumes that in order to expect parents to participate effectively in the governance of schools they should be given training and necessary capabilities of financial knowledge to handle funding and technical knowledge and skills to run schools. Indeed for parents to be effective and capable of holding school authorities accountable, they should have training in these skills.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Is democracy present in primary schools of South Sudan? It appears there is democracy in the primary schools of South Sudan. This study seems to indicate that democratic values and behaviors are being fostered in primary schools of South Sudan. In this study, evidence seemingly suggested that in the schools, there is joint decision making process involving SMC, PTA, the school administrations and pupils to participate in shared responsibility in the governance of the schools. The research findings has also shown that parents representation in the school governing body in the form of SMC and/or PTA is an important component of their participation in school governance. The election of members of the SMC and PTA as key structural components of school governance systems is one means for the democratic parents in the school governance. Membership of parents in the SMC and PTA through election is a

democratic process which gives them a voice in the school governance. Therefore, this study concludes that the formation of school committees and parent teacher associations in schools and their engagement in the school governing activities is a tangible way parents are being democratically involved in schools governance. The presence of the SMC and PTA in school is one way parents can participate in the supervision and monitoring of teachers attendance and school performance for the improvement of the quality of learning. While government can have as its education policy the SMC and PTA as structures designed to facilitate democratically community and parental involvement, there are times that these bodies are not involved in decision making in the schools. The finding of this study has shown that parental engagement in the democratic governance of primary schools to some extent is limited. Hence, this study concludes that parents' roles in the school are mainly supportive and consultative in nature for a need to build classrooms and meet daily school administration costs.

This study has also revealed that students take part democratically in the form of prefects in the school governance structure. The democratic process of voting prefects through periodical elections is one means pupils get involved in the school governance. As part of their responsibilities, prefects serve as a link between the pupil body and the school administration. They are charged with the responsibility of bringing the complaints of the pupils to school administrations. The prefects also supervise and represent the views of the pupils to the school administration and vice versa. In general, what this study has revealed is that pupils are involved in the school governance through pupils' representatives in forms of prefectural body. In that regard, this study concludes that they are indeed involved in a democratic process in the school governance. Although children have been positively involved in the school governance in the areas of responsibility sharing with the school authority in form of prefects, however, apart from their participation in the school governance as pupil representatives, all indications are that pupils play minimal roles in their participation in school governance with no influence on decision making. They are neither represented on the SMC that governs the school nor the SDC that settles disciplinary cases in the school. Based on this finding, I conclude that pupils do not engage to a greater extent in genuine democratic practices except in maintaining discipline and punctuality as well as doing some cleaning on the school compounds as part of sharing responsibility in the school governance structure.

When it comes to the policy documents, I want to say that they are indeed revealing a very optimistic picture for South to embrace democracy. In fact, policies on the practices of democracy are in place for the education systems and that is a good point of departure on the part of the Government of South Sudan. So, where do we go from here? May be South Sudan needs a systematic approach for teacher training in order to equip them with knowledge and didactic skills on how to cope with democracy issues in classrooms. The ability of having a democratic nation or for that matter imparting democratic knowledge, values and skills to young people cannot be done overnight. It is a process. The democratic process needs to be given time so that the values, knowledge and skills take roots in the minds of the young people and become internalized. Very soon, South Sudan will be an independent newest nation-state in Africa. In that respect, for South Sudan to be an independent democratic nation, it needs the young people to serve in an independent judiciary systems, citizens who can uphold democratic values and respect human rights. This is where the need for a sound policy on the promotion of democracy in schools as well as policies for the training of competent and knowledgeable teachers on issues of democracy plays a crucial role in preparing young people for the emerging new democratic nation in Africa.

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## Appendix A

### Interview questions guide to the head teachers and teachers

1. What kind of educational background and work experience do you have?
2. What comes to your mind when people talk about democracy?
3. Tell me, to what extent and about which issues you are involved in decision making in this school.
4. Give me an example of one of the most difficult work related decisions you have ever made.
  - i. When did this happen?
  - ii. What was the situation?
  - iii. Who else was involved?
5. Do children in this school have chances of interacting on a daily basis with a variety of individuals from different ethnic groups?
6. In your opinion, how and to what extent are tolerance and freedom of speech tools in interaction amongst pupils and teachers?
7. Have you ever sought cooperation for doing work which you could not have managed to do alone yourself?
  - i. What approaches have you ever used to secure such cooperation if any?
  - ii. From whom were you seeking this cooperation?
  - iii. What were you trying to get from them?
  - iv. What outcomes did you get from them?
8. Describe a situation of conflict resolution you have ever worked on
  - i. What was the outcome?
  - ii. What lesson did you learn?
  - iii. If you were teaching that same conflict resolution to teachers as well as students, would you vary your approach? If so, what would you stress?
9. How and to what extent do you involve parents and students in the activities of the school? Are they involved in making any decisions? If yes, about what issue?

10. Do you have any strategies to protect and defend pupils from arbitrary behaviours (bullying) of elderly pupils, peers and teachers?
11. What is the role of motivating pupils to achieve their own goals for future education and jobs?

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview questions guide for the pupils**

1. How old are you and what class/grade do you attend?
2. Please describe a regular school hour/lesson in your class.
3. What have you learned about democracy in school?
4. What have you learned about election/voting?
5. Have you exercised an election in school?
6. Are you planning to vote in the upcoming election?
7. Do you have any class leader in your class? If yes, tell me how your classmate was chosen to be your class leader?
8. Do you have any rules in this school concerning students' and teachers' behaviour?
9. If students ever break a rule in class or school, how does the teacher react?
10. If teachers ever break a rule, what are the reactions?
11. Do you have chances of interacting on a daily basis with a variety of individuals not only from your own ethnic group, but also from other different ethnic groups in your school?
12. So, what is your feeling of being in the same school/class with children from other ethnic groups?

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview guide for the government officials**

1. What kind of formal background do you have and what are your specific tasks in this job?
2. What do you think makes good governance?
3. In your opinion, what democratic values should be taught in primary schools?
4. What are the government's policies that seek and support the growth of these democratic values?
5. How are these policies being implemented in primary schools?
6. Are there specific programs in schools that can educate youth in their role as (future) citizens of South Sudan?
7. If yes, at what educational levels are these programs implemented?
8. What measures have been taken to assure the sufficient training of teachers in such issues as democracy, citizenship, and human rights?
9. Sudan will be having its first ever democratic election in 2010. In your opinion, has adequate civic education and voting information been passed onto the youth to prepare them for the upcoming election?