LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	**African National Congress**
AWB		**Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging**[1]
DoE		**Department of Education**
MDM	-	**Mass Democratic Movement**
NEPI	-	**National Education Policy Investigation**
NP	-	**National Party**
OS	-	**Observation Schedule**
SA	-	**South Africa**
SASA	-	***South African Schools Act***
SGB	-	**School Governing Body**
SJ1	-	**The first School Journal**
SJ2	-	**The second School Journal**
SMT	-	**School Management Team**
UKZN	-	**University of KwaZulu-Natal**
USA	-	**The Unites States of America**

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1 Africaner Resistance Movement

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE INQUIRY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is not the only country to have known racial segregation and racial inequality. Many other countries, including some of the so-called best democracies of our age, have practised this to a greater or lesser extent. Yet, South Africa is the only country where racism (in the 20th century) was enshrined in the Constitution and enforced - through the aid of legislation - by successive whites-only governments from 1948. What made South Africa a racially segregated country of a special kind was the fact that unlike other countries that had practised segregation, the so-called politically powerless races were in the majority. In terms of the Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950, the country's population was classified into four main racial categories, namely: whites (European), African (natives), coloureds and Asians (Indian). In the words of Wilson and Thompson (1975: 402), the Act clearly defined "who was who and, therefore, entitled to what."

Before and during apartheid, South African public schools were 'strictly' segregated according to race (Steyn, Steyn & de Waal, 1998:38). Learners attended separate schools according to the four main population groups, namely Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians (Steyn *et al*., 1998:24). Racial separation was the defining feature of schools during the colonial and apartheid eras, which explains why this inquiry examines racial integration in the post-colonial and post-apartheid eras (Nkomo, McKinney & Chisholm, 2004: 5). The study focuses on the way learners deal with diversity on a daily basis at their school. In search of what Pandor (2004: 14) calls "quality education", black learners overwhelmed the South African education system, by migrating from their under-resourced and underdeveloped rural and township[2]

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2. According to the Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950, non-Whites in South Africa were placed in settlements referred to as Townships. These were situated just outside white living areas. The African townships were mostly on Zone 3 land which was the land adjacent to factories. They lived relatively poor, under-resourced lives. People who lived in these townships had to commute to and from work using trains and taxis to access the white designated

schools to affluent and well-resourced neighbouring suburban schools. In fact, this was the movement of African[3] learners to the nearby coloured,[4] Indian[5] and white[6] schools. There has not been any movement in the direction of black schools (Soudien, 2004: 89).

On the basis of the *Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950,* the *Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950* and other legislation - the details of which are given in Chapter 2 - which were specifically adopted to make racial segregation work, the different race groups were accorded different and unequal life opportunities in South Africa. However, the end of apartheid and the advent of democracy in 1994 legally ended this situation. Among the changes resulting from this so-called "small miracle of 1994" (Phatlane, 2006:1) were deliberate post-apartheid efforts to create a non-racial society. For practical reasons, these efforts could only be realised by deliberately breaking down the racial barriers which were artificially constructed by apartheid - including the

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areas. During apartheid rule there were sufficient police to knock at every door every night - in all these townships - to demand permits from the occupants of the houses. Anyone who was found without a permit was assaulted and arrested.

3. In this study I define 'African' as encompassing the population categories that were classified as non-Whites by the South African Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950 and which did not form part of the Tricameral parliament system in 1984. In this study Africans are those who were classified in terms of their ethnicities, namely Nguni and Sotho. Among the Nguni are the Zulus, Xhosas, Tsongas, Vendas, Swatis and Ndebeles and among the Sotho are the Pedis, Tswanas and S. Sotho-speaking people of the apartheid era. They were referred to as 'Blacks'. In the Employment Equity Act, the term 'Black' refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians. It should be noted that references used in this study might sometimes use the term 'Blacks' to mean non-Whites and also to mean 'Africans', interchangeably.

4. According to the race classification of South Africa, Coloureds were people born from mixed racial relationships – especially those between Africans and Whites. They were treated better than the Africans. They have a rich culture and ethnicities, such as the Griquas and the Malays, etc.

5. My study takes cognisance of the fact that most Indians regard themselves as Blacks and also as Africans. In South Africa, the Indians are the descendants of Indians who came to Kwa-Zulu Natal in the 1860s to work on the sugar plantations.

6. In my study Whites refer to the descendants of the Dutch (1652), British (1820), other European countries and countries, such as the United States of America (USA), who either occupied and/or colonised Africa and who emigrated to - and settled - in South Africa. This includes - but is not limited to - different "white ethnicities", such as the British, Irish, Scottish, Italians, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, etc., and their inner ethnicities within each group. They were never divided in terms of their original languages or countries of origin; they were always referred to as white people as they will be referred to in this study.

South Africans refer to all the people of South Africa - black and white.

desegregation and deracialisation of the schooling system through the promotion of school integration.

Against this background, it is my intention to determine - in this study - how learners, who have been so divided and denied any form of social interaction across race by apartheid, now experience a desegregated learning environment at Van Den Berg High School - a former Whites-only Afrikaans medium school in South Africa. A number of considerations have guided and influenced my selection of the school. I will return to these considerations later in the chapter. The main purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of diversity by learners who had, historically, been divided by race yet, today, share a common educational space in a desegregated school environment. Another intention of this study is to make a contribution to issues of diversity in education in South Africa. Historically, race is inscribed in the functioning of everyday life by schools where the majority of learners spend a great part of their lives (Nkomo *et al.,* 2004:4). This provided me with further reasons to find answers to my questions in a school because schools are institutions of socialisation and they become contested terrain in a changing society (Keto, 1990: 26, Bell; 2004:56). The following research question guided this study:

> *How do learners, who were historically divided by apartheid purely on*
> *racial grounds, now, experience a desegregated school environment?*

Responding to the challenges of racial diversity in schools raises other complex and wide-ranging questions which have general relevance to school managements today (Heystek *et al,* 1999: 187). Though I was particularly interested in the foregoing question, I also recognised that in order to get to the bottom of these experiences, I had to confront and find answers to the following sub-questions:

- How does prejudice - resulting from the long history of discrimination and racial separation - shape learners' perceptions of one another?
- How do such perceptions aid or hinder integration?
- How does Van Den Berg High School, in particular, account for the trajectory of integration in the school since desegregation?

1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

A great deal of research has been conducted on educational change, reform and transformation in the world (Sarup, 1986: 23; Sarup, 1991: 63; Fullan, 1991: 3; Morris *et al*, 2003: 79). Research done in South Africa on educational change has tracked change in desegregated schools after the introduction of the Clase models[7] in 1990 and after the South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996. These research projects present a picture of minimal changes in the practices of such schools and an absence of co-ordinated programmes to address the issues of diversity and inequality (Naidoo, 1996a; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Sekete *et al,* 2001) Learners and educators in desegregated schools continue to face significant challenges regarding integration and diversity. It is almost up to individual schools to proceed either with minimal direction or without direction from the Department of Education (Carrim, 1998: 21).

A few other research projects - focusing on problems encountered by desegregated schools - have also been conducted (Christie, 1990; Metcalfe, 1991; Carrim, 1992, 1995; Naidoo, 1996b; Soudien, 1998; Zafar, 1998). These studies laid a firm foundation for studies in integration and desegregation in the face of the changing environmental circumstances; the persistence of racial attitudes and stereotypes; as well as a general resistance to change (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). It seemed equally important to start identifying emergent interactions among learners in desegregated schools which seemed to be deviating from the established norm. What happens in desegregated schools is also of importance to all other schools in South Africa because desegregated or de-racialised schools (Sujee, 2003; Carrim, 1992) in South Africa can, possibly, be the foundation of social cohesion for a country which was torn apart for decades by racial divisions and discrimination.

It is often said that every project bears the mark of the intellectual interactions that preceded it. Therefore, previous research - such as the above - provided a necessary backdrop to this inquiry. However, the focus of my study is on what has not been

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7. In 1990 Mr Piet Clase, the then Minister of Education and Culture in the House of Assembly, gave all white schools a choice of 3 models of school administration to desegregate. They had to choose between Model A, Model B and Model C. What each of the models entailed is explained in Chapter 2.

central in these studies. The overriding purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the social dynamics of diversity in a desegregated South African public high school where learners from different backgrounds attend school together. Social dynamics include experiences, relationships, interactions, attitudes, intentions, beliefs, reasons and the behaviour of people. I wanted to find out whether - as a result of desegregation efforts - learners at this particular school are racially integrating, both socially and otherwise. If not, I wanted to find the reason for this and what the actual impediments to integration - perceived or real - are.

Although there were earlier attempts in the South African schooling system where unofficial desegregation took place in schools and black and white learners attended school together (Christie: 1992: 29), schools in this country were only legally desegregated in 1997 with the introduction of the South African Schools Act. In terms of this legislation learners from different racial groups now attend school together - after four decades of institutionalised segregation. In fact, apartheid kept learners from diverse social and cultural backgrounds apart. This, and other factors, made racial integration after 1994 a difficult mission to accomplish in some schools - and an impossible one in others. It also limited opportunities for interpersonal contact between black and white learners. The other significant impact of this racial polarisation was that it limited access to knowledge about the 'others' through first-hand acquaintance that would otherwise result from day-to-day interaction. The result of all this was general ignorance about the way the different racial groups lived which, in turn, provided a fertile climate for the creation of myths and, sometimes, inaccurate perceptions about each other.

In terms of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 200 of 1993, the victory of the African National Congress in 1994 led to the establishment - for the first five years after 1994 - of a Government of National Unity, which displaced the Afrikaner Nationalist's apartheid government. This was an achievement hailed by the international community as the "political miracle of the 90s" (Phatlane, 2006:1).

The movement of African learners to formerly segregated schools became a phenomenon for much research attention and it presented education challenges (Christie, 1990; Gaganakis, 1990; Carrim, 1992; Soudien, 1996, 1998a, 1998b; Carrim

& Soudien, 1999; Chisholm, 1999; Dolby, 2001; Soudien & Sayed, 2004; Zafar, 1998). These challenges included increased learner-educator ratios; the depopulation of township and rural schools; the over-population of suburban schools; commuting learner problems; and educator challenges in teaching diverse learner classrooms - in terms of race, ethnicity, class and/or religion (Carrim, 1992; Ranchod, 1997; Van Heerden, 1998; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Machaisa, 2004; Meier, 2005).

In an attempt to address the problems brought about by learner migration and learner urbanisation, the school system sought to implement - among other strategies - a system of educator redeployment where educators from overstaffed schools were placed in schools and areas that needed those most, due to the increase in learner numbers. Township and rural schools were revamped through school zoning and school feeder schemes. The registration of learners was prioritised for learners who stayed - or whose parents worked - within the vicinity of the school (Schools Act, 1996). School clusters were developed to bring schools that were well-resourced together with those that did not have enough resources. Learners were provided with food in their own schools through school feeding schemes. Educators were trained and given appropriate learning and teaching support materials.

The new era promised - among other things - to transform South African policies to ensure that all South African children would have access to a school of their choice and that no child would be turned away from a school on the grounds of race, ethnicity, class and/or religion, or even financial position of parents. However, it is evident that - even in the new dispensation - many inequalities still persist. Schools in the country are not all desegregated. However, for economic reasons, most of the schools in the Greater Tshwane area of Gauteng Province are desegregated. There are learners from diverse backgrounds enrolled in these schools.

Closely analysed, the desegregation of a school is the initial stage of eventual social integration. It deals more with the quantitative aspects of the process of school integration and, usually, concentrates on the demographics of the learners and staff of the school (Naidoo, 1996: 1-4; Nkomo *et al*, 2004: 1). It is the intention of this study to go a step further and to examine the qualitative elements of integration which, generally, refers to the incorporation of different ethnic or racial groups in the same

classes in a school (Corsini, 2002: 866). School integration includes using the content from diverse groups when teaching concepts and skills; helping students to understand how knowledge in the various disciplines is constructed; helping students to develop positive intergroup attitudes and behaviours; and modifying teaching and learning strategies so that students from different racial, cultural, language, and social class groups will experience equal status in the culture and life of the school (Banks *et al,* 2001: 45; Irvine, 2003: 124). The Brown *versus* The Topeka Board of Education case of 1954 is a landmark case that determined the future of education in the United States of America (USA) and in the world as a whole in terms of aiming to provide 'equal' educational opportunities for both black and white students (Carter, 2004: 195).

If one analyses the above guidelines of what one would expect in an integrated school then one can deduce that social integration in a school refers to more than just the numbers of black and white learners, but it include changing the school to meet the needs of all the learners; fostering meaningful interaction amongst learners in the classroom, on the playground and during extra-mural activities; as well as instilling a human rights culture (Nkomo *et al,* 2004: 2). The behaviour, attitudes, experiences, interaction and perspectives of learners were studied.

The aim of the South African government in desegregating schools - both public and independent - was to bring about integration among learners from different backgrounds in order to provide equal educational opportunities for all learners (Naidoo, 1996:11; Sujee, 2003:13). The South African context calls for "integrated pluralism" - an approach in a desegregated school whereby the differences among learners and staff are recognised and accepted, but where an emphasis is placed on fostering respect and interaction. This approach explicitly affirms the educational value inherent in exposing all learners to a diversity of perspectives and behavioural repertoires and it is structured to achieve mutual information exchange, influence, and acceptance (Orfield, 2004: 96). This study examines the question as to whether or not desegregation brings about integration, interaction and respect among learners of different races.

It was necessary to embark on a study such as this in order to establish how the process of desegregation has unfolded in a former Afrikaans medium high school after the

post-apartheid government has opened the doors of learning of all schools to all learners in South Africa. Both the Constitution of South Africa and the South African Schools Act give every learner the right to basic education. In spite of the foregoing, the process of desegregating schools to allow learners from diverse backgrounds to attend the same school has remained slow in some schools and no progress has been made at all in others. The levels of entrenched democratic habits have, therefore, not really been tested (Adam & Moodley, 2004: 160). In *The Pedagogy of Domination* Nkomo maintains that one cannot, reasonably, expect those who have erected apartheid - directly or indirectly - and benefited from it to be able to effectively dismantle it (1990: 13). This study examines the learners' understanding of diversity; their perceptions about 'other races'; their relationships and interaction with learners from other 'races'; their attitudes towards people who are different from them; and the way they speak and respond to those people.

The Race and Values Directorate and the Gender Directorate of the Department of Education (DoE) vaguely address the issue of inequality by pointing out the following in their vision:

- All learners have access to teaching and learning and are catered for in the schools.
- All learners feel welcome in the classroom, irrespective of racial, class, religious and language background (DoE, 2006: 12)

However, at the time of this research, there was neither a plan of action nor a programme in place for desegregated schools to use as guidelines or frame of reference to facilitate their day-to-day management (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). Only recently (2006), the DoE published a monograph, entitled *Strategy for racial integration*, which supports the argument that there are no specific programmes for desegregated schools and attempts to give some general guidelines in this regard. This monograph was published after this research was carried out and after a number of colloquia, workshops and conferences - to which I contributed - had made recommendations to government to that effect.

The importance of this study also lies in the fact that before the publication of this monograph, schools were forced to survive in their own strategies. Even in the post-apartheid period some schools are still without direction and assistance from the education authorities in dealing with issues such as desegregation and diversity. Without claiming to provide a needed recipe in this connection, this study seeks to close the gap by suggesting a practical approach to the issue of school integration that can be applied by all schools that are confronted with the pressure to desegregate. It deals with the issue of transformation and its attendant challenges so that the development of a critical citizenry can be advanced. According to Jansen, the curriculum "should be informed by research; which examines both the autonomy and the interrelationship among the three constructs of race, class and gender in the South African context" (1990:331). This can be achieved if - amongst other things - people's experiences are revealed through research. It is for this reason that I wished to understand how one of these constructs - 'race' - was experienced in a South African desegregated school context.

By drawing attention to how South African learners understand and deal with diversity on a day-to-day basis, this study makes a contribution to the debate on educational change. South African and international scholars will understand the transformation process taking place in South African schools because educational transformation is going to be a feature of education systems for a long time to come. Principle 11 of the White Paper on the Provision of Education in South Africa states that "effective provision of education shall be based on continuing research" (RSA, 1983:3).

The aim of research in education is also to directly address the improvement of practice and to influence educational policymaking (Stenhouse: 1985: 266). Even if an ethnographic case study is specific to context, and does not aim at generalising the findings, it can influence policy. At the National Conference on Racism in 2000 a programme of action was adopted which - amongst other things - aimed at undertaking research to find ways of effectively promoting and deepening respect for traditional cultures with a view to ensuring respect and understanding for their search for identity and respect for their cultures and values so that a common nationhood could be forged out of difference and diversity (SAHRC, 2000: S [2]).

1.3 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It is still a problem in South Africa that the post-apartheid government has not yet designed programmes to teach and educate those who have learnt discriminatory practices to learn how *not to* discriminate - and for those who have learned to be receptive of discrimination, to challenge it. For practical reasons, these practices of non-discrimination and of challenging discrimination cannot happen automatically. Pandor, the National Minister of Education in South Africa, also acknowledged this fact when she said that "Our approach of 'first mix then engage' reflects a somewhat naïve faith in our goodness of heart" (Pandor, 2004:14).

Race relations play an important part in fostering growth and development within communities (Naidoo, 1996:4). South Africa is managing to address its dark history of discrimination and continues to be seen as a model for other countries that still face various forms of discrimination (Naidoo, 1996: 5). Some South Africans believe that our 'tortuous' history has been overcome, while others feel that the reality on the ground, today, suggests the opposite. It is difficult in South Africa to implement diversity education or citizenship education because - as Adam and Moodley rightly observe - in 1993 the government did not have a clear direction of where to lead the schools (Adam & Moodley, 1993:158). Pandor maintains that "our learners in desegregated schools in South Africa are not integrating" (Pandor, 2004:13). Therefore, my wish in this study is to understand what the learners' actual experiences are and if they are desegregated but not integrating.

According to Pandor, "Integration continues to be the least discussed and most ignored aspect of education because 'all' of us are embarrassed to acknowledge that there is still an issue out there calling for our urgent attention" (2004:11). Legislation outlawing all forms of discrimination in the country has been introduced (Mothata, 2000: v). Yet, in spite of the fact that Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa guarantees the protection of human rights, there is evidence that some communities and individuals are still experiencing racial discrimination in one way or another (Brown, 1997:6). It seems logical to argue that *if, indeed,* discriminatory practices are *learnt*, *then* practices that do not discriminate *can also be learned.*

There are numerous Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and parastatal-driven programmes, but very few government driven programmes. What the government does is to publish booklets that emphasise values that must form the basis of school policies and practices which - in my view - are usually not very specific. The drawing up of the different policies at school level is still the responsibility of individual school governing bodies. The former Minister of Education in South Africa, Kader Asmal, argued that there is not a single remedy to different school situations. However, I think any guidelines given to schools should not be vague – they should be very specific.

According to a Department of Education publication, "there are many loopholes in the legal system which allows some schools to manipulate it" (DoE, 2001:13). These loopholes are used by some School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and principals to manage schools according to the letter of the law rather than "according to principle" with the aim to avoid genuinely integrated schools to flourish (DoE, 2001:13). It would, then, be logical to ask questions about the principles and the loopholes, such as "What are those 'principles' that should guide or inform the school's management of diversity?" and "Why are they not specific and readily available for desegregated schools to use in order to avoid alleged manipulation by some SGBs and headmasters?" The fact that it is still left in the hands of the SGBs to decide on very pertinent issues affecting the national plan of school integration is totally unacceptable because they usually perpetuate the cultural ethos of the schools by maintaining the staff composition and the composition of the SGBs which delay - if not prevent - integration *per se*.

Some researchers do not think that programmes and the training of people to learn not to discriminate is enough to teach them not to discriminate. In an interview with Nieuwenhuis (May 15, 2004) on the issue of 'emotional and psychological effects of discrimination' he argued that people who regard others as less human should first go through what he calls "a significant emotional life experience" for them to stop discriminating against others in all sorts of ways. According to him, designing programmes alone cannot stop people from discriminating against others. I think the programmes may be the starting point in the race against 'race'.

1.4 INTEREST IN THIS AREA OF RESEARCH

My experience as an educator at a former English, Whites-only primary school in Pretoria, Gauteng Province - which is also desegregated - has provided part of the motivation for this research. It was, indeed, a gratifying experience to teach Black, Coloured, White and Indian learners to speak Sepedi which is one of the indigenous languages of South Africa and which is also my first language. What was even more remarkable was that the learners encouraged their parents to organise and attend Sepedi classes in the evenings. I, then, taught the parents, who consisted - amongst others - of university professors, psychologists, medical practitioners, teachers and professionals of various kinds.

The general interest in this community in learning Sepedi was, particularly, commendable in the light of our historical background and the general alienation of African cultures, including their languages, in the curriculum of many schools in the country. The language policy of this particular school included the compulsory learning of Sepedi by learners from Grades 4 to 7. I later terminated my services at this school - after five years - in order to carry out this research on a full-time basis. Within a community with this attitude towards people different from them, also hosted an Afrikaans medium high school, a kilometre away from the English-medium school were I used to teach. This is the High School where I carried out my research

I was also involved as a junior researcher in a project on school integration - funded by South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD). The research project set out to identify 'best practices' in teaching learners in racially diverse classrooms. I was involved in this research project primarily because its objectives corresponded very closely with those of my own research.

My focus was on the issue of the racial diversity of learners and how they experienced this in their particular school on a day-to-day basis. While barely a decade ago the primary preoccupation of the post-apartheid education authorities was to ensure that black learners had access to formerly Whites-only public schools, attention has now shifted to achieving the 'full integration' of learners enrolled in such schools. Studies - such as this one - is therefore an exploration into what was not explored before.

This study assumes that former Model C schools in South Africa have racially diverse learners and are in the process of transformation. Some schools encounter serious problems; some encounter minimal problems; while others seem not to encounter any problems at all. It is worthwhile studying the experiences of learners in the transformation process of schools in South Africa - focusing on their experiences of racial diversity in their specific schools. Learners are, usually, most affected in the process of desegregation because it is, mostly, the learner populations that are desegregated and their experiences, therefore, shed more light on the transformation process in other schools.

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Examining the experiences of learners called for a qualitative research approach because studying learners qualitatively helps researchers to get to know them personally and to experience what they experience in their daily activities at school - an advantage that other researchers, using different research approaches, do not have (Bogdan *et al*, 1992:7, Creswell, 1998: 212). The school life is, in fact, a 'natural setting' for this inquiry (De Vos, 1998:246; Henning *et al.,* 2004:3).

Another reason why a qualitative approach was used for this study is the 'emergent design' of qualitative enquiries which makes it possible for the researcher to make - and change - decisions about data collection strategies during the course of the study (Merriam, 1988: 71). The emergent design means that the researcher does inductive theorising which further implies that one does not have to do research with a blueprint decided and planned in advance, but instead one makes sense of what one finds out only during and when one is busy finding it out (Gillham, 2000:2). I did not know what to expect at first, and even though I put a plan in place I was prepared to adjust it should the need arise.

For the purpose of this study, qualitative research will be defined as "the utilisation of different qualitative data collection techniques, with the aim to describe, to make sense of, and to interpret or reconstruct" (De Vos, 1998:239) the interaction of the diverse

races in terms of the meanings that learners attach to it. The main objective of qualitative research is not only to find out what happens, but also how it happens and why it happens the way it does (Henning *et al*., 2004:3). Qualitative research is more context-bound and the findings are – mostly - specific, although generalisation cannot be totally ruled out because those findings can be transferred to a similar context and a similar situation at a particular point in time.

This inquiry is situated in the social constructionist research paradigm. I am interested in the experiences - in particular, the experiences of learners about diversity in their school. The descriptions of the learners' intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding (Henning *et al*., 2004:20) - as described and constructed by the learners themselves - are regarded as truth and as knowledge. Diversity and how the learners experienced and perceived it is better understood through interpretation which is influenced by, and also interacts with, the social context (Henning *et al*., 2004:20).

During the interpretation of this phenomenon of diversity, the cultural and historical meanings could not be ignored and were taken into consideration (Crotty, 1996: 67). This interpretation is in the form of a framework that captures the complex factors shaping the school lives and experiences of learners. It consists of the three interlocking core elements of identity: gender, race and social class - with history and context interwoven into the theoretical framework (Bell & Nkomo, 2001: 16) of multiculturalism, diversity education, anti-racist education and what Banks *et al* (2004) call citizenship education. These theories serve as the pillars for this study of diversity and they are discussed later in this chapter.

The social constructivist paradigm has methodological implications - that is why I utilised an ethnographic case study design for this inquiry which called for document analysis, participant and non-participant observations, informal conversations and in-depth interviews as data collection methods to adhere to the principle that the sources of 'truth' are varied. Reality is imperfectly grasped because no one scientist can claim to objectively capture reality and because human beings approach phenomena with their personal biases and theories (Henning *et al*, 2004:21). I have triangulated my data collection methods in order to enhance the possibility of getting common varied truth

from the data. The different data collection methods yielded similar results; therefore the credibility of the study was enhanced.

During the analysis I read through the data and embarked on preliminary coding - taking codes straight from the data. Because of what I had read from previous research projects on integration, it took me some time to capture the narrative that the data was conveying as it portrayed a different message. Because I had a lot of data, I used computer-based, qualitative data analysis software which helped a great deal in the organisation of the interview data and in substantiating the manual codes already established. I must mention that after the inductive open coding in ATLAS.Ti, the data became so organised that it was a challenge to select what to use and what not to use in the report. This is when the research question became useful.

The data tells the story of an integrating school - from its crawling stages to its present position. Henning and Mouton recommend that a researcher does his/her own data analysis because they believe you then get to "know your data like you know yourself." If you do the analysis yourself, you can quickly pick up a similarity and a difference or something strange within the data (Henning, 2004:105; Mouton, 2001:73). While I agree with the idea of doing my own manual analysis, I still used ATLAS.Ti for the purposes of data organisation and also to have an audit-trail on how the analysis was done for scrutiny by the research community.

The data analysis process is available as an appendix at the back of this thesis. There were similarities from the observational data; the data from documents; and from informal conversations. I first did an inductive making-of-meaning (Henning *et al*., 2004:105) of the data and followed the steps of content analysis. After a description of the data, I interpreted the findings from the interpretive paradigm (Cohen *et al*, 2000:168) - not forgetting the importance of context. This, then, led me to take the analysis a step further and to embark on the racial diversity discourse which the data was conveying. In discourse analysis, language is considered as more than just a reflection of reality. The language used and the meaning it has in a specific context becomes a very important element in discourse analysis (Henning *et al*., 2004:3 & 4). My findings are presented in a narrative form and are about the meaning constructed from the language that presents the data (Henning *et al*., 2004:31).

1.6   THE RESEARCH SITE: VAN DEN BERG HIGH SCHOOL

Van Den Berg High School was purposely selected for this inquiry - Van Den Berg is a pseudonym suggested to me by one of the learners at the school. It is a former Afrikaans medium Whites-only public high school in South Africa, named after one of the country's former statesman and an important figure in the life of the National Party, in general - and in the politics of apartheid, in particular. The school was established in 1937 as a "Laerskool" or Junior Secondary School with Grades 8 to 10. After a few years the school introduced its first Grade 12 class. In the 70 years of its existence, the school operated under three different names, including Van Den Berg.

This is the school where I carried out my research. Indeed, the school was an exception in a number of respects. I found an interesting contrast in the story of the school - as told by the school documents and the learners. The documents, especially the very negative letters that the school received from angry parents who could not hide their feelings against the incoming black learners, but the experiences of the learners were very different from the tone the letters from the white parents conveyed. Understandably, the documents tell the history of the school while the learners tell their contemporary experiences which do not necessarily reflect what used to be, but what is.

At the time of this research, besides the African learners the school had also enrolled learners from the coloured and the Indian communities – albeit such learners were in a minority. The white and African learners formed the majority of the school-going population. It is the former Whites-only schools that are facing the challenge of integration because black learners are looking for quality education (Pandor, 2004:14). Another interesting aspect is the fact that the school has retained its present name even after a referendum on a name change that was held in 1998 which suggested that the majority of parents and of the School Governing Body (12:1 to be exact) and the majority of learners voted for a name change.

This was the first high school to be established in this area of Pretoria. Changes started to occur at the school when most of the learners left in 1992 and 1993 because the

AWB was using the school as a political arena. The documents show an exodus of learners - whose parents did not belong to the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB)[8] - from this school to nearby Afrikaans medium schools.

The period 1992 and1993 in the history of South Africa was a period of uncertainty for many people because it was just after 1989, the year in which F. W. de Klerk, the former State President, lifted the ban on the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Communist Party and other political organisations and released political prisoners – followed by Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 (Carrim, 1998: 7). In this specific school the principal, then, was clearly not happy with the political developments in the country and, consequently, there was a combination of anger and frustration amongst members of his particular political party.

The AWB could not find an audience anywhere, except at the school. The principal of the school started to invite a minister from his church to assemblies at the school where he openly criticised the National Party's policies in favour of the AWB - to which he and the principal belonged. The principal used the school for his own party political purposes by openly canvassing support for it as and when it suited him.

Some of the parents who belonged to other political parties reported him to the Department of Education. Consequently, a disciplinary hearing was held whereupon the principal was warned never to repeat what he had done. He, then, raised the AWB flag at the school. He had very strong support from his political party. They started holding rallies on the school premises - about which the majority of the parent community were very unhappy, arguing that "the school was being turned into a political battlefield" (SJ (1)[9]: 34). As a demonstration of their disapproval, the majority of the parents began to remove their children from the school to other Afrikaans high schools that advocated the desire to stay 'Afrikaans' (Principal 1st Interview txt, 2004).

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8 Africaner Resistance Movement- A party which consisted of Afrikaans speaking people who favoured apartheid and protected it against all odds.
9. The first School Journal which recorded daily events at the school from 1988 to 1993.

This step resulted in the reduction of learner numbers in this school, forcing the Department of Education to remove educators who were 'in excess' and place them in schools where they were needed. The present principal took over in 1994 when the school was in real chaos (Principal 1st interview). He was faced with two big challenges: to get more learners into the school and to win back the confidence of the parent community that had left the school. Most of the learners who remained at the school were children of the parents who supported the AWB. It is, therefore, not hard to imagine the uncertainty in which the new principal found himself when he took over the reins at the school.

Despite the challenges, this principal managed to receive an acknowledgement award from parliament. In 2004 the former national Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, acknowledged him in parliament as a pioneer of diversity management in this part of South Africa. However, despite the principal's achievements - and in contrast to the transformation at this school - the school's name has been retained. The school won an award for being a school that was most desegregated with the least racial problems. As Joyce (1990: 8) puts it, the man the school is named after, while he did not invent apartheid, "nevertheless managed to knit together the many existing threads of legal and social prejudice and created from them one of the most massive and coherent bodies of control legislation ever devised."

During the time this research was carried out, the teaching personnel at Van Den Berg High School consisted of 34 white men and women and one African-American English Second Language expert from an American school on an exchange programme with Van Den Berg. Of the 34, 28 teachers' salaries were paid by the Department of Education and the rest were paid by the School Governing Body. 19 of the 34 were male and 15 were female. Of the 19 male teachers, 11 were Afrikaans and 8 English; and of the 15 female teachers 8 were English. This 8 includes the African American English teacher who was the only black at the time of this research. In total there were 18 Afrikaans teachers and 16 English teachers. At the time of this study the school had 34% black learners - black as in of African descent - but no black educators from South Africa. This is not to suggest that only those from the same race are better positioned to assist their learners because that may be too simplistic an assumption to make, but having a staff population that is predominantly white in a school with a

sizable percentage of black learners sends different messages to the learners and, hence, the need to attend to the staff composition (Nkomo & Vandeyar *et al*, 2006).

The present principal is a middle-aged male from the Afrikaans community. Contrary to what one would expect, he accepted change and is also very innovative. He was determined to turn things around at this school when he took over in 1994 - obviously not a popular decision at that particular time. A month after he was appointed principal, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the President of the new South Africa. The principal removed the old South African flag and put up the new South African flag. The principal alleges that to protest against this move, the flag was taken down more than three times by unknown people who came during the night until he decided to put it up in the mornings and take it down again in the afternoons (Principal's 1st interview, 2004). Asked in an interview how he anticipated the future of this school, he acknowledged the challenges facing him and the country when he said: "Sadly, this country still has a long way to go." This comment is very similar to that of Mary Winston - a 73 year old lifelong resident of Detroit, a city with the second largest black majority in America - who responded in an interview about the September 11[10] incident in the US: "We're all Americans, but we have got a long way to go" (The Detroit News, 2005).

After the South African Schools Act, Act No.84 0f 1996 came into effect, every school in the country had to enrol learners from all racial groups. Van Den Berg High School was no exception and, therefore, also had to enrol black learners in order to retain the good educators in the school. This move was, however, not its first choice. It was made after many other alternatives by the School Governing Body of the time had failed with a number of initiatives to keep the school white and Afrikaans. When everything else had failed, at the beginning of 1996, the school changed its language policy from Afrikaans only to both Afrikaans and English and then invited applications from the black learners in the nearby townships. This move turned things around for the school. Presently, the school is not able to cope with the number of applications they receive every year and they have to turn some learners away.

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10. On 11 September 2001 in the US the Pentagon in Washington and the two twin towers in New York were attacked by terrorists who had hijacked aeroplanes and had flown them into the buildings - destroying themselves and also killing many people in the process.

The principal at the time of this inquiry was concerned that the school may be resegregated in the years to come - as in the US (Kozol, 2005; Orfield, 2004) - if the black parents do not move into the school area. The Provincial Department of Education, with its feeder zone admission scheme, give zones to schools and provides them with a list of areas from which they should admit learners. According to the principal, this "will reverse the gains that this school has made in terms of integrating learners from diverse backgrounds in many other ways." This practice was also used in the US and it led to the segregation of schools that were desegregated. Mickleson (2004) refers to the practice in the USA as "zoning" which, she maintains, stops more learners from the minority groups outside the area gaining access to the suburban schools. By zoning schools, the South African government is responding to a concern about township schools which are gradually becoming white elephants due to the migration of learners to suburban schools (Sekete *et al,* 2001: 45).

The school - with 843 learners in 2004 - is desegregated and has adopted a parallel medium of instruction. The learners come from all four main racial groups, with white learners in the majority of 43%, African learners at 34%, Coloured learners at 2.8%, Indian learners at 1.2% and the balance of the learners coming from outside the country. Learners from outside South Africa also contribute to the diversity of learners in this school and although there are only a few of them, they include learners from Pakistan, China, Australia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. This, then, makes the school diverse in many other ways – hence, the relevance of this inquiry to determine how the learners understand and experience this diversity. Special reference is made in this study to racial diversity in the school as one aspect of transformation.

Most of the learners are from Gauteng Province. Some of the other learners commute from as far afield as Mpumalanga and North West Provinces, while others travel over 150 kilometres every morning and afternoon to reach Van Den Berg High School. The parents of these learners pay the ever-escalating costs of this travelling which is over and above the school fees. I acknowledge desegregation that has taken place in other schools and in other forms, as in formerly exclusive Indian schools and in former exclusively Coloured schools. One should understand that the process of desegregation in the South African context meant that African learners moved into a space that once

'belonged' to Indian, White and Coloured learners, but the opposite was never the case. I reflected on learners' understandings of desegregation and integration in practice, while I also understood how participation in school activities and practices on a daily basis impacts on their overall experiences.

A total of 16 learners were purposely sampled in terms of diversity and studied in depth. Their diversity included gender, class, grades, race, capabilities and disabilities. I, then, began with the observation of these learners in the midst of others in their classrooms. I concluded the interviews and observations in the fourth term of 2004. A relationship of trust was established with the learners who were involved in my study, with the principal of the school and with most of the educators. I have visited learners at their homes who have friends from other racial groups to observe how they interact and get along (Higson *et al*, 1995: 118-205). The home visits continued in the first school term of 2005.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is difficult for a South African resident who has been adversely affected by the system of separate development in general and in education in particular, to speak and/or write about diversity in education with the same degree of detachment which he/she would, otherwise bring to writing about e.g. birds in South Africa. Who I am matters more in this type of study. I am an African woman in South Africa. I was directly and adversely affected by the system of Bantu Education. I attended rural schools and qualified at one of the - so called - 'bush' universities. It was a challenging process to write about school desegregation in South Africa, especially in the former white school among white staff members and multiracial learners. Another danger is that when a person studies a contemporary issue, such as racial integration in South African schools - which many people may be reluctant to discuss, the amount of information one may get may be limited compared to what one would get when studying a different topic. It needs to be treated with the consideration that suits its sensitivity.

Another issue - which is one of the aspects of qualitative research - is researcher bias. Researcher bias has led to the view that qualitative research is subjective rather than objective. According to Ratner (2002:69), some qualitative researchers believe that one cannot be both objective and subjective while others believe that the two can coexist and that one's subjectivity can facilitate the understanding of the world of others. What I have done to reduce this subjectivity is to reflect on my possible biases. I could step back and recognise my biases that distorted my understanding. The above researcher bias is closely related to another challenge which is "the ability to keep an open mind" - as Gillham (2000: 18) puts it. This, basically, addresses the problem of pre-knowledge and assumptions. Even if you 'know' what is going on in the setting, you have to act as if you did not because you actually do not know it. I had to keep an open mind every time I was at the school – which, I agree, was difficult because of the fact that as human beings we usually feel that we are compelled to understand and to make sense of what we are investigating.

Our interpretation of new knowledge in terms of what we already know can be avoided (Gillham 2000:18; Stenhouse, 1985: 211) by concentrating on the 'qualitative element' of the research. This involves finding out how people understand themselves or their context; finding out what lies behind the objective evidence; finding out the reasons for your results, for example, people's feelings, perceptions and experiences of what is going on.

To overcome these limitations, during this research process I was employed on a part-time basis at a research centre, at the University of Pretoria, amongst mostly white South African researchers. I frequently requested them to read and critique my work, and to look, specifically, for subjectivity in the study. This process assisted me to eliminate researcher bias. In this way, I respected the learners' perspectives by using a variety of methods to ensure that what I thought they said, in fact, matched their understanding. My problem was that I spent too much time attempting to keep my own feelings and personal reactions out of the study - which I later realised I could not do. Ultimately, I decided that there was relevance in what I felt about desegregation that cannot be avoided. I, thus, made the decision to reflect and reveal those feelings (Ratner, 2002: 69).

The other limitation is the effect that cultural and gender differences bring to the setting. I am an African female and my participants were learners from all four major race groups of South Africa. The influence of culture and gender emerged very strongly during the interviews.

The research did not include all the learners of the school - which limited the amount of information I could have obtained had I involved everyone. I acknowledge that because the research was only done on a portion of the population about whom I wished to make statements, I cannot expect the findings to be precisely the same as if the whole population were studied (Rist, 1980:115). One can, nevertheless, argue that the smaller the sample, the better the chances are of accurate supervision and record keeping - with a smaller chance of mistakes being made (Gay *et al*., 2000:175).

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

One school in a district in the Gauteng Province was studied. I had to delimit my study to a certain area to make it manageable, so I decided on an ethnographic study of learners in one school to answer my main research question and related sub-questions. The key point in a case study is specificity. In human behaviour, generalisations made from one group of people to others - or one institution to the other - are often suspect. This is because there are too many elements that are specific to groups, such as what is true about one school may well not be true about others (Gillham, 2000:6, Mouton, 1996: 27). That is why I did not aim for generalisations. I, nevertheless, think that the findings, recommendations and conclusions can be used as guidelines in other settings which are similar to the one where the study was conducted. I embarked on a case study which is a detailed investigation of learners in one school. I have, therefore, attempted to analyse the themes that are important to desegregation (Polit and Hungler, 1983:23).

I acknowledge the desegregation that has taken place in former Coloureds-only and former Indians-only schools, but those did not form part of this study. However, since the school that I studied enrolled learners from those communities, those learners were

purposely sampled for my research as well because I wanted information from diverse backgrounds. The Department of Education's Norms and Standards for Funding Schools was used as a guide to choose amongst different categories of schools in terms of resources. This school enrols learners from diverse communities in terms of social class, economic background, language and racial group.

1.9   OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by highlighting the rationale and context of the study, the research question, the design and the methodology. It further introduces the purpose of the study; its contribution to knowledge; and the main argument on which the study evolves. An overview of the study is given in this chapter as well.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature. This chapter has three main parts; the first part places the study within the debates on race and racism, the second part deals with the history of segregation and desegregation in the South African context while the last part reviews both the local and international literature on diversity and school desegregation. The chapter therefore situates this study within the realm of the broader debates on school integration. It is in this chapter where the theoretical underpinnings of the study are highlighted.

Chapter 3 addresses the qualitative research approach and how it correlates with the social constructivist paradigm of my study. Further, the chapter discusses the research design and methodology embarked on in this study. It explains - in detail - which research design was utilised and why. It goes on to explain the data collection methods and why I embarked on those and also why I selected a specific order. Different types of purposive sampling in qualitative research are discussed and the reasons why I chose critical cases purposive sampling in this study and why I did not - and could not - sample in any other manner.

Both Chapters 4 and 5 address the data analyses. To adhere to ethical requirements, the names I use are not the real names of people or the original names which appeared

on documents. I have used pseudonyms for all participants and names referred to in school journals and letters throughout this thesis. It is, therefore, in these chapters that the data is analysed and discussed. Chapter 4 concentrates on the processes that led to desegregation and earlier events in the school after it was desegregated. Chapter 5 concentrates on the school as it was at the moment this research was carried out, and how the learners perceived it. Evidence, in the form of raw data from school documents, is included to support the statements that are made. Reference is also made to the original interview data - as exported from ATLAS.Ti.

Chapter 6 concludes the study. The conclusions drawn from the data - together with the conclusions of the study - are found in this chapter. I, then, also discuss recommendations - using the findings from Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEWING THE LITERATURE IN SEARCH OF THEORY

PART I: DEBATES ON RACE, RACISM, SEGREGATION, DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION.

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In providing an overview of the thesis, Chapter 1 has not only focused on the introduction of the inquiry but also on the analysis of the research problem and question. Most importantly, it has briefly highlighted the purpose for carrying out this research project - together with an introduction to the research site and the approach. This chapter has three main parts: the first part places the study within the debates on race and racism; the second section deals with the history of segregation and desegregation in the South African context; and the last section reviews both the national and the international literature on diversity and school desegregation. The current Chapter intends to place this study within the realm of the broader debates on school integration.

2.2   THE CONCEPTUAL BASE

In order to fully understand the issue of integration - and lack thereof - in schools during the segregation period; the apartheid period; and the post-apartheid period, it is important to first understand the contextual meanings of the key concepts used in the study. For this reason, this study is anchored in the exploration of concepts, such as race, segregation, desegregation, integration, diversity, multiculturalism, assimilation, Afro-centricity, Euro-centricity, etc. These concepts are now explained and their

relevance to the study is pointed out.

Although I depart from the standpoint that there is no such thing called 'race' (Tobias, 1961: 34) and because this is a socially constructed concept, I do acknowledge that as a social construct race cannot be ignored. Of course, I am also aware of Clough and Burton's (1995) argument that "inevitably, to research 'race' is to construct 'race', because the very fact of using the concept makes it alive; yet ignoring it or not using it does not erase it either." In fact, one may ask, how race can be ignored when it continues to haunt the life of every South African - even in the post-apartheid era.

In their most useful work on the concepts of race and racism, *An Ambulance of the Wrong Colour*, Baldwin-Ragaven *et al,* (1999: 134) maintain that if we accept the compelling evidence that genetically distinct human sub-species do not exist and that 'race' is not a valid category in human biology, it can be argued that the use of racial labels and categories in research is "ill-conceived, misleading and divisive." The authors claim that using nationality to differentiate between groups tends to reinforce the view that geographically isolated - and genetically distinct - human races exist. They further maintain that using racial categories legitimises the process of discrimination and generates a 'racially' structured view of society that encourages further discrimination. I am inclined to differ with what the authors suggest - especially because this entails a narrow view of the subject which results from an uncritical application of apartheid terminology. What happened in the education system of South Africa was a result of stratifying society into these categories. I, therefore, cannot study desegregation without referring to this terminology, since our education has a history - and as Phatlane (2006: 31) argues, history is a record of what happened. Against this background, I cannot realistically shy away from such historical concepts in this study.

Klaas has also interrogated the different ways in which race is conceptualised and used in research. He accepts, however, that although many studies acknowledge the controversy of the concept 'race' and the categorisation of people, those studies do not suggest alternatives. He further accepts that he, too, also ends up being caught up in

the same circle as other researchers on race because he cannot seem to suggest an alternative terminology to replace the racial denominations of people (Klaas, 2005: 16).

It should be borne in mind that the apartheid regime founded its segregationist practices on differences that were believed to be insuperable. This was a racist belief in the absolute inferiority of all race groups other than Whites - particularly the African sector of the population. Segregation in South African education did not begin in 1953 when the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* was adopted. It had been a feature of educational practice for centuries, since Jan Van Riebeeck and his sailors landed at the Cape after the breaking of the Haarlem (Malherbe, 1977: 44). There is no question that schools and curricula became more formally - and more legally - separate since that date (1953) and race remained an important feature in the division and provision of education in this country (Cross & Chisholm, 1990: 54).

The notion that each population group was entitled to its own schools and other institutions clearly corresponds with the view that each race should have its own separate existence and, therefore, separate education system (Steyn, 1998: 8). Although this was clearly in keeping with the spirit of the *De Lange Report*[11], it was accepted and expressed by government thus: "The government finds the principle of freedom of choice for the individual and for the parents in educational matters and in the choice of a career acceptable, but within the framework of the policy that 'each population group is to have its own schools'" (RSA, 1983: 4). In time, this thinking formed the basis of the policy that sought to segregate the different race groups in all spheres of existence - including education.

Scholars have criticised the apartheid regime's inconsistent definition of race - whereby whites and coloureds were defined by skin colour, while Natives were defined by their country of origin and Asians by their continent of origin (Manzo, 1992: 173). Although any one of these criteria could have been consistently applied to differentiate the population, it is clear that consistency was not conducive to the requirements of white domination at the time. For instance, the country of origin as the

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11. Government set up a commission - with De Lange as its leader - to investigate the provision of education in the RSA in 1981. The Human Sciences Research Council was commissioned to undertake the study. Details of the *De Lange Report* are given in the next chapter.

defining hallmark of race would have split the required common identity among whites, while the continent of origin would have made the classification of coloureds impossible. Similarly, colour alone as a defining factor would have created a single black majority (Manzo, 1992:173).

Closely interwoven with race is racial diversity - which clearly evolved from the concepts of multicultural and anti-racist education. Klaas (2005), on the other hand, analyses the different models of the concept of multicultural education, namely the Conservative Model, the Liberal Model, the Pluralist Model and the Cosmopolitan Model. Each of the models has its advantages and disadvantages in diversified environments, but I tend to argue for the Pluralist Model which - although it does not address structural inequalities - recognises differences. It also encourages different groups to share their culture in the hope of gaining better understanding and more respect for one another.

In his opening address of the Durban National Conference on Racism, the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, argued that "The legacy of racism is so deeply entrenched that no country so far in the world has succeeded to create a non-racial society" (Mbeki, 2000: 5). In fact, Orfield (2004) and Kozol (2005) have found that the US schools are now re-segregating after they had been desegregated for years. For example, Kozol (2005:3), writing about the United States, acknowledges that during the 1960s "tens of thousands of public schools were integrated racially and the gap between black and white achievements narrowed. But the earlier 1990s saw a reversal of the process with nearly absolute apartheid [sic] in thousands schools across the US. Other authors noted similar trends in desegregation and resegregation (Frankenberg, Lee and Orfield, 2003; Orfield, 2004). Orfield points out that schools in the United States are today divided along racial lines, as was the case before the 1950s: "Southern Schools and those in a number of big cities are moving back toward intensified segregation, now based largely on residential segregation in the metropolitan areas" (Orfield, 2004:97). Ironically, schools such as Martin Luther King Secondary in New York, that were founded on multicultural and multiracial principles given King's own contribution to the eradication of segregation, are now becoming racially segregated (Nkomo &Vandeyar et al, 2007: 11).

In this thesis I am inclined to concur fully with Tierney's conclusions that human populations cannot be separated into discrete categories because genetic combinations have never been stable (Tierney, 1982: 6). In fact, what the Nationalists attempted to achieve through the physical separation of the races in education and in other spheres was impracticable and senseless. Tobias has also argued that there is no scientific basis for such racial classification of human beings - as was done when the Nationalists adopted the *Population Registration Act* in 1950 (Tobias, 1961: 22). Yet, this does not imply that research in the field of race and diversity should be abandoned (Sarup, 1986: 49). Closely analysed, the absence of any biological basis for race does not in any way change the social implications of a belief in race (DoE, 2001:6).

Although the idea of race is not based on scientific truth - as revealed by Tobias above, it remains real in the sense that it affects how we see ourselves and how we see one another (DoE, 2001: 7). Speaking at the International Comparative Conference on Educational Opportunities - the Brown Conference - in 2004 in South Africa, Professor Hans Visser emphasised the importance of continuing to interrogate the phenomenon of race when he argued that "When we speak about race, we can get the young generation to deal with race." Visser's idea is that which Hunter calls the "Biology of liberation" which we must teach in our schools where learners can tackle the concept of 'race' to prove that there is no such thing as 'race' (Hunter *et al*, 1983: 18).

Having dealt with the concepts of race and racism, it would not be out of place to very briefly refer to the concepts of segregation, desegregation and integration - as used in the context of this study. To begin with, one may argue that segregation refers to the separation of the different race groups in South Africa in terms of education and other areas of social interaction. From the historical literature referred to in this study, an attempt was made to show that this separation of the races is as old as the Dutch settlement at the Cape and that it continued during the period of British colonisation until well into the mid-twentieth century - when it was displaced by apartheid as official government policy (Beinart and Dubow, 1995).

I have also stated that in the earlier period such segregation was not based on race, but on class (Seekings and Nattrass, 2005). Since 1948, however, apartheid, which replaced segregation, was based on race - as defined in the *Population Registration*

Act, Act No 30 of 1950. Since then, race was a hallmark of the classification of persons in South Africa until 1994 when developments - that were welcomed internationally as the "miracle of the 1990s" - changed this approach to human existence. However, my findings confirm Seekings and Nattrass' argument that since 1994 class has emerged as a means of discrimination. Although it does not totally replace race as a criterion for segregation, it is a form of exclusion and, therefore, also serves as the basis of inequality in the post-1994 South Africa (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

This observation clearly suggests that in spite of all efforts at desegregation there are still pockets of discrimination which, although not based on race - as was the case in the pre-1994 period – are, nevertheless, still prevalent and are now based on class and other mechanisms of polarisation. To a certain extent this kind of segregation explains the persistence of the negative attitudes of different race groups towards one another - despite deliberate government attempts to forge a non-racial society, using school integration as one of the mechanisms.

A desegregated school in this context refers to a school that enrols learners and employs educators and staff from different racial backgrounds and other identities, such as class and religion. To reiterate the point mentioned earlier, in the *Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950*, the apartheid government of South Africa divided people in terms of their physical characteristics, namely whites, blacks, coloureds and Indians. These classifications are used in this study only to demonstrate their actual impact on the social dynamics of the school environment. South Africans are presently classified as blacks and whites. 'Blacks' are all persons who are not classified as whites. They include Africans, coloureds and Indians (Nkomo, 1990: 308). The term, 'African', is generally used to denote people of black African descent who were grouped - through the state policy - into varying territorial units within the borders of South Africa (Van Warmelo, 1930: 7). To a larger extent, the concept, African, still denotes the black people of African descent - although there are some debates on who is really African in South Africa.

Recently, the political and social consciousness of the oppressed classes - together with some whites who have always fought against apartheid and those who despise it even though they could not fight it in South Africa - have produced a self–definition which

is descriptive of their desire to unite in the common project of dismantling apartheid (Nkomo, 1990: 2). There are some white people who have never associated themselves with Europe - who either fought against apartheid or did not support it – who, also, call themselves Africans. Another category of white people – who, although they supported apartheid - came to realise how bad it was for South Africa. They also associate with Africa now more than they do with Europe. It is, therefore, too narrow to regard all white South Africans as racists. One should also not forget about some racist black South Africans.

In *The Dictionary of Psychology*, Corsini defines integration as the unification of parts into a totality - which is the developmental process in which separate drives, experiences, abilities, values and personality characteristics are gradually brought together into an organised whole (Corsini, 2002: 493). School integration means the incorporation of different ethnic/racial groups of learners in the same classes in a school (Corsini, 2002: 866). It includes the use of teaching content from diverse groups when dealing with concepts and skills in an effort to help learners understand how knowledge in the various disciplines is constructed. This will go a long way in helping learners develop positive intergroup attitudes and behaviour. In time, this will foster the development of an equality of status among learners in schools (Banks, 2001; Irvine, 2003). Closely analysed, there seems to be nothing new incorporated into the definition of the concepts of diversity education, school integration and citizenship education - which was, otherwise, lacking in multicultural education. Thus, whatever one chooses to call it, the fact of the matter is that in a plural society with many cultures - such as South Africa, the quest to promote only one way of doing things will remain problematic and suspect.

While the changes that have taken place in schools and their restructuring in post-1994 South Africa are commendable, given the legacy of apartheid education it is evident that much still needs to be achieved. In fact, current research on diversity and racial integration (Carrim, 1998; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Zafar, 1999) - which has tracked change in desegregated schools - shows minimal changes in the practices and cultures of such schools as well as the absence of coordinated programmes to address issues of diversity and inequality (McKinney, 2005:4). This lends credence to the view that the more things change the more they stay the same.

On the issue of legislation, a timely reminder is provided by Orfield (2004) who argues that "announcing a policy does not mean the policy is realised. Legislators often act as if the enactment of a law or the issuance of a regulation or the statement of a leader actually produces the intended change." Orfield suggests that attention needs to be paid to conditions that will enable the successful implementation of policies. Such conditions should be closely studied and delineated in order to render policies symbolic – which, then, calls for closer attention to what practices schools adopt.

Difference in terms of age, gender, language, sexual orientation, colour, capabilities and disabilities, race, ethnicity, culture and social class (Banks: 2001: 45; Irvine, 2003: 5) characterise diversity in desegregated schools. Another concept that merits attention is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is not assimilation - as is often thought to be the case. It is a philosophy and practice that allows groups who interact to discover who they are through a critical and often complex examination of their own and others' cultures. As Collins puts it (2004, 17), it arose in the US as a reaction against *Euro-centrism* and *Afro-centrism*. In the beginning, America's reaction towards the minorities in 'their' country was *assimilation*, which disregarded and ignored the ethnicity, gender, class and religion of the minorities and advocated the belief of a "one America" and everybody else had to conform to what Collins refers to as a "White, Anglo Saxon, Protestant and male view of the world" (Collins, 2004: 19).

In education, multiculturalism would mean that the way subjects - especially in the humanities - are taught in school curricula should include the contributions to knowledge of minorities, i.e., what other researchers call 'people of colour'. There is a cultural reality - which results from diverse groups interacting in a variety of equal and unequal relationships over generations - which cannot be ignored even when there is deliberate attempt to do so. Each culture is influenced by other cultures and a new culture comes into being. Admittedly, 'multi' means many and, therefore, multicultural means many cultures. Collins (2004: 18) maintains that the concept lost popularity in the US because it became misconstrued as Afro-centricity. Multiculturalism was examined as a reaction to Euro-centrism which accepted the European way of doing things as absolute. This is also referred to as the theory of the 'melting pot' - also

known as *assimilation* or *Americanisation* where blacks, Native Americans, Italians, Jews, Japanese and Poles would, essentially, 'melt' into the American 'pot'. According to this theory, being American meant accepting the values of Western Europe; the capitalist way of life; and the Protestant work ethic. This included the speaking of the English language (Collins, 2004: 19).

Assimilation, on the other hand, involves the process of absorbing the social and cultural values of the people involved (Collins, 2004: 16). However, true assimilation cannot occur unless a person has already gained an understanding of his own culture. It is, therefore, important for everyone to know themselves first before they can even think of assimilation into another culture. In America, assimilation meant the 'Americanisation' of the incoming minorities and of the African-Americans. In South Africa, a similar experiment was attempted in the 1820s when efforts were made to Anglicize the Cape by encouraging and supporting British settlers (Malherbe, 1977: 44).

The Afrikaner Nationalists in South Africa were against this when they advocated self-determination and the development of their own language, Afrikaans. Surprisingly, in 1976 they wanted Afrikaans to be forced on the African people who also had their own languages. The theory of the melting pot - as Collins suggests - continued to dominate American public education until the 1970s. Afro-centricity emphasized the African-American way of being; the African experience; and generally suggested that Western culture was inferior to ancient African cultures - because its advocates wanted to contest the dominance of Euro-centrism (Collins, 2004, 18).

Stanford University educators have amalgamated the concepts of desegregation, assimilation, integration and multicultural education and blended a new concept - diversity. Conceptualising the concept, *diversity*, is done in this study by building on the work of Stanford University educators who 'divide' diversity into three dimensions: structural diversity; diversity related initiatives; and diverse interactions. *Structural diversity* refers to the numerical and proportional representation of learners from different racial/ethnic groups in the school (Hurtando *et al*. 1998, 1999) - which

Nkomo *et al* (2004) refer to as "desegregation" in the South African context. This issue of racial diversity has been taken a step further by the *South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1996* where the preamble makes explicit its intentions to combat racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination and racial intolerance (Section 5.3 [c], RSA, 1996 [2]; SASA, S5.1-5). The significance of this legislation lies in its effort to make public education accessible by creating only two categories of schools - namely, public schools and independent schools - where none is based on race.

The second dimension - *diversity related initiatives* - refers to cultural awareness workshops and ethnic studies in learning areas that occur on school campuses which would, then, touch on multicultural education. The third component would be *diverse interactions*, which refer to learners' exchanges with other learners from racial and ethnical backgrounds different to their own. The question that remains is: "What are the learners exchanging?"

One cannot divorce the three dimensions of diversity from one another. Demographic shifts/changes in the structural diversity of schools frequently provide the stimulus for diversity-related initiatives (Chang, 1999). In fact, learners are most frequently exposed to diverse information and ideas through their interactions with other learners who are different from themselves. Although each dimension of diversity can confer significant positive effects on educational outcomes, the impact of each is believed to be enhanced by the presence of the other dimensions (Chang, 1999; Gurin, 1999; Hurtando *et al*., 1998, 1999).

Although diversity encompasses 'difference', it should not necessarily emphasise difference (Dibble, 2001; 2). In the commonality and difference of people, how can a common nationhood be forged? A diverse entity includes - amongst other things - difference in terms of race, gender, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, colour, disability, and even academic performance. The challenge in a school with diverse learners would, therefore, be to engender a common national identity that accommodates diversity and also encourages self-determination (Banks, 2004: 48).

A school which enrols diverse learners in terms of race and colour - in South Africa - is desegregated. Desegregation is the putting together of learners from different racial

backgrounds in the same school. It deals, basically, with demographics. In the South African context desegregation is, mainly, interested in the quantitative elements of integration - namely, how many black, white, Indian or coloured learners there are in a school. It does not go further to find out what matters when those learners are in close proximity to one another. Vally and Dalamba (1999) found that sometimes this proximity was very problematic in some schools, especially in the former Afrikaans-only schools where learners would be involved in racial conflicts. My investigation was out to explore the experiences of learners in a former Afrikaans-only school - which seemed to deviate from the 'norm' that the Vally and Dalamba (1999) study had already established, i.e., *the resistance that these schools had against school integration*.

The desegregation of schooling in America was aimed at improving the school performance of black children (Shujaar, 1996: 54). In relatively affluent urban black communities as well as relatively poor ones, black children lagged behind their white peers, and in both cases desegregation was intended to close the performance gap (Ogbu, 1999:645; Tierney: 1982: 98). In education, desegregation is a process that removes legal and other formal barriers to access educational opportunities. Research proves that desegregation did not really close that gap in America (Ogbu, 1999:648). Research conducted by Orfield seems to contradict the findings of Ogbu, because it affirms that the gap "was closed" (Orfield, 2004).

A review of the literature on the subject of race, racism, segregation and desegregation clearly reveals that the concept of race which is often associated with conflict is still a contentious issue - even in the post-apartheid era. For instance, 'race' as a concept often arouses anger and guilt (Blum, 1998: 860; Cole, 1998: 37; Carrim, 1998: 301; Kailin, 1999: 724, Neisler, 1999: 318, Reardon, 1998: 421; Shujaar, 1996: 73; Spencer, 1998: 25; Sheehy, 1998: 6). Closely analysed, it can be seen that South Africa currently faces the same challenges that societies elsewhere in the world have had to deal with in terms of confronting their own histories of race relations. Most of the literature from North America concerns itself with the integration of minorities and immigrants into the mainstream, which makes education concentrate on cultural, economic and political equity (Banks, 1994: 123). The challenge that the headmasters and the SMTs of schools in these countries are facing is to allay the fears of the

minority and mitigate the arrogance of the majority (Banks, 2004: 48: Chikane, 2003: 1).

In Europe the difficult task is to sensitise the majority to accept difference; to suppress xenophobia; and to embrace multicultural education - instead of what Moodley calls "making Turks Germans" (Adam and Moodley, 1993: 160). This is not, fundamentally, different from the US though. For example, in his analysis of the concepts of race, racism and racialism, Tierney shows the extent to which racism persists as a feature of society - both at the level of personal feeling and personal structures (Tierney, 1982:5). Admittedly, Tierney's research is somewhat dated, but in spite of its focus on American society, there can be no doubt that his conclusion that there were tendencies within the American education system that promoted ways of thinking that rendered racism and racialism more likely to continue remains valid and applicable to the post-apartheid South African situation - as the next section of the chapter will demonstrate.

PART II: THE HISTORY OF SEGREGATION AND DESEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.3   THE ORIGINS AND FORMS OF RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

Engelhart has argued rather persuasively that - in an ethnographic case study research with historical educational research characteristics - the researcher should have an interest in, and knowledge of, not only his/her specific topic, but also the general history of education (Engelhart, 1972:455). For this reason, a brief overview of the education system in South Africa is given below with particular attention being paid to the pre-apartheid, apartheid and post-apartheid segregation and desegregation. These form the focus of this section of Chapter 2.

2.3.1 Education in the pre-apartheid period

Available historical literature suggests that the forms of racial segregation and apartheid which the National Party began to implement in 1948 are as old as the Dutch settlement at the Cape (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1993). Although the word 'apartheid' might have been new in the late 1940s, the idea which it was intended to express was certainly not as the separation of whites from blacks was a goal which had been pursued at many stages of the encounter between Europeans and Africans (Keto, 1990:22; Lacour-Gayet, 1991:295; Phatlane, 1998:1).

According to Malherbe (1925:28), the first school in South Africa was established at the Cape in 1658 under the auspices of the Dutch East India Company. Of particular relevance to this study is the fact that of the first 17 learners ever to be enrolled at this school, 12 were whites, one was a Hottentot and four were the children of both local and enslaved Africans (Horrel, 1963:27). From the given racial composition of the school, it stands to reason that an individual's skin colour was not a determining factor for admission to the school. Thus, colour prejudice - which came to characterise a later period - was non-existent during the early days of formal schooling in South Africa (Malherbe, 1925:28). The Dutch settlers brought with them to the Cape a tradition of religious education in terms of which the church provided an authoritarian framework within which education and other social services developed (Behr, 1988:11). As a result, the education that was provided in South Africa - albeit on a small scale - was mainly religious and under the direction of the Dutch Reformed Church (Behr, 1988:11; Keto, 1990: 27). It is not surprising that the Dutch Reformed Church soon objected to an arrangement whereby free and 'non-free' children were lumped together for education in the same school (Jeeves, 1982:138). The fact that the religious and civil affairs of society were closely connected during this early period explains why the church played such a pivotal role in matters affecting education at the time.

South Africa was not unique in this regard. With the exception of Prussia, Europe – too - had to wait almost until the 20th century for the establishment of a fully state-controlled education system which was free from church influences (Tunmer,

1982:82). Although the church, itself, was divided at the Reformation, the notion that education should be administered by the church persisted until well into the 20th century (Behr, 1988:11). Perhaps, with the wisdom of hindsight, it is clear that the subsequent ideology of apartheid grew out of this early tradition of no equality between people of different social backgrounds - in terms of which discrimination was, however, based not only on racial lines but also on class lines (Terreblanche, 2002; Seekings and Nattrass, 2005).

As a consequence of the church's misgivings and objections to these early tendencies of school integration, South African children were schooled in segregated environments and every level of schooling was cast in a racial mould in terms of "budget, structures, staff and pupils in schools, curriculum and ethos" (Carrim, 1998: 2). It is not surprising that separate schooling systems were launched in South Africa in 1663, whereby formal schooling co-existed with traditional educational practices of indigenous societies (Dolby, 2001: 19; Keto, 1990: 23). Thus, the subsequent establishment of the school for white children and the school for coloured children in subsequent years may be said to have marked the beginning of racialisation in schooling which then displaced class as a hallmark of segregation and discrimination in school and social life (Malherbe, 1925: 28). This meant that the poor and the rich white children were placed in the same school.

The official policy of all governments at the Cape until the mid-19th century was, essentially, concentrated on keeping the races as far apart as possible. However, when Sir George Grey arrived as High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape in 1854, he initiated a new policy of gradual political and economic integration of the white and the black races. Sir George Grey's move was, partly, the reason for the Great Trek[12] which was - in essence - a revolt against the British policy of placing whites and blacks on an equal footing.

With the discovery of diamonds and gold in the second half of the 19th century, an industrial revolution was launched in South Africa whereby a rural community of both blacks and whites was transformed into an urbanised one. These new

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12. The mass exodus of Afrikaners (Voortrekkers) in the 1830s from the British ruled Cape Colony into the interior of what is now South Africa.

developments brought in their wake a state of political turbulence which – eventually - led to the outbreak of the South African war at the turn of the century (Marks & Rathbone, 1982; Van Onselen, 1982; Worden, 1994). At the conclusion of this war - and in terms of the *South Africa Act of 1909* - the former two British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the two Boer Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were brought together as provinces of what, eventually, became the Union of South Africa.

Between the years 1910 to 1948 a great deal has been written about the ideological and political content of the curriculum objectives. These objectives were, seemingly, humanitarian and disinterested in the colonial context. There was much evidence of indigenous resistance to such an attempt to impose an 'adapted' form of education on African rural communities. It would be accompanied by resistance (Kallaway, 1984: 2-3) from the time of the Phelps–Stokes Commission in the 1920s to the run-up to independence in British Africa (Murray, 1980, King, 1974; Kallaway, 2002).

Kallaway describes this period as a period during which the history of African education in South Africa from colonial times to the apartheid era had much in common with the history of colonial and post-colonial education in Africa. According to him, in both contexts there was a constant emphasis on the need for special attention to be given to the education of rural peoples and the orientation of the curriculum to the needs of rural societies (Kallaway, 2002). As with colonial, missionary education in Africa, the early attempts at 'adapted education' in South Africa - pioneered by C.T. Loram and the Natal Native Education Department - were not particularly successful. They had not changed the nature of education from formal/academic education to vocational education (Murray, 1980). One of the major reasons for this was that any form of technical education - however modest – such as wagon-building, leather-work, carpentry or masonry in the old mission days, or training to be a motor mechanic, electrician, plumber, or computer operator in recent times, required expensive workshops and laboratories which were not available for the underprivileged sector of the population (Kallaway, 2002) who were - in most cases - black.

2.3.2 Education during apartheid (Bantu education)

In May 1948 the National Party won a general election with 'apartheid' as its key election policy. After this date the Nationalist leadership soon recognised that blacks were not only pressing for total integration but were also aspiring for more political rights. Total integration would be irresistible unless a new orientation was given to the political structure of the country as a whole. Hence, the decision to extend the traditional segregation policy of the pre-1948 period to that of apartheid where blacks surrendered all claims to what came to be known as 'white South Africa' in return for greater autonomy in their erstwhile reserves-cum-homelands (Phatlane, 1998). Indeed, this policy of racial separation was developed and brought to fruition by Dr H. F. Verwoerd in his capacity as Minister of the, then, Department of Native Affairs (1950-1958) and as Prime Minister (1958-1966). Whatever the rhetoric of Bantu education was regarding a separate education for the development of Africans in their 'own' rural areas, the practical reality never reflected this shift. Although whites and blacks had very different educational experiences under apartheid, those differences were dictated by the unequal allocation of resources to the various racially and geographically defined sections of the system rather than through the differences imposed by varieties of curricula. According to Kallaway (2002), the reason for this lack of curriculum change - in spite of the spirited statements by Verwoerd and others to the contrary - has not yet been adequately explained. At the very least, the secondary school curriculum remained formally the same for all. It soon became clear that this was part and parcel of the apartheid policy which was designed - through education - to confine and isolate the Black people from the economic activities of the country.

In the light of the foregoing background, it stands to reason that apartheid and the separation of black and white children - in all spheres of social encounters - was not a unique set of ideas that had sprung 'full blown' out of the heads of Afrikaner Nationalists in 1948, but entailed practices that were woven over a long period of time. What the Nationalists did after taking control of the state apparatus was to institutionalise such race separatism and, thereby, enforce it with the aid of legislation. The key laws underpinning apartheid that were introduced by the National party were:

- The *Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950* which classified all the people of South Africa in terms of race upon birth;
- The *Group Areas Act, Act No 41 of 1950* which racially divided the residential areas where people lived;
- The *Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953* which racially segregated public amenities such as parks;
- The *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* which determined the Education of all indigenous black people of South Africa; and
- The *Extension of University Education Act, Act No 45 of 1959* which also extended racial segregation in education to the higher education level.

All these Acts perpetuated apartheid and racial segregation in different ways. For example, in 1949 - barely a year after assuming office, the Nationalists set up a Commission on Native (Black) Education under the chairmanship of Dr W W M Eiselen. The commission had very significant terms of reference. Of particular relevance to this thesis was the commission's mandate to formulate the principles and aims of education for "Natives" as an independent race (Behr, 1988: 32). In 1951 the Eiselen Commission presented a report which proved to be the blueprint for Bantu Education for the next four decades.

Integration - as understood in the present study – was, thus, no longer a dream in the country's public schools. In fact, the Eiselen commission also paved the way for the eventual abolition of the missionary influence which the Nationalist Government regarded as "nothing less than an instrument in the hands of liberalism…. native education has achieved nothing but the destruction of Bantu culture… nothing beyond succeeding in making the Native an imitation Westerner" (M C Botha, quoted by Malherbe, 1977:545-546). While in no way lacking in appreciation of their own culture, it was understandable why many black people regarded this sudden solicitude on the part of the Nationalist government about their cultural development with suspicion. It soon became very clear that this concern with African culture was part and parcel of the apartheid policy which was designed - through education - to confine and isolate them from the broad stream of South Africa's socio-economic life.

Thus, beginning with the premise that black and white education should be different - primarily because the race groups were perceived to be inherently different and distinctive in many respects - the Commission set the tone for a segregated education system in South Africa for the next four decades. The advent of apartheid reinforced the idea of a separate curriculum which would promote distinct racial identities for Africans (Kallaway, 2002). In terms of the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* which followed the commission's major recommendations, it became law that children belonging to different race groups in South Africa could neither be taught in integrated classes nor attend the same schools. With the exception of a few remaining mission-run institutions which continued to maintain some form of racial integration of learners in so-called multiracial schools - with which the apartheid government later interfered - all schools conformed (Christie, 1990).

On the basis of recommendations by the HSRC (De Lange Commission) in 1981, and *The Education Renewal Strategy* (1991), vocational guidance and technical education were extended at both the secondary and tertiary level - as opposed to the previous primary school only set up. Although the success of these initiatives was uneven (Bot, 1988), the effort to change the direction of policy was significant (Kallaway, 2002). The previous assumptions - that vocational education and training for blacks was either to be discouraged as it posed a threat to the monopoly of skills for whites or that blacks were only to be trained for skilled work in the 'homeland' areas - were both abandoned as the issue of skills shortage entered into the centre of the debate about economic growth (Chisholm, 1984: 387–409). Big business and the state - along with a range of other pressure groups - applauded these changes as a significant break with the past practices of labour market racial discrimination and a fundamental step towards addressing human resource development problems in South Africa (Kallaway, 2002).

The responses from anti-apartheid groups and educationalists to National Party initiatives to reform education - predicated on the vision of a new education constructed by the Peoples' Education Movement of the 1980s - was distilled in the report of the *National Education Policy Investigation* (NEPI, 1993a) in 1993. The investigation drew on the skills and experience of a variety of researchers who were

keen to provide a radical vision of educational change - in keeping with the social, democratic principles that had been a fundamental feature of both the internal and external wings of the liberation movements (Kallaway, 2002).

For instance, in explaining the rationale for such a racialised approach to education at the time, Verwoerd was very unequivocal about the purpose of African education when he declared in the House of Assembly:

> The school must equip the Bantu[13] to meet the demands which the economic life in South Africa will impose on him. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community, however, all doors are open… Until now, he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze….” (UG, House of Assembly Debates, 1953:3576-3586 as quoted by Carrim, 1992).

Verwoerd's declaration was contrary to the fact that due to economic reasons only 37% of black people actually lived within their own communities or in the homelands where supposedly “all the doors would be open.” In 1959 such racial segregation in education was extended to universities as spelt out by M D C de wet Nel who, as Minister of Bantu Education, expressed the concern that “If the non-Whites are allowed to enter the universities, most of the students in the near future will be non-white, with full control…. as long as the National Party remains in power, it will strive for university apartheid” (The Argus, 1959: March 10). With the knowledge that, like the white students, black students were also capable, De wet Nel wanted to prevent black students from accessing the same university education as their white counterparts. Striving for university apartheid implied keeping black students out of the white universities.

With views, such as the foregoing, expressed as they were at such a high level of government, it stands to reason that it would have been extreme optimism to expect the National Party Government to voluntarily desegregate schools and, therefore, encourage integration without any form of pressure being brought to bear on the very political structure of society. There is no doubt that among the reasons for the separation of different race groups in education was the fact that the Nationalist

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13. A term used to refer to black people of African origin - the indigenous people of South Africa.

Government was acutely aware that integration or keeping the children together in the same school would result in these children learning to appreciate each other as human beings through playing in the same school teams and, thereby, laying the foundation for a common loyalty as South Africans (Malherbe, 1977:39). This would pose a serious threat to apartheid, itself, and the only way it could possibly be avoided - according to the apartheid logic - was to keep the races apart. Hence, the Broederbond's[14] conviction that, "by separation, the future of Nationalist policies would be assured" (Malherbe, 1977:47).

As a result of all these developments the education system in South Africa consisted of a number of separate sub-systems based, largely, on race. For example, among other outcomes of the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* was the removal of African education from provincial control to state control while - in terms of legislation adopted in 1963 and 1965 - both coloured and Indian education, respectively, were also placed under the control of the central government (Tunmer, 1982: 50). The four provincial departments of education that catered for the white population, coloured population, Indian population and blacks in the so-called white areas, all fell under the control of the National Department of Education and Culture (Steyn *et al*, 1998:8).

In addition to these, however, there were nine - later ten - other departments of education and culture in the 'homelands' - six self-governing and four 'independent'. Besides advocating that different racial groups should have different schooling systems with different curricula, syllabi and media of instruction (Nkomo, 1990: 292-5), Bantu Education also ensured a lack of contact between blacks and whites while at the same time it provided what had been perceived in black liberation circles as education for perpetual subordination (Behr, 1988: 37). Part of the reason for this separation of the races in education was the erroneous perception embodied in the so-called Christian National Education (CNE) that equality between blacks and whites was a threat to the very existence of European civilisation and culture (Maylam, 1986: 170; Cross *et al,* 1998a: 185).

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14. A secret organization at the heart of apartheid created to advance Afrikanerdom and apartheid ideology and systems.

In this way Bantu education laid a firm foundation for the present racial prejudice that makes integration in schools such a problem - as revealed by recent research into the subject (Carrim, 1998; Vally & Dalamba, 1999). For practical reasons, the exclusiveness of the school served to generate stereotype attitudes with regard to black-white relationships - as witnessed during the recent Babeile[15] crisis. The fact that young people - at the prime of their lives – were, by law, deprived of the normal opportunities of rubbing shoulders with their peers across the racial divide tended to make them less adaptable in meeting the changed circumstances after the formal ending of apartheid in 1994.

It is natural that when children come to school for the first time they bring with them initial feelings of social distance, prejudice and antipathy towards other race groups and also towards other children, in general. These attitudes are, usually, a reflection of the attitudes prevailing in - and around - their home environment. However, by the time they reach Grade 6, the school would have had a marked effect upon whatever attitudes and stereotypes they might have brought from home. Therefore, in a segregated school system the children remained with these attitudes and stereotypes throughout their school lives which would only prove detrimental in the post-1994 era.

The question of the medium of instruction - which had, all along, been a sensitive matter in South African history - soon came into prominence in the mid 1970s when attempts were made to enforce the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in certain school subjects for Africans. This is not surprising if cognisance is taken of the pronouncement made as early as 1942 by J G Strijdom, the former leader of the Transvaal Nationalists and later Prime Minister, that "Every Afrikaner who is worthy of the name cherishes the ideal that South Africa will ultimately only have one language and that language must be Afrikaans" (Malherbe, 1977: 72). Although this idea is more about domination than education, it affected education in the sense that it led to the 1976 Soweto[16] uprisings, which later served as a landmark event in the

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15. The name of an African boy who attended a former white school and stabbed a white boy with a pair of scissors. This incident attracted wide media coverage.
16. 1976 was the year during which the youth of South Africa took up arms against the apartheid government for wanting to introduce teaching in Afrikaans throughout the African schools. The youth

history of youth resistance against Bantu education. After 1976, unrest in black education became the feature of student life until well into the 1990s. The so-called bush universities were the driving force behind student activism (Nkomo, 1984; Sehoole, 2005 33). While the black people did not seem to lack enthusiasm to maintain their own culture and to develop the use of their own language, they felt the necessity of having English as an official language to serve as an open window to the world beyond. Most of them still retain this idea - even to this day (The Star, SABC News) - where, for economic reasons, parents insist that their children be taught in English rather than in their indigenous languages.

No wonder Mncwabe sees apartheid and the ruthlessness with which it was implemented - particularly in the field of education by means of Bantu education - not only as a recipe for social and economic disaster, but also as the root cause of the crisis in education - even in the period beyond apartheid (Mncwabe, 1990:17).

The De Lange Report (1981) was among some of the initial efforts towards reforming the apartheid education system. It was released in 1981 following an investigation by the Human Sciences Research Council which was commissioned by government to report on the provision of education in South Africa. This committee presented very significant findings and recommendations. Of particular interest to this study was the fact that for the first time - since the promulgation of *The Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* - there was, now, a general recognition that equal opportunities and standards for education for all the people of South Africa - without distinction related to race, sex, colour or creed - would be the concern of the state. Perhaps even more importantly was the recognition of both the commonality and the diversity in people's religious and cultural ways of life (The De Lange Report [HSRC, 1981:33]).

Closely analysed, however, this report was still functional to race separatism in education because the principles it enunciated still emphasised segregation by proposing that each population group should have its own schools and education authority. Hence, the 1983 White Paper - which followed this report - further

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in a township known as Soweto took the lead. Most of them were arrested while many lost their lives on 16 June 1976. The day is commemorated in South Africa today as Youth Day.

emphasised that the education departments for each population group should do justice to the right of that group to self-determination (RSA [2], 1983:4). To all intents and purposes what the *De Lange Report* of 1981 and the subsequent White Paper of 1983 could achieve was, merely, to confirm the continuation of racial segregation in education until well into the 1990s.

2.3.3   The post-apartheid desegregation policies and practices

The year 1990 may be said to be a watershed in the history of education in South Africa, in general, and of desegregation, in particular. This was the year in which - for the very first time - the Nationalist government officially announced the possibility of white schools enrolling learners from race groups other than from whites, especially black learners. The historic announcement was made by Piet Clase, the Minister of Education and Culture at the time. The announcement was made in 1990 and it was not surprising - in the light of the political developments in the country since the State President, F. W. de Klerk, made his landmark pronouncement on apartheid and racism by releasing Nelson Mandela and unbanning political parties in February 1990 (Carrim, 1998:7).

Indeed, Clase's announcement offered white schools the freedom to choose from three options directed towards desegregation. In terms of Model A, the white state schools could choose to close down as state schools and re-open as private schools. Model B allowed such schools to remain state schools, but with an open admissions policy. And finally, Model C gave white schools the option to convert into semi-private and semi-state schools in terms of which staff salaries would be the responsibility of the state while all other expenses incurred by such schools would be borne by the school community.

A close analysis of Clase's announcement, however, shows - without a doubt - that all three models prompted all white schools to enrol black learners where the concept 'black' meant 'other than white' - a term which also included the coloured and the Indian communities. It would be recalled that in the strictest racist terminology of exclusion - from park benches to beaches - the concept 'black' meant 'non-European' (Lacour-Gayet, 1991:294). It should be noted that though white schools were legally

allowed to enrol black learners, there were still conditions attached to such a move. For example, all schools were to ensure that - amongst others -

- 51% of the school learner population remained white.
- the cultural ethos of the school remained white.
- the school had no obligation to shoulder the financial burden of incoming black learners.
- schools were under no obligation to provide any support systems and special programmes to facilitate and ease the adaptation of black learners to the new environment (Carrim, 1998: 2).

Perhaps even more important was the provision for white parents to remove their children from a desegregating school to a non-desegregating school at the state's expense (Steyn, 1998: 5; Carrim, 1998: 7). Precisely because of such a concession, it may be argued that there was little commitment on the part of the state to facilitate integration. Scholars have argued that what the Nationalist officials were trying to do during this early period was to ease political tensions both in social life and in education by reforming those aspects of apartheid that were not so crucial to white supremacy in South Africa. The desegregation of schools was probably one such an effort. Hence, my argument that Clase's major policy pronouncements - though framed within the reformist rhetoric of the time - were not in conflict with the basic tenets of apartheid. Thus, rather than transform the system from its very foundations, the Clase announcement merely sought to "assimilate black learners into an existing structure" (Le Roux, 1993: 180).

A view that Clase's policy changes did not go far enough - and did little more than just prick the apartheid skin - finds credence here. Unlike Clase, perhaps a significant shift from the traditional apartheid education came with the *Curriculum Model for South Africa* and the *Education Renewal Strategy* (DoE, 1991a: 18 & 32). In terms of these initiatives, race ceased to be a hallmark of differentiation in terms of admission to schools.

These developments did not go unchallenged from conservative white constituencies

which viewed them as a threat to their privileged position (National Education Co-ordinating Committee, 1992: 32). In spite of such intense opposition, integration was insisted upon and the government resolved to forge ahead with non-racialism in schools (Cross *et al.*, 1998b: 5) so much so, that by 1992 almost all white schools were changed to the Model C option described above, and they remained as such until 1996 when the *South African Schools Act* was adopted (Carrim, 1998: 8). The adoption of SASA abolished all Model C school types and provided for only two types of schools in South Africa – namely, public schools and independent schools. All public schools would be state owned and salaries of staff would be paid by the state. Schools were further divided into categories depending on their resources and the community they were supposed to serve.

A document - which was referred to as the *Norms and Standards for School Funding* - was produced after this process. This document, served to categorise schools into poor schools and the 'not so poor', Section 21 and Non-Section 21 schools. The Section 21 schools were schools which had the capacity to professionally spend money which was awarded to them by the Department of Education. The problem which arose after this process was under funding of some schools which were wrongly categorised, e.g. A school in a so called rich suburb would be given less money using the category of the community around the school, and not using the community inside the school. After the desegregation of schooling in South Africa, schools which originally belonged to white communities were also required to cater for learners from black communities. Some of these learners were bussed into these schools from townships. The demographics and the financial status of those schools also changed in the process.

After the official abolition of racial segregation in 1994 and the official abolition of race-based schooling by the *South African Schools Act of 1996*, the former white schools came under severe pressure to transform from segregation to desegregation and then to integration. Thus, the process and success of racial integration in schools had major relevance for the official policy agenda (Klaas, 2004: 35)**.** According to the research conducted by Carrim in 1992, schools had many racial problems and regarded the incoming students as the 'others'. The reaction of the schools towards the incoming learners was assimilationist in nature (Soudien, 2004:89). The incoming

learners were expected to conform to the host culture of the school. According to Vally and Dalamba, by 1999 this racial integration had not been successful. Carrim's 1996 study - which was a follow-up to the 1992 one - found a shift in the way the teachers approached the learners. The schools had now - as Carrim puts it - moved from their assimilationist approach to a more multicultural way of teaching and existence. This study aims to take the baton further by documenting the progress made in the movement from the assimilationist nature to the more multicultural way of teaching as noted by Carrim (1996).

Research that was carried out in the early nineteen nineties in South African desegregated schools show that it was problematic for learners from different racial groups to attend same schools, or at least if they did, the schools were characterised by racial conflicts. As years go by, there is a change of attitude that is documented which moves from the rigid separatism to a more acceptable interaction. In his parliamentary speech in support of the budget for Public Works, Reverend Chikane confirmed the progress made in South Africa in general when he said:

> It is a long way we travelled since 1994, we moved from the white male dominated empire to the Department that represents all the tapestry of all the people in South Africa. We changed the face of nepotism to that of all young and vibrant community with women taking central position which were reserved for whites only. Our symbols represent united nationhood at work as enshrined in our policy. We grappled with the tasks and expanded on mainline function to include community based public work programme, which has gone a long way in poverty alleviation and transfer of skill to the deprived, and formerly disadvantaged communities in cities and towns alike, in informal settlements and rural areas.

> People have water and electricity. Access roads are created where none existed. Bongi and Jan can be heard talking in the single classroom trying to share common ideas on the problems before them. This state of affairs was regarded as anormally. Mama Shenge and Annikie Van Wyk can today share a common topic from their television episode of Madam and Eve, which was uncommon in the days of our dictators. Even Van der Merwe feels uncomfortable with the term BAAS. MRS now applies equally to all those who have celebrated matrimony. South Africa is at work. Apartheid is behind us, but there are challenges to face

still. Poverty and unemployment are still dogging all we have done and must the removed henceforth. It is my task and yours to not threaten the poor with 150 000 police but poverty with decisive strategy.

Let us not fight back those who have brought about the system that is envied by most people world over, Let us expand the programme to include all those we have not reached today. Let us isolate the lunatics who continue to advocate separate and unequal development between Sandton and Diepkloof. Bongi whom I talked about has been accepted as a pupil in the nearest school She does not have to walk the long road in the Platteland whilst her counter part who is also her play mate enjoying the free ride in the bus. Jannie who was a student at the University of Pretoria who studied engineering is now a Proud South African. He has no plan to leave his fatherland. He does not respond to the false drum beat by some amongst us of the unrythmatic music of Brain drain. He does not want a homeland. He wants a country and to serve his people; difficult and windy as the road to nation building has been, we are happy that progress has been made. Apartheid and discrimination are on their way out. In comes non-racial, none sexist democratic dispensation as enshrined in the freedom charter.

Slowly doctrines of Verwoerd and Malan are fading away and in come equality and self-respect of each other's culture and values (Chikane, 2003: 1-2).

PART III: REVIEW OF BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON DIVERSITY AND SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

2.4   EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This section of the chapter highlights some of the empirical studies undertaken on the phenomenon of desegregation and its challenges. Literature on diversity and school integration needs to be explored in order to position this study within the debates on the phenomenon. Nieto (2000), a leading scholar in diversity, conducted multiple case studies of learners in high schools - using a multicultural approach. The students came

from different ethnic, racial, linguistic and social-class backgrounds. The findings of her study showed that most learners were of the opinion that their cultures and ways of life were not represented in the curriculum. She, then, recommended - amongst other things - that teachers should change their techniques in teaching and adopt a new approach whereby learners from all racial backgrounds are given a chance - teachers must be willing to engage constructively with learners and take on board the different experiences that different learners bring to school. Although it is understandable that the research was conducted in schools, it seems to ignore other issues that contribute to, and impact on, learners' under-performance - except being victims of poor schooling. Of interest to this study, though, is the fact that the learners' accounts of what they think about the curriculum have been examined through research and, therefore, their facts are considered as valid as any other. My study is also on the perceptions of learners about their diversified school environment. I do not concentrate on the curriculum, but on their interactions both inside and outside school. Nieto's study serves as a backdrop to my study - in terms of dealing with the participants, because she regarded the learners' accounts as truth and the information she got from them as valid as any other, as a result giving the learners a voice as well.

Kailin undertook a quantitative study in 1999 on how white educators in America perceived the problem of racism in their schools. Educators were asked to provide examples of racism in their schools. Their responses were analysed and coded according to major themes which were collapsed into three major categories - namely, the attribution of racial problems to blacks; the attribution of racial problems to whites; and the attribution of racial problems to institutional/cultural factors. The research findings indicate that most white educators in the study operated from 'impaired' consciousness about racism and that a majority 'blamed the victim' by putting the blame for racism on blacks. The study further found that - amongst the white educators - those who witnessed racist behaviour by their white colleagues kept quiet about it and did not challenge such behaviour. As educators play a pivotal role in the sum total of race relations in education, it is critical to consider how they perceive the problem of racism (Kailin, 1999:724). However, the mistake that is mostly committed is overlooking the perceptions of the learners. Kailin examined this problem in a school

district. I, on the other hand, would like to investigate it among learners in a desegregated public school.

A study similar to Kailin's - conducted by Spencer in the United States in 1998 - also addressed the problem of racism in schools and reviewed the historical and contemporary contexts of policies and programmes to reduce racism. Spencer focused on the role of school social workers in helping to combat racism in schools. The study - conducted in the social sciences - concluded that schools need social workers to help combat the scourge of racism. On the basis of most research findings, I concur with Spencer when he says: "Although the United States maintains a goal of protecting human rights and promoting equality, there is an inconsistency between ideology and reality" (Spencer, 1998:25). I think this is the case in South Africa as well (Jansen, 2001: ix). While one cannot deny the importance of school social workers in addressing the issue of racial differences in schools, one also thinks that the experiences of these racial differences - by learners in their specific schools - cannot be underestimated. Even if programmes and legal frameworks are in place, learners are the ones who suffer or benefit from those programmes but, usually, they are at the receiving end.

In 1992 Carrim surveyed Indian, coloured and white schools with regard to their admission of students who were previously not admitted to these schools. This study was a project on the desegregation of South African schools which was undertaken by the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. The study utilised quantitative measures to determine the rate at which black students were admitted to white schools and also qualitative methods - where school-based practitioners and also learners were interviewed, and observations of daily school routines were carried out. In this study, the researchers further analysed the National Education Ministry's intentions, legislation and policy documents. Carrim - using 'race' as a yardstick - concentrated on the ways in which a new South African educational order was being reconstructed and, also, how much was really changing; how was it changing; and why it was changing. One of his conclusions is that desegregation in South African schools is assimilationist in nature – which, then, implied that the host schools assumed that the incoming students should be assimilated

into the dominant culture. This study - conducted before 1994 - could mean that people were still not sure what they should or should not do.

In a follow-up study in 1996, Carrim utilised almost the same schools for data and the same teachers for interviews - but reduced the original numbers. In this study his findings are remarkably different as he concludes that there was a gradual movement away from predominantly assimilationist tendencies. He bases this change on the national or macro- level tendencies of multiculturalism.

In his study of 1998, entitled *Anti-racism and the 'new' South African educational order*, Carrim traces the desegregation of South African schools - particularly within the Gauteng region from 1990 to 1996. He argues that - at school level - the response towards ethnicity has been predominantly assimilationist. He examined desegregation in the national sphere of the SA education system and argues that attempts to redress apartheid legacies are limited - due to their failure to address the complexity of identities contained within the classifications of 'black' and 'white'. In their conceptualisation of anti-racist education, Carrim and Soudien (1999) argue that racism is not a 'black' against 'white' phenomenon because there is also 'intra-black' racism. This is a very important issue that is usually ignored or overlooked – which, then, leads people to think that all white people are racist and all black people are victims of white racists. There are also black racists who discriminate against other blacks - what Carrim calls "intra-black racism." To take the argument further, there are also black racists with white victims. This study examines the attitudes of learners towards learners different to themselves and therefore takes Carrim and Soudien' s finding that it is not just school policies that need to be changed in order for desegregation to take place, a step further.

Carrim continues to argue that macro, national policy initiatives - whilst necessary and unavoidable - tend to homogenise and generalise issues related to race, and for this reason they do not facilitate micro-level change in deracialising schooling in South Africa (Carrim, 1998: 14). It seems as if Carrim blames the failure of integration at school level on national policies. However, I argue that - even if national policies are in place - the people who have to put those policies into practice are, mostly, educators and in the process the learners are directly affected. The problem could be that

educators have not bought into the new paradigm. This, then, leads one to argue that the failure of putting policies into practice is not exclusively due to the fact that the policies, themselves, are difficult to implement. There may be other issues in play like lack of resources or even lack of commitment from the side of school communities. This study gives an ethnographic account of the experiences of learners in diversity studies, a section of the school population that has not yet been exhausted.

The work of Vally and Dalamba (1999) - commissioned by the South African Human Rights Commission - was a national survey whose purpose was to explore the experiences of schools enrolling learners from diverse backgrounds. Vally and Dalamba's study concentrated on 'problem schools', while I based my study on a desegregated school that is neither a problem school nor a subject of research and publicity. The reason for choosing an average school was to solicit information that could be relevant to most average schools. Vally and Dalamba's study uncovered issues relevant to my research which include amongst other that schools are desegregated but encounter a lot of racial conflicts. Although they reported on a seminal national survey of desegregated schools after five years of legal desegregation in South African schools, they did not collect the data in this research project, themselves. I have approached the phenomenon of diversity and inequality from an ethnographical case study design point of view which includes an in-depth understanding of a number of learners' experiences in one school. This means that I was at the school to observe what went on and, also, to talk to the learners. This is a privilege that the researchers in the Human Rights commissioned study did not have. I want to find out if a study such as mine, would yield different results from those of Vally and Dalamba.

Sekete, Shilubane and Moila's work of 2001 on the migration of learners from formerly disadvantaged rural schools to well-resourced suburban schools was groundbreaking in terms of its focus on school integration and providing statistical information which is scanty in the field of school integration in South Africa. This study concentrated on the quantitative aspects of desegregation and showed that enrolments had changed dramatically (2001:33). The researchers were interested in the 'how many' black learners migrated to which school and, also, the fact that this migration was not two-fold. Only the black learners were migrating to former White,

Indian and Coloured schools in other parts of the country. This study found that out of the 79 schools that returned the questionnaires out of the 120 that was originally targeted, 60% of the respondents acknowledged that there were major changes in their respective schools. I chose to conduct a study of this nature in Van Den Berg High School because I knew that the school consisted of all four racial groups of South Africa.

Dolby's work in 2001 on a Kwazulu-Natal school examined the effects of globalisation and popular culture among the youth of South Africa. What is remarkably different with Dolby's findings is that the learners at that school during that year did not relate to the discourse of the rainbow nation and also most of them saw a bleak future in South Africa. It was my intention to find out if learners at this school had any different understanding of the rainbow nation discourse.

South Africa has its own dynamics of diversity because - as already alluded to - the so-called minorities in other countries are the majority in South Africa. In a desegregated school in South Africa the dynamics of diversity had - to date - been assimilationist in nature. Schools have continued to serve the dominant culture (Carrim, 1998: 42). Diversity in a South African desegregated school would cover - amongst other things - race, gender, social class, ethnicity, language, colour, disability, and academic performance. The challenge, therefore, is to engender a common national identity that accommodates diversity or self-determination (Banks, 2004: 49).

Smit's research (2001:67-83) on "*how primary school educators experience education policy change in South Africa*" observed that educators are, indeed, the key role-players in the implementation of policies. She mentions that 'sadly' the same educators are silent voices which are often ignored and discounted when policies are made – a belief which I share, except that the implementation of policy is not the responsibility of educators alone but also of the parents, the learners and the community at large.

Smit concentrates on education policy change, in general, whereby the educators are given a choice of any policy that they would want to comment on - from the curriculum to HIV-Aids. I focused on legal frameworks that already exist and which

address racial diversity and its recognition. While I share the notion that educators are indispensable in the implementation of education policies, I did not want to underestimate the learners in the schools who are always on the receiving end. I also interrogated practices at school level and their reflection of the national legal frameworks on racial diversity. Documents that were drafted at school level, such as admission policies, religious policies, language policies, and policies on HIV-Aids, were examined to find out if they addressed diversity.

Sujee's paper entitled, *Deracialisation of Gauteng schools - a quantitative analysis*, presents a picture of what schools in Gauteng looked like in terms of racial classification (Sujee, 2003:1-21). He does not claim a full study, though, but focuses on what the *status quo* was in education for the Gauteng province from 1996 to 2002. In his paper, Sujee attempts to answer questions on educator and learner profiles and how rapidly - or slowly - 'deracialisation' is taking place across public schools in Gauteng.

Many factors are uncovered in Sujee, but the most relevant one for my study is the finding that "deracialisation of schools require further research into attitudes, friendships and group dynamics within schools so as to develop a real sense of whether racial integration is taking place or not" (Sujee, 2003: 12). My study did just that - it examined the experiences of learners of the transformation process at their school, and experiences include attitudes and friendships together with group dynamics.

Sekete, Shilubane and Moila's (2001) research for the Human Sciences Research Council on *Deracialisation and migration of learners in South African schools* confirms Carrim's 1992 research findings that there is an assimilationist approach to admitting different learners to the same school. The learners who are admitted into the school are assimilated into the existing culture and ethos of that particular school. Carrim's first research on desegregation was undertaken before 1994 and the follow-up in 1998 which means four years after 1994. I wanted to find out if my research - done ten years after - would yield different results.

Klaas (2005) undertook a study similar to mine in two-single sex schools - one for boys and one for girls. In his study he also examined the diverse learning environment. Klaas was in South Africa during the time when apartheid was rife. He admits that he just wanted to see if and how learners from different racial groups could attend school together. He recommends that researchers who research desegregated schools "need a change of focus, they need to stop looking for problems and try to find positives although not ignoring what might still be going on in those schools" (Klaas, 2004: 145). He further recommends that sports can be successfully used as a tool to unite learners from diverse communities. In my study there is a section where I report on the role of sport in integrating learners (See par. 5.4.2), therefore carrying Klaas' argument forward.

It should be noted that when multiculturalism became popular in America, most African-American scholars advocated in favour of it while European authors criticized it. Some authors preferred to use the term 'cultural pluralism'. Cultural pluralism - as a concept - was used for the first time by Kallen. Later Locke, DuBois and Banks expanded on Kallen's ideas (Collins, 2004: 17). The concept has, popularly, come to be known as school integration, diversity education and citizenship education by modern advocates of multicultural education and their critics. There are different approaches to multicultural education (Klaas, 2004) which - although they have their differences - all have the same aim and which I interpret as 'wanting the best for all learners involved.' 'Best' is also a relative concept as one's best may not be another's, but it is, nevertheless, the 'best'.

When I analysed the concept of multiculturalism closely, I could not find concretely new characteristics incorporated in the definitions of diversity education, school integration and citizenship education - which was, otherwise, lacking in multicultural education. Whatever one chooses to call it, the fact remains that in a plural society, like South Africa, with its many cultures, the quest to promote only one way of doing things and one way of thinking becomes suspect and it may, therefore, not succeed. What should be noted though is that integration is a *gradual* process and, therefore, it needs time for the separate values and personalities to be unified into a totality.

Besides the aforementioned studies, the main arguments in this study are also based on legal documents, such as *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*; *The National Education Policy Act, 1996*; *The South African Schools Act, 1996*, the *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* published in 2001 and the *Employment Equity Act of 1998* - all of which were introduced after 1994. Indeed, their significance lies in the fact that they all affect the issue of racial diversity in schools - as addressed in this study (Mabasa, 1997:1; Manyane, 2000: 23).

The above legal frameworks affect diversity in schools. Section 29(2) of the Constitution of 1996 gives everyone the right to receive instruction in the official language of choice in public educational institutions - where that education is reasonably practicable. Many black learners and, particularly, those from the rural schools are denied this right (Pandor, 2004:14) because under the circumstance it is not 'reasonably practicable'. Single medium institutions are not necessarily a right, but they are certainly an option in terms of this legislation. As the following section makes clear: "In order to ensure effective access to, and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single-medium institutions, taking into account equity, practicability, and the need to redress the result of past practices" (Section 29[2]). How can the results of the past practices be redressed and effective access to schools achieved if it is not 'reasonable and practicable'?

Section 29(3) allows for the establishment of independent educational institutions that do not discriminate on the basis of race. Section 29 of the Constitution does not allow any school - whether public or independent - to discriminate on the basis of race.

On the other hand, Section 4 (a) of the *National Education Policy Act* seeks to guarantee - among other things - the right

- of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination within - or by - education departments or education institutions on any grounds whatsoever.

- of every person to basic education and equal access to educational institutions.
- of every person to the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression and association within educational institutions (RSA, 1996 [1]; *National Education Policy Act*: S6).

Similarly, the *South African Schools Act* takes the racial diversity issue addressed by the Constitution and the *National Education Policy Act* one step further. In its preamble, the Act states - among other things - that South Africa needs a new national school system to redress past injustices in education; to provide education of high quality; and to lay the foundations for, inter alia:

- combating racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination and intolerance.

- protecting and advancing our diverse cultures and languages (RSA, 1996 [2] SASA: preamble).

The Act provides for the access of learners of all races to all public schools by stating that no learner should be refused admission to a public school on the grounds of his/her parents' inability to pay school fees (Section 5.3[a]) and if the learner's parents do not subscribe to the school's mission statement or have refused to enter into a contract whereby they waive any claims for damages arising out of a learner's education (Section 5.3[c]) (RSA, 1996 [2]; SASA: S5.1- 5.3).

The Act further, in Section 12, makes access to public education possible by creating two categories of schools - public schools and independent schools. It further abolishes language testing by public schools as a form of pre-admission (Section 5.1) and so ensures that learners have reasonable access to education in a language of their choice - the language(s) that the governing body of the school decides upon (Section 6.2) - and that learners are not discriminated against unfairly because of their religious orientation (Section 7). One may ask: "Are the learners enjoying these rights - and if not, why not?" Answers to these questions may be found through research.

Indeed, the adoption of the *South African Schools Act (Act No.84 of 1996)* marked the turning point in the South African schooling system because it closed one of the most absurd chapters in the history of education in South Africa. Among other outcomes of this watershed legislation was an official end to the existence of the race-based public schools of the country. Although the legislation was intended to affect all schools in the Republic, the reality was that schools in the rural areas - particularly those in the Bantustans[17] - were left untouched.

2.5   CONCLUSION

Against this background, one may argue that the problem of segregation or integration has been a recurrent theme throughout South Africa's history. Almost from the time of the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652 two sets of conflicting forces have been in continuous operation with one trying hard - though not hard enough - to integrate the races, while the other sought to segregate them (Behr, 1988:13). Thus, the apartheid policy which the Nationalist government began to implement from 1948 actually grew out of the forms of domination and segregation which had their roots in the colonial period. This chapter, therefore, sought to demonstrate that it was largely the political developments in South Africa - from the pre-apartheid and throughout the apartheid period - that had significant implications for education until 1994.

Similarly, the chapter sought to draw attention to the fact that it was also the political developments since 1994 which led to major policy changes in education - amongst which was school desegregation and integration of the different races that had been kept separate for centuries by Whites-only governments. This thesis is an ethnographic case study of one city school that has since desegregated. It sheds light on the level of interaction amongst learners from historically separate race groups that goes beyond the classroom into their homes.

I admit that the study does not - in any way - offer a recipe for friendships and interactions of learners across the racial divide. Neither does it claim that its findings

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17. These were the areas that were created in terms of the Bantu Homelands Act of 1959 to serve as the legal homes of each of the ethnic groups of the apartheid period.

can be generalisable and, therefore, also be transferred to other schools that operate under different environments. However, The US anthropologist's advice should not be completely lost sight of - "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has" (Mead, 2007):

I have sketched this brief overview of the history of education and, thereby, found that racial segregation - both in school and in social life – was, actually, not an invention of the Nationalist Party during the apartheid period. This chapter concludes that the problems of integration that came to characterise Van Den Berg High School early on as well as most post-apartheid white schools - as revealed by research carried out by numerous researchers and scholars (Christie, 1990; Gaganakis, 1990; Carrim, 1992; Soudien, 1996; Carrim, 1998; Vally & Dalamba, 1999; Carrim & Soudien, 1999; Chisholm, 1999; Zafar, 1999; Dolby, 2001; Soudien & Sayed, 2003) – were, indeed, inevitable because the historical roots of racial segregation in this country go deep into the past.

CHAPTER 3

FINDING MY WAY THROUGH THE RESEARCH

3.1   INTRODUCTION

To position this study, Chapter 2 gave an overview of the history of education in South Africa with an emphasis on the complexity of the system of education - both past and present. The existing literature in the field of school desegregation and integration was highlighted, using international perspectives and trends in school integration as well as by discussing South African trends. The conceptual base of the study was also given in Chapter 2.

The current chapter, Chapter 3, presents a description and discussion of the reasons for the choice of a qualitative research paradigm - together with its theoretical framework. The research design and methodology that were followed during the research process are explained – as are the data collection strategies. The sampling of the school and the selection of participants - and the reasons for these - are elaborated on in this chapter. The sampled learners are evidence of the diversity amongst the learners found at Van Den Berg High School. Amongst the methodological criteria used to evaluate a good qualitative inquiry, the justification of the methodology that I have used in this research is given.

3.2   THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Qualitative researchers believe that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world (Smit, 2001: 58). The idea that qualitative research is a situated activity - that locates the observer in the world of the participants - implies that the best way to understand the phenomenon in the setting is to become immersed into it. This can be done by moving into the organization that one is studying and by experiencing what it is like to be a part of it. This suggests that the researcher - who is the most important

research instrument in qualitative research - gets 'immersed' in the setting as well as in the research process. When I carried out my observations and interviews, I was at Van Den Berg High School. I saw - and even 'experienced' - some of the realities that the learners experienced in the school on a day-to-day basis.

I positioned my research in the qualitative research paradigm because of the concept of the 'emergent design' in qualitative inquiries (Trochim, 2005). It emphasizes the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Interaction between variables is important. Detailed data is gathered through open-ended questions that result in direct quotations. The researcher is an integral part of the investigation The person is the primary collection instrument and investigations are conducted under natural conditions. The focus is on design and procedures to gain 'real', 'rich' and 'deep' data.

The 'emergent design' of qualitative enquiries - which makes it possible for the researcher to make and change decisions about data collection strategies during the course of the study (Merriam, 1988: 71) - encouraged me to use this approach. The emergent design implies that the researcher does inductive theorising which, further, suggests that one does not have to do research with a previously decided, rigid design or with previous knowledge but, instead, make sense of what one finds out while finding it out and 'only after finding it out' (Gillham, 2000:2). This is a grounded theory approach which - according to Henning *et al* (2004: 83) – may, at times be suspect. As the authors correctly claim, the researcher's previous knowledge and background always influence the research process.

Qualitative researchers construct 'reality' in conjunction with their participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 162) - unlike traditional quantitative research where it is believed that reality is beyond the control of the researcher and the researcher is a spectator in the research activity. The epistemological foundations of qualitative research are based on values and value judgements of the researcher - together with his/her participants (Smit, 2001:59). The conclusions that the researcher makes about the research and its findings are 'constructed' and are influenced by the background of the researcher (Lincoln and Guba: 1985: 160-186). The researcher must only be

sensitive to the realities created by the participants and the different values that the participants have (Smit, 2001: 59).

3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND INTERPRETIVE PARADIGMS

I position this inquiry in an interpretive paradigm because qualitative research approaches phenomena in an interpretive mode. This implies that phenomena are studied in their natural settings and that the phenomenon and the context cannot be separated. I studied the experiences of learners of desegregation at their school. Another important dimension of studying learners in their respective school - which served as a natural setting in this study - was to interpret diversity in terms of the meanings that the learners, themselves, attached to it. The idea that knowledge is constructed through society's interaction with reality - to which Schumacher (1993: 15) eludes - places my study in the social constructivist paradigm. The social constructivist's idea of the creation of knowledge is that it is 'constructed' by researchers and their participants through observable phenomena and through descriptions of intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding (Henning *et al*, 2004:20). The origin of knowledge is, therefore, varied and reality is also seen by different people from different perspectives - making it multiple (Mouton, 1996: 3-4).

I explored the experiences of learners at a specific school in a desegregation context with the aim to understand those experiences. The learners were from different racial backgrounds and, therefore, it was reasonable to expect that they might not have perceived and experienced desegregation in the same manner. I did not assume that there was a single, unitary reality available somewhere - apart from the learners' perceptions. My aim was to understand desegregation and diversity as social phenomena - from the learners' perspective. Since each learner experienced the desegregation process differently from his/her own point of view, he/she experienced and constructed a different reality (Trochim, 2005)

The interpretive approach enabled me to give the voices of the sampled learners' first priority during the data analysis and allowed justice to be done to their perceptions, beliefs and values - in the sense of advocacy for varied realities. Interpretive theory is more accepting of free will and sees human behaviour as the outcome of the subjective interpreting of the environment (openet.ola.bc.ca/socglossary.interp.html), that is why I ended up with different opinions and perceptions on desegregation and diversity. These different opinions agree with the epistemological assumptions within the social constructivism and interpretive paradigms of qualitative research. They imply that the best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in its context (Schumacher, 1993:15). I believe that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur. The role of the researcher is also indispensable because he/she is the primary 'research instrument'. He/she is the one who is actively involved in collection of data. The researcher is a human being - which is why all research is, essentially, biased by each researcher's individual perceptions (Henning *et al.*, 2004:21). Soudien argues that social sciences field is by its nature a constructed field (2004: 89) because the social sciences always depend on the knowledge that the researcher, together with his participants construct Some qualitative researchers go to the extreme of even suggesting that there is no point in trying to establish "validity" in any external or objective sense. All we can hope to do is to interpret our view of the world as researchers (Trochim, 2005).

In social constructivism the world is turned into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:3-4). In the interpretive paradigm understanding is gained through interpretation - which is influenced by, and also interacts with, the social context (Henning *et al.*, 2004:20). When the learners told me their stories, I could not divorce those stories from their historical and social contexts because 'context' plays an indispensable role in qualitative inquiries. Thando - one of the learners from a township school - was admitted in Van Den Berg High School because she was awarded an engineering bursary by the school. During the interviews she admitted that she felt lost at the school on the first day because the school was "too big" compared to her township primary school - where she came from. As she put it, she

was also scared as she was going to be taught by white educators for the first time in her life.

A learner like Thando had a different understanding of the phenomenon of desegregation compared to a learner like Boipelo who started her first grade at a desegregated school and who had always been taught by white educators. The set-up for Boipelo was a continuation of what happened in her primary school. The two African girls' different backgrounds affected their perceptions of desegregation at this school.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

 I used a case study - drawing on ethnographic methods to carry out this research project. I combined the data collection strategies used in ethnographic research design with those used in case study research design to, appropriately, answer my research question. I deployed a range of interconnected methods and strategies to have a clearer focus on the desegregation at Van Den Berg High School (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 3-4). The purpose of the utilisation of different data collection strategies was to capture the experiences of desegregation within a former Afrikaans-medium, Whites-only school - as experienced and perceived by the learners themselves - by combining ethnographic and case study research data collection methods (Henning *et al.*, 2004:34).

I drew on data collection methods from two research designs to make sense of a desegregated school setting and the behaviour of learners from inside the school - using participant observation which normally could only be used in an ethnographic design which Pole and Morrison (2003) suggest. Participant observation privileged the perspective of the learners involved in the desegregation process. In a case study, alone, it would be problematic for me to participate and observe at the same time - the combination of the two, therefore, became a necessity in this design.

The ability of case study research to take into account the different objective experiences and the subjective perspectives of the participants advocated its use in

this research. Data from school journals had, for instance, given me the 'objective evidence' and the interviews - together with the incidental conversations - gave me the 'subjective perspective' of the learners. I refer to the evidence as subjective because learners related their experiences in terms of how they, themselves, perceived those experiences - which is in line with my theoretical framework of social constructivism.

The focus of ethnographies is the study of culture. In this case study the learners' culture was studied in-depth. The meaning of the concept 'culture' in this instance refers to the way the learners interacted and related to one another; the language they spoke; and how and where they spoke that language - together with what that language meant in their specific context (Geertz: 1973: x). According to (Geertz, 1988: 1), a proper ethnographer ought to be going out to places; coming back with information about how people live there; and making that information available to the professional community in a practical form. I went to a school where learners from different racial groups attend school together and found out how they dealt with the idea of being in close proximity to one another. My choice of a case study with ethnographic characteristics was influenced by the fact that it would be appropriate to give voice to the learners as they were the ones who were directly involved in the results of school desegregation. This idea is compatible with the social constructivist paradigm that I have chosen. The learners in South African schools are, directly, involved in the desegregation process because it happens mainly amongst them and rarely amongst the educators (Hemson, 2005:34). This study shows how learners perceive that desegregation and how they experience it.

A high priority was given to the accounts of the participants and their understanding of desegregation. The voices of the 16 learners in this study were analysed in depth and form the main findings of this research. I focused on the learners' experiences and perceptions of desegregation that served as a particular case rather than on any attempts to generalize the findings, because qualitative researchers develop context-bound generalizations - contrary to the universal context-free generalizations in quantitative research (Smit, 2001: 57). Most studies search for what is common and pervasive. However, in this case study, the focus was not on generalization but on

understanding the particulars of desegregation and its complexity. A case study focuses on a bound system - usually under natural conditions, so that the system can be understood in its own habitat (Stake, 1988:134). For this reason, I did not aim to generalise my findings. I, nevertheless, think that the findings, recommendations and conclusions can be transferable to other settings which are similar to the one where the study was conducted. For example, one can generate hypotheses about other settings for research purposes and, therefore, generalisations in a case study cannot be totally ruled out - depending on the circumstances and the situation.

The other reason I used both the case study and ethnographic data collection methods was the principle difference between case studies and other research designs. It focuses its attention on the individual case and not the whole population. Finch (1986:23-29) maintains that ethnography is uniquely well-suited to gathering data about consequences and "lived realities". The lived experiences of the learners at Van Den Berg High School - a desegregated school - were suitable for exploration which used ethnographic data collection methods, such as participant observation. This study shows how the local level - involved in the implementation and reception of policy decisions - is indispensable to determine the extent to which policies can either succeed or fail. Insights into the effects of policies - as they are interpreted - could be provided by those involved as they become the subject of varying degrees of resistance, accommodation or acceptance. The decision to desegregate schools involved a change in the way things were done. Jansen (2001:1) rightly observed that the government puts laws and policies into place, but the implementation at grassroots level is suspect. There may be many reasons for the success or failure of policy implementation at local level.

There were good intentions in introducing the desegregation process of schooling. Unfortunately, any policy change ends up with unintended consequences at grassroots level, because the schools reconstruct and reinterpret the policies in a way that suits them (Corbitt, 1997: 175). I embarked on a case study with ethnographic data collection methods to investigate the intended - and the unintended - consequences of desegregating schools in South Africa. Because of the fact that schools are highly complex organizations, it happens that a positive change to one part of the school may

lead to deleterious changes to other parts. Ethnography satisfies the need for rigorous research that does not ignore - but rather addresses - the complexity of the various aspects of schools and schooling (Finch, 1986:32).

Policy change also has positive results, but looking at the positive results of the policy change in isolation may lead to totally incorrect evaluations of its overall effect. For this reason, this case study - with its ethnographic data collection methods - attempted to ensure that the wider context of the school was examined and that the effects of any change were observed within the total environment of the school in terms of national and international trends. This makes Finch's statement (1988:29) that "documenting what happens in practice is not simply a matter of pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of their application; but also makes visible the tensions, contradictions, and incompatible aims which are often encompassed in those policies themselves" valid in this instance.

This research made it particularly appropriate to study the phenomenon of desegregation and its meaning to the learners 'as it happened' to them (Gillham, 2000: 4). The school served as a natural setting for this study because no learners were taken away from the school to be studied elsewhere - they were studied at their school. The ability of case studies to suggest to the reader - after a long time - of what to do and of what not to do "in a similar situation" (Gay, 1996:60) made it appropriate to study desegregation as a phenomenon in this one school. While every situation is different, a case study like this one could be referred to other desegregated schools of the same nature - just as in the case of law where a decided case forms part of a frame of reference and is also regarded as law.

Gay (1996:61) describes a case study as "the in-depth investigation of one 'unit', for example, a school, a classroom, a programme, an individual or a group." The 'one unit' which was studied here is the process of desegregation as it happened at Van Den Berg High School. It could only be studied and understood in its context. It emerged with its context so that precise boundaries were not easy to draw between the case and its context. The phenomenon of desegregation - and how the learners perceived and experienced it in their specific school context - formed the 'case.'

Because a case can also be a group with something in common (Gillham, 2000:1), I studied a group of 16 learners in a desegregated school, most of whom - except for two - started their schooling in desegregated schools. The learners are, essentially, similar. The slight differences which exist are not of serious concern. For example, the learners who did not start their schooling in South Africa - or in desegregated schools - were learners at Van Den Berg High School and I added them to the sample in order to get other perceptions from learners who did not start their schooling in desegregated schools.

In this case, I aimed at obtaining the most complete possible views of learners on desegregation - by regarding it as a holistic entity. I collected multiple forms of evidence - in sufficient detail - to achieve a better understanding of the desegregation process at Van Den Berg High School (Gillham, 2000: 19) by means of evidence from school documents, such as policies, journals, newspapers, minutes of SGB meetings and principal's reports. I, then, observed the purposely sampled learners' interaction with other learners and educators at the school and, finally, conducted in-depth ethnographic interviews with them.

Although I followed the descriptive type of case study - as described by Gillham (2000:21) - my aim was not only to describe the process of desegregation but also to interpret the data. Description is the basis of interpretation. The characteristics of a descriptive case study are - amongst other things -

- to illustrate the complexities of a school situation and the fact that not only one factor but many factors have contributed to the situation - as it is at a school at a particular point in time;
- to look back in history for causes and influences of why things at schools happen the way that they do - its ability to show the influence of personalities on the issue of desegregation;
- to cover many years and describe how preceding decades led to the present situation;
- to spell out the differences of opinions on desegregation and to suggest how these differences have influenced how things happen; and

- to present information from the viewpoints of different race groups (Gillham, 2000:4).

I used an ethnographic case study research because I wanted to examine a contemporary issue - 'a desegregated school in South Africa.' Yin (2003:9) maintains that if a 'how' or a 'why' type of question is being answered about a contemporary event - over which the investigator has little or no control - then case study research is the most appropriate method.

3.5   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological implications in the interpretive paradigm called for the use of document analysis, participant observations, informal conversations, field notes and, finally, interviews with purposely-sampled learners. The reason for using this variety was to adhere to the principle that the sources of data in the interpretive paradigm are 'varied'. Reality is assumed to exist, but it is "imperfectly grasped because no one scientist can claim to objectively capture reality. Human beings approach phenomena with their biases and prior knowledge" (Henning *et al.*, 2004:21). The different methods of data collection were used in order to find out if all of them create similar data, i.e., valid data.

I wanted to get an insider perspective of desegregation from the learners in Van Den Berg High School while - at the same time - I did not want to get too involved. I wanted to be careful so that in the process of 'researching hobos', I did not 'become a hobo' myself (Pansters: 2004). I used both case study and ethnographic methods of data collection to capture the experiences of learners of desegregation. The process which was followed in this inquiry is explained in detail below in terms of site selection, sampling of participants and other considerations about the sample.

3.5.1 Site selection

A former Afrikaans Whites–only school was purposively sampled for this research. I lived in the same neighbourhood of the school. Learners from this school passed by my street and I usually exchanged a few words with them. Sometimes I would, from

inside the house, watch them play and listen to their conversations as they passed by my house before and after school. From a distance, the learners of this school, from different racial groups, seemed to get along well as they walked together to and from school. From an outsider, it seemed strange especially because I had already ruled the school out as a research site for integration, because of the name of the school. When I asked for permission to carry out my research at this school, it was granted. Although I was sceptical, I decided to make an appointment to meet the principal.

On my first day, I was shown to a seat by the secretaries in the reception area of the school. As I sat on the couch, the statue of Van Den Berg, the statesman whose name the school bears, painted black, in a rockery of colourful flowers was right in front of me. Questions ran through my mind; black statue, colourful flowers, rainbow nation, integration, is that not what I am here for…? At that moment, the school principal greeted me with a smile. The principal, a big but friendly man, whom the teachers and the learners, together with the parents of the school seemed to like so much, looked calm as he signalled me into his office. I later learned that in 2003, he received an award from the former National Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, as the best 'Diversity Manager' in his area. I paid a visit to the school to find out if I would be able to do research there.

The community 'around' the school and the community 'inside' the school are very different. Van Den Berg High School is classified as a Section 21 school, which means that it is able to financially cope with the demands of running a school and can also manage itself. Contrary to this fact, though, is that the community around the school is reasonably able to cope financially, while presently 33% of the parents of the learners in this school are not able to afford school fees[18]. The total number of learners at the time of this research was 795 - 334 Whites, 261 Africans, 189 Coloured and 11 Indians. There were 34 teachers – all of whom were white men and women. The school provides tuition in both English and Afrikaans in different classes - English and Afrikaans streams.

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18. Compulsory fees that the school governing body may levy in terms of the *South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1994.*

The school was previously housed in a nearby primary school where it catered for the education of most of the learners in the area. The school journals show an exodus of learners - whose parents did not belong to a certain political party - from this school to a nearby Afrikaans-medium school. The reason for this movement was that the principal of the time used to invite a minister from his church to assemblies in the school where the minister openly criticised other political parties in favour of his own - which was also the principal's. Document review and interviews revealed that the minister canvassed support for his party at the school.

Some parents reported the principal to the Department and a disciplinary hearing was held where he was warned never to repeat what he had done. However, he – then - put up the flag of his political party at the school. He had very strong support from his party. The party started holding rallies on the premises of the school with the permission of the principal and most parents were unhappy about this practice because "the school was being turned into a political field." As a result of the unhappiness, many parents took their children out of the school. Most of the learners left the school around the years 1992-1993. In 1994 the present principal - who was once a teacher at this school - took over as the new principal.

3.5.2   Sampling of participants

The choice of data collection methods was affected by the sample that was studied. Some methods, such as surveys, are well-suited to collecting data from all participants, while others, such as focus groups, are better suited to a smaller group that represents the population. According to Trochim (2005), sampling is the basis for conclusions that will be reached and for the degree to which a study will be useful (Trochim, 2005). With this idea in mind, I used purposive sampling - where only the 'critical cases' were selected. Only learners who could answer my research question - were sampled for the research (Morrison, 1993: 112-117). Critical cases-purposive sampling is a way of sampling, where participants are selected on the grounds of existing knowledge of the research population by the researcher. This type of sampling is used, specifically, when the researcher wants to select specific unique cases that can provide special information (Cohen *et al*, 2004: 92). The choice of the learners for this study was done with the concept of desegregation and diversity in mind. Soudien refers to these diverse

entities as 'scapes' (ways of seeing). According to him, researchers in race should develop an approach that tries to work with the notion of multiplicity and brings together, as far as possible, the range of factors that can be identified within a given context (Soudien, 2004: 92). The following table reflects the 'scapes'/ diversity within the sample and, also, shows the combination of diversity within each participant. A detailed description of each participant is available in Appendix 1 at the end of this thesis. Pseudonyms are used for the participants.

Table 3.5   Diversity within the sample of learners

Participant	Grade	Age	Language	Social Class	Academic Achievement	Behaviour	Disability	Gender	Race
Vernon	11	17	English.	Middle class	good	good	none	male	w
Kobus	11	17	Afrikaans.	Middle class	good	good	none	male	w
Suzan	10	17	English	Working class	good	good	yes	female	w
Karen	11	17	Afrikaans	Middle class	average	bad	none	female	w
Sipho	11	17	IsiXhosa	Middle class	good	good	none	male	b
Thando	11	18	IsiZulu	Working class	good	good	none	female	b
Malose	10	17	Sepedi	Working class	average	bad	yes	male	b
Boipelo	11	17	Tswana	Middle class	good	good	none	female	b
Saloosha	11	17	English	Middle class	good	good	none	female	I
Vally	11	18	English	Middle class	average	good	none	male	I
Snail	11	18	Afrikaans	Working class	average	good	none	male	c
Samantha	11	17	Afrikaans	Working class	average	good	none	female	c
Koos	11	17	IsiNdebele	Middle class	average	bad	none	male	b
Yang Chuang	10	15	Chinese	Middle class	average	good	none	male	ch
Abuja	11	18	Swahili	Middle class	good	good	none	female	b
Marie	11	18	Afrikaans	Working class	average	good	none	female	w

The composition of the critical cases of purposely sampled learners reflects the profile of the population of learners at Van Den Berg High School during the time that this research was carried out (Cohen *et al*, 2004: 95) - it was, also, a heterogeneous sample (Borg & Gall, 1979: 195). The learners – who were chosen from different 'races', language groups, social class, academic achievement, gender and ethnic groups in the specific school - were first observed and later interviewed with an aim to understand their experiences.

3.5.3   Other considerations about the sample

The first criterion that I used to sample the learners for my study was that the learners should have started school at desegregated schools. However, because the school also admitted learners from townships who did not start their schooling at desegregated schools, I decided to include two such learners - a boy and a girl - in order to capture the experiences of that group of learners as well. The other criterion that I added was that of learners who came from countries outside South Africa - so that I would get yet another layer of perceptions.

Since desegregation and diversity were key words used to sample learners, the following is a summary of the diverse criteria which were used to sample learners:

- The learners had to have started their schooling at desegregated schools.
- The gender composition was considered.
- The racial composition of the sample was in proportion to the number of learners according to race at the school.
- The African learners were chosen from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Different languages were represented.
- The religion is predominantly Christian, but the Muslim and Hindu religions were also represented.
- Two learners who started their schooling in township schools but started Grade 8 at this desegregated school were included.
- I had two learners from outside South Africa - who had recently been admitted to the school.
- Learners were from middle class families; from the working class; and from those who survive on social grants. This was done from across the colour line to address the social class issue of desegregation. I got information from the school on the class issue. Careful considerations were followed in order not to make unfounded assumptions about people's livelihoods. Confidential information about families was given to me by the school where needed.
- Some learners lived nearer to the school and some were bussed into the

school every morning - proximity to the school.

- Learners with disabilities were also included in the sample.
- Learners who did well academically and in sport.
- Learners who were amongst the 'not so well-behaved' group were also in the sample.

Most participants sampled for this research were in Grade 11. As the year had already progressed, I would have difficulties finding - or tracking - the Grade 12 learners in the next year - if any follow-up were to be necessary. I could not include the Grade 12 learners because the Grade 12 year in the South African education system is a hectic one, during which the learners prepare for the first national examination of their school career.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF METHODS

A variety of data collection methods was used in this ethnographic case study, including documentary analysis, incidental conversations, participant observation and interviews. Observation sheets and interview schedules, respectively, are added as appendices to this thesis. The data collection methods were used in the same sequence in which they are mentioned above. School records of incidents related to racial desegregation were perused and the principal was available to clarify questions arising from the documents in quick interviews which were, mostly, not recorded. He provided me with information which was either missing from the documents or which may not have been clear. I embarked on the use of multiple methods – thus, the construction of diverse foci of data for triangulation purposes. At the same time I was directly involved with the participants - for what I thought was possibly a long term engagement which assisted me to know them better, two school terms to be exact- from the second and third term of 2004.

I studied the history of Van Den Berg High School from the time the school started enrolling black learners in 1997. Amongst the documents I was privileged to peruse were different school policies that provided me with a better understanding of the school. A brief case history of each sampled learner was taken during the interviews -

available at the beginning of each interview transcript - after I obtained the consent of the learners' parents. These histories provided me with a clearer understanding of my 'participants' (Babbie & Mouton 2001:37). The biographies assisted me in being alert during the interviews to pick up on the relationship between what the learners were saying and their specific historical background (Cohen *et al*., 2004:183). Each data collection strategy is discussed in detail below.

3.6.1   Document analysis

Document analysis happens when the researcher studies the records and other documents which are not gathered - or developed - specifically for the study which is being undertaken. Those documents should shed more light on the study being undertaken. Examples include recruitment and attendance records, the budget, staff records, and annual reports (Trochim, 2005). The documents are particularly useful for recording the processes that took place prior to the study in question. I studied the minutes of the School Governing Body meetings; the minutes of staff meetings; and the school records in the form of policies and school journals which recorded the events which took place at the school. I wanted to establish the characteristics of the school before and after the process of the admission of black learners, including academic achievement, school attendance, English proficiency status, sports participation, awards received by the school, functions held at the school, achievements by the principal and the educators and newspaper reports on the events at the school. A content analysis of the documents relevant to my study was carried out.

The advantage of collecting data from documents is that they elicit a high degree of accuracy because they were not kept with the knowledge that they would - one day - be scrutinised for research purposes. In my case, the challenge was that most documents were not available, or applicable, to my research and many of which could have been relevant were incomplete. Part of this process involved reviewing the school records on the number of learners - according to race and language. In giving the full profile of the school, the documents were very useful. Although obtaining learners' records of academic performance involved special permission from parents

and school officials, it was not a significant problem in this study because the parents gave their consent.

There is no single data collection method which is ideal for every situation. For this reason, I preferred to use multiple methods - which are explained below in conjunction with document analysis. Using multiple methods to assess the same outcomes provided me with a rich, detailed picture of what was happening at Van Den Berg High School. It also illuminated inconsistencies between methods and reduced the chance of bias that could have been caused by the use of a particular method.

I studied the documents of the school in order to get information that could position the school within the context of my research on desegregation. This situating of the school helped me to understand and to determine my next data collection method. The data from the documents shaped my observation and interview protocols as well as the type of questions I asked - afterwards - during the interviews.

3.6.2 Direct observations

Observation is not looking at things - but looking through things. Behaviour, interaction, conversations and sign language - used by learners - were observed. The reason for using observation as the second data collection method was that - through it - I could obtain detailed information about aspects of school life which I could not have obtained from documents, such as a detailed record of the language used; non-verbal communication used by learners in interaction with others; and what they did and how they did what they did on the playground (Foster, 1996: 12). The observation method was useful in a variety of ways. It provided me with ways of looking for non-verbal expressions of feelings; of determining who interacts with whom; and grasping how participants communicate with each other (Schmuck, 1997: 79).

During observation, the observer records what he/she feels, hears, sees, experiences and smells. During the observation process there is also gut feeling. It is not scientific, but it needs to be recorded. The interpretation of observation data before full scrutiny of an incident has taken place is not advisable. Because observation is systematic, I

went into the school with an observation schedule on which I noted down what I would observe, on which dates and also the focus of each of the observations. I did not just go in there and observe. I observed learners' interaction with other learners from a race group different from their own. The following is an example of what appeared in my note book as an empty observation schedule which would be full of field notes at the end of the observation. The observation schedule is adopted from Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 307), but contextualised for qualitative research.

Date	
Site (Where)	
Time	
Specifics (Who)	
Length	
Observer role	
Descriptive Notes (I recorded everything that happened on this section)	
Reflective notes (I recorded my thoughts and feelings about what happened on this section)	

Observation is special in the sense that - as a researcher - you become immersed in what is going on in the setting. I first observed from a distance and, then, slowly observed - and participated in - the school's events. The weeks that I spent observing the sampled learners in different educators' classes led me to participate while I was observing and to observe as I was participating - what Merriam (1998:22) calls participant observation.

3.6.3 Participant observation

Participant observation refers to the researcher being involved in a variety of research activities over an extended period of time that enable him/her to observe the cultural members in their daily lives and that allow him/her to participate in their activities to facilitate a better understanding of those behaviours and activities. The process of conducting this type of field work involves gaining entry into the community; selecting gatekeepers and key informants; participating in as many different activities as are allowed by the community members; clarifying one's findings through member checks, formal interviews, and informal conversations; and keeping organised, structured field notes to facilitate the development of a narrative that explains various cultural aspects to the reader. Participant observation is used as a mainstay in field work in a variety of disciplines and, as such, has proven to be a beneficial tool for producing studies that provide accurate representation of a culture (Trochim, 2005).

Participant observation is considered the most appropriate data collection method in anthropological studies - especially in ethnographic studies - and it has been used as a data collection method over a long period of time (De Walt and De Walt, 2002:223). I could not carry out an ethnographic case study without using participant observation as one of the ways of collecting data. I used participant observation, specifically, because it allowed me to check the definitions of terms that participants used during my subsequent interviews with them. I also used participant observation to observe events that the learners were unable - or unwilling - to share. Observation further allowed me to draw the attention of the learners to

distortions or inaccuracies in their own descriptions (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:68).

The role of observer *as participant* stance enabled me to participate in the group activities - as and when I desired. Yet, I did not forget that my role as a researcher was to collect data and that the group that was being studied was aware of my observation activities. In this stance, I was an observer who was not a member of the group but who was interested in participating as a means of conducting better observation and, hence, generating a more complete understanding of the learners' activities. Merriam (1998:56) points out that while the researcher may have access to many different people in this situation from whom she may obtain information, the group members control the level of information given. They may either decide to tell you what you want to hear, or they may select the information they want to give to you. In terms of this concern, Adler and Adler (1994: 380) advise that this "peripheral membership role" enables the researcher to "observe and interact closely enough and is able to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership."

Merriam (1998: 103) calls this stance of participant observer a "schizophrenic activity" because the researcher participates in the setting studied, but not to the extent that he/she becomes too absorbed to observe and analyse what is happening. The learners were told who I was; what my business at the school was; and what I wanted from them. They became interested in the research and everyone wanted to participate. This observer role is said to be the most ethical approach to observation because the researcher's observation activities are known to the group being studied, while the emphasis for the researcher is on collecting data - rather than on participating in the activity being observed.

I observed learners in their respective classrooms. While I was given permission to have conversations with the learners in the school, only the learners who were sampled for interviews were observed and, therefore, a variety of classes were visited. I followed the four learners who were said to be amongst the 'trouble makers' in the

school during the first week of observations. The second week I followed the ones who were said to be amongst the 'angels' in the school. During the third week I observed the 'average' ones. I would observe two learners a day - in different classes. The 'trouble makers' - in this instance - would be the learners with many demerits in the school discipline register. The demerits would range between offences like homework not done or not completed to smoking on the school premises. The 'angels' would be the opposite of the troublemakers and the 'average' ones would be learners with a reasonable number of demerits acceptable at the school and behaving like most of the learners at the school.

Another advantage of observation is that - as an observer - I was able to 'see' what participants could not. As I observed the learners, important patterns and regularities in behaviour were revealed (Foster, 1996: 13). I observed the interaction of the learners with their educators and of the learners amongst themselves - both inside and outside the classrooms. The observation furnished me with the opportunity to witness behaviour patterns related to the way learners speak to one another and the way they relate to one another - as recorded in the following observation notes:

13/10/04 In Ms Smarties' (pseudonymn) class. Observing Vernon.

This is a Grade 11 English class. 6 African boys, 8 African girls, 3 Indian girls, 4 coloured girls, 3 coloured boys, 5 white girls, and 9 white boys. The teacher is sitting at her desk. The learners come into the classroom. They sit in groups. There are five groups - mixed according to race and gender. The class has to complete a group project that they started two days ago. One African girl tries to reach the top of the cupboard in front of the class but she is too short. She jumps up and down. The class is noisy because of the group work. Suddenly, a tall white boy goes to the front, picks up a rolled paper from the top of the cupboard and gives it to the African girl who had been trying to reach for it. The girl says 'thank you'. The boy goes back to his group. No one has noticed this incident, probably because it is not important for them, but it is for my research. The boy did not belong to the same group as the girl, but he went to help her because he noticed her struggling. This girl did not ask for his help. Later, I asked the boy why he did what he did. He seemed to have forgotten about the incident. My own reflection was "Wow. If this is how they relate everyday, it is amazing!"

I spent a week on observing each group of learners. The reason I conducted my observations before the interviews was so that I would have a chance to get the learners to clarify some of the issues I may have misunderstood during the observations when I conducted the interviews. The aim of the class observations was to observe the learners who were involved in my research and not the educators *per se*. Therefore, my report does not include the educators anywhere - except where I would be following up on an issue that was of interest about a learner in a particular educator's lesson. Observations can be done in a variety of ways, but I used ethnographic participant observation which is explained below.

Merriam (1998:78) alerts qualitative researchers - using participant observation - to the fact that they should not be concerned about their role of participant observer affecting the situation, but rather to worry about how they would account for those effects when explaining the data. Participant observation is more difficult than simply observing without participation in the activity of the setting since it usually requires field notes to be jotted down later - after the activity has been concluded. Yet, there are situations in which participation is required for understanding. I was aware of the fact that simply observing - without participating in the actions of the learners - may prevent me from completely understanding those activities.

At the netball field during break. 15/10/04. Observing Thando.

The girls were eating their lunch. I was sitting at the edge of the stands at the netball field. Lina, an African girl, came and challenged some girls to play netball. There were 4 white girls and two coloured girls and there were 6 more African girls who wanted to join the team. The two teams needed one more player and one of the girls invited me to play with them - which I did. The bell rang and they challenged me for the next day. It was a very nice game, but too physical. During the game Lina kept on cheering her team mates in her language, saying something like "come girls, let's show the suburban girls how we rural girls play the game of netball!"

According to Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999: 67), participant observation is the first step in ethnographic studies. It was because of their reasons for using participant observation in research (1999: 91) that I embarked on it. I wanted to

- identify and guide relationships between the learners;

- get a feel of how the learners organise and prioritise things;

- determine how the learners interact and interrelate;

- learn what the learners deem important in manners, politics and social interaction; and

- let them get to know me as well - thereby easing the facilitation of the research process.

Another main reason for using participant observation was to increase the study's validity - as Bernard (1994:76) suggests. It made it possible for me to collect different types of data. Being on site over a period of time allowed me to become familiar with the Van Den Berg community and it facilitated my involvement in activities to which I would, generally, not be invited to, such as the bicycle race which was organised to raise funds for the school where groups of learners and educators would cycle for the whole night to reach a destination measured in kilometres. This method reduced the incidence of 'reactivity' which was evident on the part of the learners at the beginning of the study. It helped me to develop questions that would make sense in the language relevant to the context. I also developed a better understanding of what was happening in the school and that 'reduced' my subjective interpretation of the observation. Participant observation was used to collect the 'right data' for my study (Bernard, 1994: 142-3).

The degree to which I involved myself in participating in the daily lives of the learners who were studied made a difference to the quality - and the amount - of data that I collected. De Walt and De Walt (2002: 92) believe that "the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method." I acknowledge the limitations of

participant observation and that is why I used it in conjunction with other data collection methods, such as interviewing and document analysis, to increase the validity of the study. I used participant observation to answer a descriptive research question (De Walt & De Walt, 2002: 56), namely, "How do learners in desegregated schools deal with their diversity?"

3.6.4 Limitations of participant observation

One limitation involved in conducting participant observations is noted by De Walt, De Walt, and Wayland (1998: 45) when they allude to the fact that "the researcher must determine to what extent he/she will participate in the lives of the participants and whether to intervene in a situation." Another potential limitation they mention is that of researcher bias. They note that unless ethnographers use methods other than just participant observation, there is a likelihood that they will fail to report the negative aspects of the participants. To reduce this bias they encourage novice researchers to practice reflexivity. This implies the keeping of a reflexive diary to record one's feelings at any particular point in time. My reflective diary assisted me to understand the biases I might have had that could interfere with the true and correct interpretation of what I observed.

Breuer and Roth (2003:45) use a variety of methods for knowledge production, including the positioning of various points of view; different frames of reference, such as special or temporal relativity; perceptual schemata based on experience; and an interaction with the social context. The two authors argue that a researcher needs to understand that any interaction changes the observed object. Noting this limitation of participant observation, I used other data collection strategies as well - which led to a richer understanding of the social context, the school context and the learners.

Another challenge was "the ability to keep an open mind" (Gillham, 2000: 18) where the problem of pre-knowledge and assumptions is addressed. Even if you 'know' what is going on in the setting, you have to act as if you did not - because you actually do not know. I had to keep an open mind all the time I was at the school which - I agree - was difficult because of the fact that as human beings we usually feel that we are

compelled to understand and to make sense of what we are investigating. This makes us interpret new knowledge in terms of what we already know (Gillham, 2000: 18).

However, I tried to avoid an interpretation of new knowledge in terms of what I already knew (Gillham 2000:18; Stenhouse, 1985: 211) by focusing rigorously on the desegregation process. The aim of the research was to find out how learners understood themselves or their context; to find out what lay behind the 'objective' evidence; to find out the reasons for the research results, for example, the learners' feelings, perceptions and experiences of what was going on in the school.

A further limitation is the effect of racial, language and gender differences which were evident at the setting. I am an African female and my participants were learners from all four major South African racial groups. The influence of language, race and gender emerged very strongly during the interviews. My previous experience as a teacher at a former white-only English medium primary school enhanced the trust that the participants, the parents, the teachers together with the principal gained for me. The school culture in terms of protocol and how the learners related to the environment was in a way not new to me. This fact may have influenced the data collection in the sense that important data may have been ignored as normal or maybe as a researcher I may have only observed behaviour that I expected. The teachers treated me like I was one of them, because some of them were parents at the primary school where I used to work before I undertook this research. I also taught some of the learners who were in this school at the primary school. This helped to ease the tension that could otherwise have been a problem.

3.6.5   Interviews

Interviews have been used extensively for data collection across all the disciplines of the social sciences and in educational research. There are many types of interviews - as suggested in the literature below. However, I did not attempt to use all of them. Instead, I used only in-depth interviewing. In interviewing it is generally agreed that there is a questioner and one or more interviewees (Trochim, 2005) and, also, that it is a key method of data collection. Hitchcock (1989:79) lists nine types: structured interview, survey interview, counselling interview, diary interview, life history

interview, ethnographic interview, informal/unstructured interview, and conversations. Cohen and Manion (1994:273), however, prefer to group interviews into four kinds, namely, the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview, and the focused interview. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 271) also explain different types of interviews as: informal conversational, guided, standardised open-ended and closed quantitative interviews. My in-depth interviewing had some informal conversational characteristics which assisted me to probe further in order to get more information on issues related to desegregation in the school.

The type of interview one chooses increases the relevance of questions to context; it builds on observational data; and it can be matched to the participant being interviewed - in the sense that the interviewer chooses which question to ask and when to ask that particular question, depending on which participant you are interviewing at that particular moment. That is why I used the interviews at the end of the data collection process - to build on information from documents and also from conversations and observations. I used in-depth interviewing which assisted in eliciting information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the learners' points of view of their situation. It was also used to explore interesting areas of desegregation for further investigation. I asked the learners open-ended questions, and probed whenever necessary to obtain information that I deemed useful. In-depth interviewing involves qualitative data - that is why some authors refer to it as qualitative interviewing (Patton, 1987:113).

This is an extract from one of the interviews where I gave the participant time to flow in his talk without interrupting. While probing is necessary, it should however, not disrupt the flow.

Researcher: Where do you see this school in five years from now?

Vernon: I actually see this school in a very big, much better position than it is now. Because when I first arrived at this school it was just beginning to get a good name, when I was still in primary school in standard five and I had to choose a high school, my mother said you know I can go to any high school

except Van Den Berg, so which is very very strange to me because a lot of my friends were coming to Van Den Berg and I just had to go to Gladys because both my sisters are there, but then Gladys was not such a good school and my mom was just gonna let me come here. Then our school actually started getting a very good name, from round about that period which was kind of strange to me because initially my mom said you can't go to Van Den Berg I think it is because of the Afrikaans and the English.

A lot of the English-speaking people did not want to send their kids here because they were scared of this culture of Afrikaans but because of the fact that our school showed the public that we are both English and Afrikaans and now we are more English than Afrikaans actually we have more English people than Afrikaans, and ever since I came into the school in grade 9, we started to grow, and we really really grew to think that we were nominated as the best school of the year, I mean really, we have now the Teacher in South Africa teaching at our school. I mean you know, with the sports we are doing a lot of things, I think we are really really growing up and I think we shall continue to grow up. In five years time we should see a lot less negativity amongst the pupils because a lot of pupils are still a little bit negative about the school you know You usually hear pupils saying "this is not right, I do not like this etc, It is actually a few people so, I think a lot of people in the school are pretty positive it is only those few people, but I think in about five years time, we will see more of the rainbow nation coming about and more sense of unity among the students themselves , a bigger sense of pride in the school itself. Like I said a lot of the students not a whole lot but a few are still a lot negative they do not feel part of the school so I think in a few years about five years probably, we will feel a lot more proud of our school, yes, time will tell.

3.6.6   Dynamics of the interviews

I conducted interviews after I had observed the learners. The aim was to conduct the interviews at the end of the data collection process so that I would have a chance to let the learners clarify whatever information I solicited during the observation and during the document review process. I interviewed four learners each day for 3 days and two learners each day for the remaining two days of the school week - a total of sixteen learners over the course of five days.

I scheduled the interviews for 30 minutes each, but each interview had its own dynamics and, as a result, the interviews ranged from between 15 and 30 minutes each. Sometimes the participant would ask me to switch off the tape and continued providing information which he/she then allowed me to use in my report - but not to record it. In circumstances like this, I would write copious field notes before I called the next interviewee. The learners were called from their respective classes by the school secretaries who used the intercom - which was only audible in the specific participant's class. I had class time-tables of all my participants. The learners knew that they could be called any day that week for an interview and they were, therefore, present at school. The interview schedule was used as a guideline to direct the interview but not, necessarily, exactly as it was - depending on the dynamics of each interview.

The black learners – especially, the African and coloured learners - were open to most of the questions. Although the female Indian learner was very reserved, she responded to many questions. The male Indian learner was very confident and tended to try to dominate the interview by asking me questions instead.

Most of the English and Afrikaans-speaking white learners were also very open - except for one Afrikaans-speaking boy. English was used for all the interviews except this one interview which was the only one where I realised that language was a barrier, so we switched over to Afrikaans. In general, the learners responded to all the questions. I anticipated a negative reaction to some of the questions, but did not get any. In fact, instead of the negativity that I expected, the learners were eager to talk about desegregation which - together with race – I had, originally, thought were 'sensitive' issues.

The life histories of the learners - which I wrote down during the interviews - assisted me to understand the dynamics of the interviews. Most of the learners from the English medium primary schools were accustomed to being taught by black educators as the English primary schools in the area employed African, Indian and coloured teachers long before 1996. In turn, they related to me with ease. The principal played a very important role in the interview dynamics and in the reactions of the learners to this research. When he introduced me to the learners, he encouraged them to feel free

to give as much honest information about the school as possible - which made the process of data collection easier than I had anticipated

3.6.7 Data management

Data from the documents and observations was written down and kept in files on computer as field notes. On a daily basis I wrote them out in full when I got to the office. The participants gave me permission to audio-record the interviews. I transcribed the interviews and imported them into ATLAS.Ti qualitative computer data analysis software to organise this data. The audio tapes, the transcripts and the observations schedules - together with the notes from school documents - are safely kept for record purposes

3.6.8 Data analysis

The first step in qualitative data analysis is to develop a thorough and comprehensive description of the phenomenon which was studied. Geertz (1973: 11) and Denzin (1978) call this a 'thick' description. If a 'thin' description merely states 'facts', a 'thick' description includes information about the context of an act, the intentions and the meanings that organise action and its subsequent evolution (Denzin, 1978: 20). Thus, description encompasses the *contexts* of action, the *intentions* of the actor, and the *process* in which action is embedded.

The second step, then, would be the classification of the data. Without classifying the data, I would have had no way of knowing what it was that I would be analysing or of making meaningful comparisons between different bits of data. Classifying the data is an integral part of the analysis process. Moreover, the conceptual foundations upon which interpretation and explanation are based are laid on my classification of the data. I exported all my interview data from Microsoft Word into ATLAS.Ti. Many qualitative researchers have utilised this software to assist them in organising their data. ATLAS.Ti organises the data and makes it easy for further analysis. The interviews were coded in ATLAS-Ti, using an inductive approach referred to as open coding where the coding is done from the data - line by line. This open coding in ATLAS.Ti enabled me to – simultaneously - create new codes and attach text to them

in the form of exact words/quotations from participants (Babbie, 2001: 511). It, then, became easier to import original segments of texts as quotations from ATLAS.Ti during the discussion of the data in Chapter 4.

The codes were developed, directly, from the data and themes were identified - using quotations and codes. The following is an example of how I worked with the data. The following is an example of what the data looks like in ATLAS.Ti - with the meaning of the different terminology given at the end (adopted from Smit, 2001: 73).

HU: Diversity

File: [c:\diversity\atlas hu\Diversity]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 06/04/11 04:31:36 PM

Codes-quotations list

Code-Filter: Code Family Social relations

Code: Attitude: learners {6-0}

P 3: Respondent 10.Vally.txt - 3:64 (71:72)   (Super)

Codes: [A sense of responsibility towards each other] [Attitude: learners] [Caring attitude: learners] [School rules]

but then I think of the children who do not have many jeans, it would be a pity.

P 5: Respondent 12 Samantha.txt - 5:44 (132:133)   (Super)

Codes: [A sense of responsibility towards each other] [Attitude: learners] [Caring attitude: learners] [I feel at home here]

1. HU stands for *Hermeneutic Unit* - the complete project.

2. The *File* reference indicates the location where the project is saved on the computer.

3. The word *Super* refers to the person who actually did the analysis – me.

4. The time and date when the analysis was done are also available for further reference.

5. Codes-quotations list means that this particular information shows a particular code with the relevant quotation, i.e., the original words - as said by the participant.

6. Code filter: Code family refers to the fact that this code was filtered by using all the primary texts, i.e., all interviews.

7. P3 refers to the 3rd interview.

8. Vally is a pseudonym used for the participating learner.

9. 3: 64 stands for the 3rd interview 64th code.

10. 71: 72 is the line where the quotation can be found in the complete project.

In this study I have put an emphasis on documenting and portraying the everyday experiences of individual learners by observing and interviewing them (Frenkel & Wallen, 1993:92). The shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language that seemed to have developed over time amongst the learners were also recorded (Creswell, 2002:37).

While I bore in mind that for a researcher to do justice to ethnographic data he/she has to deal with the stories as told by the participants, I aspired to move beyond that and to find the discourse that the data portrays. After all, the 'truth' is 'constructed' by the participants and interpreted by the researcher. Studying desegregation qualitatively assisted me to get to know the learners, personally, and to have a 'feel' of what they experienced in their daily activities at their school and in society - an advantage that other researchers, using different research approaches, could miss out on (Bogdan, 1992: 7).

The data was transcribed for content. The learners' experiences of desegregation – particularly, in terms of handling *racial* desegregation as one form of identity

formation as it happened at their specific school - was studied in-depth. The language that emanated from the data was analysed and interpreted from a social constructivist point of view.

3.6.9   Content analysis

When one starts with analysis, one reads through the data and then proceeds with content analysis. My understanding is that analysing the content of the data means making sense of what the data tells you at face value. After that, when one starts asking questions about what may be hidden behind the spoken word, one moves to a higher level of analysis. I focused on the ability of language to be social and, also, to be interactive in nature. Using this point of view/standpoint, I moved beyond the statements - as put across by the learners. I interpreted the statements beyond what they seemed to mean in general language use. Language usage is a situated performance. The same concept may mean different things to different people in the same context or in a different context.

The limitation of qualitative data analysis as seen by Dey (1993: 83) is that a researcher can only describe, interpret and explain, but cannot hope to reproduce the full richness of the original data. The pre- requisite of qualitative data analysis is familiarity with the data. There is no one kind of qualitative data analysis, but rather a variety of approaches related to the different perspectives and purposes of the research. I was more interested in describing the social and cultural aspects of the process of desegregation as it unfolded in Van den Berg high school.

3.7   METHODOLOGICAL NORMS

The worth of any research endeavour is assessed by a variety of audiences, including editorial reviews, publishers, grant reviewers and dissertation committees (Anfara Junior *et al*, 2002: 28). In traditional quantitative research, the authors refer to the validity and reliability of the study. There is confusion about how to best think about standards for qualitative research. Validity and reliability in qualitative research is

seen as the truth and correctness of a statement (Kvale, 1996:236) and conducting the research in an ethical manner so that the findings are a true reflection of the perspectives of the participants - as interpreted by the researcher (Merriam, 1998: 198).

There are many different standards mentioned by authors, such as Le Compte (1993:17); Smith and Glass (1987); and Denzin and Lincoln (2000:12). Eisenhart and Howe (1992:iv) proposed the following five criteria that can be used to evaluate a good qualitative inquiry:

1. ensuring a fit between research questions, data collection procedures and analytic techniques;

2. ensuring the effective application of the data collection procedures and techniques;

3. being alert to - and cognisant of - prior knowledge;

4. being cognisant of internal and external value constraints; and

5. assessing a study's comprehensiveness.

Anfara Junior *et al* (2002:12) maintain that validity and reliability in qualitative studies will not go away. Similarly, Creswell (1998: 216-217) suggests that it is "impossible to reach consensus on the evolving perspective of qualitative validity" and further suggests that rather than thinking of qualitative validity as rigid, we should look at it from different perspectives because qualitative research, itself, carries out data collection within a variety of traditions. All research should be subjected to methodological norms which are used to evaluate whether it is credible or not. Creswell and Miller (2000:34) propose eight different ways to verify that a study is credible – namely, prolonged engagement and persistent observation; triangulation; peer review or debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying researcher bias; member checks; thick description/rigor; and external audits. While they refer to the eight criteria, they recommend that qualitative researchers engage in at least two of the eight criteria in any given study. I have, in this particular study done persistent

observation and therefore prolonged my stay in the field. I have embarked on member checks and also triangulation of data collection methods.

When conducting qualitative research, the investigator seeks to gain a total - or complete - picture of the phenomenon in its context and not to find out what is, generally, true (Merriam, 1998:208). According to Stainback and Stainback (1988:120), a holistic description of events, procedures, and philosophies occurring in a natural setting is often needed to make accurate situational decisions.

3.7.1   Trustworthiness, dependability, transferability and credibility

Associating the quantitative paradigm of 'validity and reliability' with the qualitative research paradigm has always been problematic. Validity and reliability originate in the quantitative paradigm - where the authenticity of a study can be established. These two concepts do not sit well with the establishment of authenticity for a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative researchers have tried to find ways to verify the authenticity of their studies in a 'qualitative way'. Researchers need alternative models - appropriate to qualitative designs - to ensure rigour without sacrificing the relevance of qualitative research. In summary, then, what the different authors are emphasizing are four general criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research - to enable other researchers to be able to determine the truth value/credibility of the research; the applicability/transferability; the consistency/dependability; and - as far as possible - the neutrality/conformability of the research process in order to accept it as empirical research (Trochim, 2005).

Qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies which are described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field or participant observer research. The purpose is to understand people's interpretations of reality. The process is dynamic because as reality changes, people's perceptions change as well. The aim is to get an insider perspective of the topic being studied. The participants' values will have an impact; should be understood; and should be taken into account when conducting - and reporting on - qualitative research. The focus is a total or complete

picture of what is going on. The ultimate goal is to discover reality and not to predict it. Theories and hypotheses are evolved from data as it is collected. The data is subjective because it consists of the perceptions of the people in the environment.

As I was writing my report, I tested the trustworthiness of my research by presenting my work in progress at colloquia and seminars which dealt, specifically, with school integration. I asked respondents to verify the accuracy of my records. One of the processes that I used is triangulation. Denzin (1978:145) has identified several types of triangulation. One type involves the convergence of multiple data sources (Creswell & Miller, 2000: 126). Another type is methodological triangulation - involving the convergence of data from multiple data collection sources - which I have attempted to satisfy in this instance, namely, document analysis, observations and interviews. A third triangulation procedure is investigator triangulation in which multiple researchers are involved in an investigation. I was the only researcher in this project. However, related to investigator triangulation is researcher-participant corroboration - which I have used. This type of triangulation procedure has been referred to as cross-examination. I triangulated various kinds of information from documents, from interviews and from observations - and I have verified my data with my participants.

In order to maintain validity in this research, during the research process I kept accurate records of events. The process at the University of Pretoria is such that a proposal for research is presented in the department where a student wants to register for a doctoral degree. Upon approval at departmental level, the proposal is then presented at faculty level with a wider educational research audience. After my proposal was approved at both levels, I presented it at a University of Pretoria Postgraduate Research Indaba - a conference organised for postgraduate learners to showcase their research-in-progress every year. These forums assisted me with inputs from experts and it contributed to shaping and refining my research process.

The research-in-progress and the methodology used during the research were also presented at the South Africa and the Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in

Development (SANPAD). This is a forum where each year the South African Government - in collaboration with the Netherlands Government - sponsors twenty-six doctoral students from South Africa to develop their research skills. The programme is called the Research Capacity Initiative (RCI) which is a year long programme consisting of four meetings of two weeks each during that year. In the workshops, the cohorts go through rigorous hands-on training in research methodology. Presenters at workshops are experts in their research methodology fields - from both countries. These experts serve as member checks, providing inputs which assist with the development of the research process.

The cohorts in the RCI present their proposals; work-in-progress; and have a chance to share ideas and concerns with research methodology experts from the two countries. My research proposal and work-in-progress were presented at that forum. I received feedback that I used to further shape my study. By doing this I allowed others to critique the research manuscript - following the developmental process. I included professional colleagues and research participants in this process to ensure that information was reported accurately and completely. I feel that the steps that I have followed make my study credible and dependable. I have also explained - in detail - the data collection and data analysis processes. The findings of this study can be transferable to similar situations.

3.8   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research at schools in Gauteng Province is regulated by the Department of Education's *District Memorandum 70 of 2002*. This circular outlines the procedures that have to be followed to obtain permission from the department to do research at schools under the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). I followed that process and was granted permission to proceed with my research. After permission had been given by the GDE and after I was convinced that I would be able to do research at the school, I requested permission from the School Governing Body to continue. I also sought permission from the parents of the learners who were directly involved in my study - scanned copies of signed consent forms are archived as a folder on my computer. However, in terms of anonymity, I cannot make the signed consent forms public. A blank example of the form that I used is provided as Appendix 2.

In granting permission to conduct research, the school community asked me to use the school's real name in the final report. This is an ethically controversial issue - and after discussions with the ethics committee at my institution and careful deliberations with my study leader - I decided not to use the school's real name. If, however, in the process, someone is able to deduce which school I studied, it goes without saying that no researcher can guarantee total anonymity. I was very careful not to jeopardise my relationship with the school.

I made an appointment to meet the principal. On the first morning I waited in the reception area for my turn to see him. I was given my first voluntary one-hour interview on the same day. This interview was an eye-opener because it helped me understand information that I later found in the documents. During the first interview, the principal gave an overview of the history of the school from before he was principal until the day I met him. The aim of this interview was to get an overview of the events at the school; to ask questions about the procedure of my research; and what procedures and dates would best suit the school. The principal highlighted the history of the school – especially in relation to the desegregation process - which became very helpful as the research progressed.

He then offered me a quiet space in the school library and an office in the administration building which I could use if I needed to. This was the end of the second term in 2004 when the Grade 12s were busy with their term tests. The school was reasonably quiet because the other learners were also busy with their term tests. I decided to start with the study of documents while the learners were writing their term tests.

I explained my research to the school principal - especially the process and purpose. The learners were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at anytime - but I encouraged them not to do so. The principle of privacy - which means that the information they would give would be treated in the strictest confidence and that they would remain anonymous throughout - was adhered to. The school would receive a copy of the research report when it was completed.

I promised to stick to the principle of trust. This meant that I would not betray or deceive the school or the learners in any way during - and after - the research process. If the results of the research were to be published, the school would be informed first and it would receive a copy of the draft of the publication that may emanate from this research. The University of Pretoria has a committee responsible for ethics in research and I met all the requirements set by that committee before I started with my fieldwork.

3.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the research paradigm, the research design, and the methodology which were embarked on during the research. The research design was explained - together with the strategies used in the data collection process - and reasons were given each time. The sampling of the school and the participants - together with the reasons for their selection - were also given in this chapter. The learners represented the majority of the learners in this school and are evidence of the diversity of learners one would find at Van Den Berg High School during the time of this research. The next chapter describes the data gathered.

According to Merriam (1998:24), Dey (1993), and Brewer *et al* (2000: 62), there is no standard format for reporting qualitative research - there is a diversity of styles to do that. The next two chapters consist, mainly, of stories from the learners as they shared their experiences with me - as well as information I gathered from the school documents and from my observations. Experiences are always what have already happened, so most of the experiences are in the form of stories. These were open coded in ATLAS.ti. As the main themes emerged, an intriguing story unfolded as a result of the data linked together in terms of the themes.

Chapter 4 relates the story of how Van Den Berg High School changed from a previous Afrikaans Whites-only school to a desegregated one, focusing on diversity. The process is highlighted by the documents of the school. The story shows that Van Den Berg High School was prompted to change by policy and law changes. It did not

find change easy – even though most people at the school were committed to the changes that were taking place at that particular moment. Some learners had been in the school for quite some time and, therefore, they had witnessed its metamorphosis. Some of the information in the school documents is supported by what the learners talked about during the interviews.

CHAPTER 4

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A DESEGREGATING SCHOOL

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, Chapter 3, dealt with the research paradigm, the research design and the rationale for the methodology followed during the course of the research process. The research design was explained in conjunction with the strategies used. It was also in Chapter 3 that a detailed explanation of the choice of school and the sampling of participants in this research project was provided. Since 'context' forms a significant component of case study and ethnographic research (Yin, 2004: 23; Creswell, 2002: 56), it is my contention that to fully understand the issue of diversity and integration that is addressed in this study, an overview of the context is indispensable. This chapter focuses, mainly, on a discussion of the process of desegregation as it unfolded at Van Den Berg High School - with regard to challenges and obstacles by scrutinising specific incidents at school, the atmosphere nationally and within the school when desegregation started.

4.2   THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Four decades of institutionalised segregation and racism in South Africa have not only isolated the different population groups, but they have also limited opportunities for interpersonal contact between black and white people - both in the social and cultural spheres of society and in schools. This limiting of opportunities for the spontaneous development of interpersonal relations among learners from diverse racial backgrounds - as well as limiting access to knowledge about each other through first-hand acquaintance across ethnic and racial boundaries - had at least two consequences: namely, individual/group ignorance about the way some groups lived and it provided a fertile climate for the creation of myths about the 'others'. While

barely a decade ago the primary preoccupation of the post-apartheid education department was to ensure that black learners could access formerly Whites-only public schools, attention has now shifted to achieving the 'full integration' of the learners who are enrolled in such desegregated schools.

The adoption of the *South African Schools Act, Act No 84 of 1996* marked the end of the official existence of race-based schools in the country. Schools in rural and disadvantaged areas were not affected much by this process - in terms of receiving learners from other race groups - since the migration was, mostly, of black learners from township schools to former Whites-only schools and - in some cases - former Coloureds-only and Indians-only schools. In the cities, schools which were originally designated for white learners only - in contrast to coloured and Indian schools - received more learners from other racial groups. This was a reversal of the social pattern that was put in place by the designation of the separate residential areas for different racial groups in South Africa which - since 1950 - was legalised in terms of the *Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950.*

4.3   THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

The narrative developed here shows the process of desegregation as it unfolded at the selected school. I use the metaphor of the life-cycle of the butterfly in relating the stages of the desegregation process at Van Den Berg High School. The narrative, therefore, depicts the life-cycle of Van Den Berg's desegregation process - from its crawling egg and larva stages in the years from 1992 to 1999 and up to the time this research was carried out in 2004 which is the 'current full-grown stage' in the narrative. Although some events before 1996 influenced what happened afterwards, for the purpose of this inquiry the narrative, nevertheless, concentrates on the period 1996 onwards. The reason for this is because Van Den Berg High School was, then, a desegregated school and no longer a single medium, single race school. Perhaps, I need to point out at this stage of the narrative that I was confronted by two main challenges during the process of data analysis: Firstly, I had to translate the data from Afrikaans – the language in which the majority of the school documents are written - into English. Therefore, whenever I quote from the documents in this chapter, the

quotations must be understood to be the translated versions of their original form. The original is, however, given as a footnote. Despite this, all the interviews - except for one with an Afrikaans-speaking learner - were in English. In some cases African learners and parents used their first language to highlight some points. Wherever I needed to quote from that type of conversation, I did that in English and gave the original in a footnote.

The second challenge - as Nind *et al.* (2004:ix) ascertained - was seeing through the layers of what I found in that school in terms of the official school culture; the learner's culture; the classroom culture; the playground culture; and the sub-cultures related to class, ethnicity, race, colour, gender, sexuality, etc. For this reason, I provide raw data - through description - in the form of stories that the learners told. The stories are interpreted by putting each experience in context and by indicating how each reflects on desegregation and integration in the South African context - and at this school, specifically. A strong emphasis is given to the accounts of the participants (Wallford, 2001:5) and their understanding of racial diversity in the analysis. The voices of the 16 learners in this ethnography are given first priority and are analysed in-depth – thus, forming the main findings of this research. These voices are, nevertheless, mirrored by the theoretical base of the Stanford University Educators conceptualisation of diversity, namely, *structural diversity*, *diversity related initiatives* and *diverse interactions*, which are further closely related to one another.

4.3.1 The egg stage

Van Den Berg High School was an Afrikaans medium Whites–only high school before the new democratic order. From 1996 the school began to change its language policy in order to accommodate learners who were, specifically, from an English background. As has already been alluded to in this study, previous studies on desegregation found that most schools were vociferous in their opposition to the idea of school desegregation - as advocated by the new Department of Education in terms of the *South African Schools Act* (Vally & Dalamba, 1999:87). As Naidoo puts it, there were spates of racially motivated violence at schools, such as Drakensberg Secondary School in Estcourt, Shallcross Secondary School, Burnhood High School in Sydenham and Vryburg Primary School and Potgietersrus Primary School in

Limpopo (Naidoo, 1999: 3; The Cape Times, 1999: 8).

With the parent community of Van Den Berg High School being largely Whites and Afrikaans-speaking, it could be expected that these profound changes - which were sure to affect the future of their children - could not be accepted without a certain measure of coercion. In fact, it needs to be emphasised that Van Den Berg High School did not embrace desegregation out of choice. On the contrary, it had no option but to comply - both with the Constitution and with the legislation that governed education from 1996. Besides these, other structural factors played themselves out and influenced the decision-making process at the school. For example, the school was already losing both staff and learners to other schools - mainly because of its own history (Principal.1st interview.txt -1:76 [120:132]).

It may be said that - like other schools at the time - Van Den Berg High School was compelled by government policy and other factors beyond its control to desegregate and, eventually, to embrace integration. Hence, the narrative that is presented in this chapter seeks to demonstrate how far the school had come in terms of shifting from its rigid Afrikaans Whites-only past - as presented by the school documents - to its 'integrated' form - as told by the learners in the interviews and my personal observations in the course of this research.

During the first interview with the principal of the school, he alluded to the factors that led to the school's loss of learners and teachers as, mostly, the actions of his predecessor when he said: "He, basically, turned the school into a political field and many parents were unhappy about that and as a result took their children out of the school" (Principal.1st interview.txt -1:56 [98:100]). The number of learners in the school has always been the concern of the school community, in general, and the School Governing Body, in particular - as is evidenced by the various agendas of its meetings (SGB Minutes, 8 September 1994). This was more so because the number of learners in the school determined the number of teachers the education department would allocate for the following year - as well as the number of teachers the school stood to lose to other schools should the lack of number of learners prescribed by the department warrant it.

As could be expected, the first approach to the problem involved attempts by all stakeholders to fill the school with learners - without tampering with its racial make up. The challenge, therefore, was to recruit not only white but also Afrikaans-speaking learners. To realise this objective, a vigorous marketing strategy was embarked upon - targeting, specifically, the white Afrikaans medium primary schools in the neighbourhood, but with ever-diminishing success. The following year the education department transferred excess teachers from Van Den Berg High School to schools where their services were needed the most (Principal.1st interview.txt -1:56 [103:104]).

The School Governing Body eventually accepted that their strategy was not effective and that new strategies had to be devised to save the school from complete closure - should the number of learners continue to decline. The next move involved changing and strengthening their marketing strategy to include the advertising of the school in the print media and to include the coloured Afrikaans primary schools in their target population. Closely analysed, it is clear that the inclusion of the coloured group was informed by the desire to preserve the school's Afrikaans character. However, what was even more disheartening was the fact that - except for only three - most of the coloured learners who took enrolment forms from the school did not return them; of those who did return the forms, none enrolled at the school in the following year (SJ1: 123).

Consequently, the education department continued to transfer excess teachers to other schools as the number of learners justified this. Indeed, this continuous loss of staff was viewed with deep concern by the School Governing Body that resolved to stop at nothing to see the situation reversed. One of their first strategies involved a decision to change the language policy of the school from Afrikaans to both Afrikaans and English - so that the school could also be marketed to the white English-speaking learners at the neighbouring English primary schools (Principal.1st interview.txt -1:59 [109:109]). This strategy did not work very well in the beginning because of the history of the school and the reputation that the school had among the white English-speaking parents. As Vernon[19] put it:

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19 A pseudonym given to one of the learners in the sample

> A lot of the English-speaking people did not want to send their kids here because they were scared of this culture of Afrikaans (Vernon, txt - 2:126 [252:253]).

From the above statement, there is no doubt that what happened at the school during the years 1992-1993 - as pointed out in Chapter 3 - had adverse affects on the school's image in subsequent years. The principal concedes this fact when he said: "Some parents were unhappy about it and they started removing their children from the school as a result of which the number of learners at the school declined" (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:25 [54:56]).

Subsequently, in an effort to remedy the situation, the school governing body decided to market the school in the neighbouring black townships of Mamelodi, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve. They opted for this approach because Groot High School[20] - a neighbouring Afrikaans medium high school - had already used this strategy from 1995 to great effect. Thus, taking into account the apparent success of the strategy at Groot High, it was thought advisable to implement the same strategy at Van Den Berg High School - but all in vain. The reason for the failure was that - for the majority of the parents - the schools 'whiteness' and its 'Afrikaans' culture could not be preserved under conditions of integration with other races. Notwithstanding this concern, however, the decision to admit black learners was implemented and as a prelude to their admission it was considered even more imperative that the school's language policy should be modified. This approach seemed to be effective because the school clearly demonstrated its commitment to desegregation - as Vernon so explicitly explained:

> Our school showed the public that it is both English and Afrikaans and, in fact, now it is even more English than Afrikaans (Vernon.txt - 2:127 [253:255]).

Desegregation was forced on an unwilling community more by structural, policy and logistical imperatives than by voluntary actions. This was the school's first move towards what the Stanford Educators would refer as structural diversity. Although the community aspired to keep the school white and Afrikaans, Vernon's statement supports the fact that the school did not succeed. In the following discussion, they had

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20 A pseudonym given to a neighbouring former Afrikaans high school near Van den Berg

to market the school to white English-speakers. Ironically, one could have expected the Van Den Berg Governing Body to market the school to white English-speakers first - before they marketed it to coloured Afrikaans-speakers. It is clear from their marketing strategy that they would have settled for an Afrikaans school with coloured learners rather than a parallel medium school full of white learners who spoke the two languages.

The preservation of the Afrikaans language and its rivalry with the English language has a long history - from the time the British Settlers arrived at the Cape in 1820 and after the Afrikaans people of Dutch origin mobilised in favour of Afrikaner nationalism. The Afrikaners had always competed with the English people for superiority. As the English-speaking South Africans have always identified themselves with Britain this led to the Afrikaner accusing them of being 'rooinekke'[21] whose allegiance to the British Empire prevented them from identifying with South Africa (Pretoria News, 1939: 11).

To show that the Afrikaans-speaking, white people would rather have ties with the coloured Afrikaans-speaking people than with the white English-speaking people is evident in how they used to refer to them. Amongst other connotations, the English-speaking people would be referred to as 'The British[22]' or 'The English'[23]. In his inaugural address at the University of South Africa, entitled *An unknown people: Writing a biography of white English-speaking South Africans*, Lambert (2006:21) provided - what he called – "a possibly apocryphal story which illustrates this hostility" between the two language groups of white people. "On being told that the English had lost 3 wickets for 42 runs in a cricket test match against South Africa, the then South African Prime Minister, John Vorster asked, 'their English or our English?'[24]"

Langehoven, a celebrated South African author, portrayed the competition between the Afrikaners and the English and their attitude towards the English when he said that to Afrikaners the word, 'English', includes "whatever the general term British

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21 rednecks
22. Die Britte
23. Die Engelse
24. Hulle Engelse of ons Engelse?

includes… to us they are all English as their speech is English" (1979: 8). I do not think that the Van Den Berg community would, willy-nilly, have included the language of domination in their school because - as far as the Afrikaners were concerned - it was a common accusation that English men and, particularly, women accorded little respect for - or recognition of - Afrikaner aspirations and they were not even prepared to learn their language (Langenhoven, nd: 12). It seems that some English-speaking South Africans admit to what the Afrikaans people accused them of. Brookes (1977: 14) admits to being one of those English-speaking South Africans who took "uncritically and even unconsciously, that position of superiority and were infuriated by English arrogance and their failure to comprehend Afrikaner bitterness at events such as the destruction of the republican independence." Brink (1996: 110) wrote an analysis of Afrikaner anger towards English arrogance in *Reinventing a continent: Writing and politics in South Africa, 1982-1995).* I refer to this uneasiness at this point of the story so that it should be remembered and be appreciated to understand where the thinking of the time came from. The next section explores the next stage of the life-cycle.

4.3.2 The larva stage

This section of the chapter draws attention to the history of the school - as recorded in the school documents from the time the school enrolled its first black learners. The chapter seeks to demonstrate that integration had been a continuous process and, therefore, at no stage could anyone have claimed that it was complete**.** Desegregation was not an easy process for any of the affected schools - and Van Den Berg High School was not an exception. I allude to events that took place at the school immediately after the learners from different racial groups came into contact with one another in a school situation for the first time.

Attention is drawn to the way the parent community and the learners in the school responded to the whole process. Of course, the ideal situation would be to let the data 'speak for itself'. However, as Lather and Smithies (1997:5) suggest, "there is no such thing as 'objective' data." Henning *et al.* (2003: 4) note that objectivity can be seen as allowing the voice of the participant to be heard in as clear and undistorted a manner as possible. Klaas, on the other hand, talks about critical reflection of oneself on a continuous basis - especially when one studies a phenomenon that has once affected

her life (Klaas, 2004:71).

According to Vernon's statement - quoted above - the success of the school in attracting learners from other language groups, particularly from black communities, could be ascribed to its flexibility in terms of its language policy. In 1996, for instance, the school enrolled its first black learners. As a result the overall number of learners improved significantly. However, there could be no reason for complacency because the school was not yet full – as had been anticipated. According to the principal, it was for this reason that they had to explain to the Director of Education in their region why the school was not full (Principal, 1st interview.txt 1: 62 [112-114]). On 03 August 1997 the school celebrated its 60th anniversary (SJ1: 123), boasting sufficient number of learners - at least enough for them - to justify keeping the number of educators who were paid for by the state at the time.

Subsequently, the school governing body undertook to work differently and to improve their situation in the following year (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:56 [103:104]). The following year the school strengthened its marketing strategies and started a serious recruitment of learners from neighbouring English primary schools. These English primary schools already had many African, Indian and coloured learners, but for various reasons most of the parents were reluctant to send their children to Van Den Berg High School (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:26 [57:58]).

In spite of their initial reluctance, a few white English-speaking parents braved the situation and sent their children to this school. These parents were convinced by the new marketing strategy and, indeed, the success stories of those learners in the English classes no doubt accounted for the eventual influx of English-speaking learners to Van Den Berg High School (SJ2: 45). According to the principal, most of these newcomers started featuring in the top ten of the school's academic achievement list in each grade (SNL[25,] September, 1999: 2). Vernon attested to this in the following statement:

> Precisely because of the foregoing, many learners left the English high
> schools nearby, after their Grade 8, and came to join Van Den Berg for their

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25 School News Letter

Grade 9 in subsequent years. Parents who were still sceptical to the whole idea of sending their children to this school were now happy and willing to do so (Vernon.txt - 2:126 [252:253]).

The importance of the change in the language policy - as the main contributing factor in this regard - cannot be overemphasised. According to the principal, "the English parents were now convinced that their children were not taught in Afrikaans as they had previously feared" (Principal. 1st interview.txt-1: 26 [60-62]). Hall *et al* (2000: 69) sums up this argument when he says that "in the post-colonial world it is necessary for peoples to rethink their identities, to take into account exclusivity and cultural diversity."

Table 4.1:   The growth in learners' enrolment, 1995-1998 and 2004

1995	1996	1997	1998	2004
Afrikaans: 432	Afrikaans: 454	Afrikaans: 495	Afrikaans: 514	Afrikaans: 391
English: 0	English: 64	English: 143	English: 224	English: 452
432	518	638	768	843

From the above table, it is clear that the number of learners increased every year - from 1995 to 1998. Perhaps, even more notable was the growth in the number of English-speaking learners – primarily, because the school had changed its language policy to accommodate learners other than Afrikaans language speakers (SJ1: 213). During January 2006 there were already more English learners than the Afrikaans learners (2005 School EMIS data). Vernon also noted:

But because of the fact that our school showed the public that we are both English and Afrikaans and actually we are now more English than Afrikaans (Vernon.txt - 2:127 [253:255]).

As a member of the Learner Representative Council, Vernon sits on management committees that decide the future of the school. He knows that the numbers of the learners being taught in English are, presently, more than those that learn in Afrikaans.

The Stanford University educators - with James Banks as their co-ordinator - refer to diversity-related initiatives. For a school to succeed in its diversity, it has to take initiatives that will include the interests of all the learners it serves. This move to change the language policy is in line with what Banks and Irvine refer to as modifying the teaching and learning strategies so that learners from different racial, cultural, language, and social class groups will experience equal status in the culture and life of the school (Banks, 2001; Irvine, 2003). This move is also in line with the second dimension of diversity – *diversity-related initiatives* (Hurtando *et al*., 1998, 1999, 2002).

The changing of the language policy to include English-speaking learners did not seem like assimilationist in nature. It does not look as if the school intended to let the English learners 'melt into the Afrikaans pot.' The learners were given the freedom to start their own cultural activities within the school - something which did not exist before. These cultural activities included English Public Speaking and the English Forum. The school newsletter was written in both English and Afrikaans - not translated from Afrikaans to English. Within the same letter, both languages were used on an equitable basis.

The reality of the situation at the school was that the same teacher had to teach the same lesson twice - once in the Afrikaans class and then again in the English class. The result was that, initially, most teachers were frustrated by this move because they had to teach in the two languages and not all of them were, completely, competent to do so. Some of the English first language learners developed language problems during the lessons. The example that Marelise - one of the Grade 11 pupils - gave is the use of the word *except* instead of *accept* and vice-versa. Teachers who were used to teaching in Afrikaans only, were expected to become bilingual. Although the teachers may not have been competent to teach in both languages, they accepted the challenge. This makes one think that their attitude was conducive to the changing environment of the school. It is possible that some accepted the situation because they were aware that they did not have a choice. However, the fact that they were willing to 'give it a go' is remarkable.

4.3.3   The pupa stage

It is important to mention that the pupa stage of the school's desegregation process was marred by racial intolerance and racial conflicts. Analysed very closely, there can be no doubt that this development has - in many ways - served to vindicate the views of the segregationists – particularly the man after whom the school is named when he justified racial segregation in education in the early 1950s.

During the 1950s the main argument was that different race groups could not coexist in - let alone attend – the same schools without conflict and tension; hence, the idea of apartheid and the subsequent racial polarisation of society - in both social and cultural spheres of life. This falls in line with the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission on Native Education which emphasised the impossibility of co-existence – as is evident in the following quote:

> The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives, as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under ever-changing conditions are taken into consideration.

It was after these types of recommendations that the Nationalist government passed the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* (Sehoole, 2005: 13). From information available in the school records, such as the school journals; letters from members of the parent community; and newspaper clippings in the school file, it appears that among other impediments to integration in this school was the attitude of some of the parent members of the school community towards other race groups. For example, one parent who expressed concern about people roaming around the school fields in the afternoons couched this concern in racist language by arguing that

> It has come to be unsafe for me to train my daughter as an athlete using the school fields. I suggest that a solution could be raising funds to build a big and strong wall to keep the *black people* out (author's emphasis) (Letter pasted in the SJ1: 190).[26]

Although on the surface, this statement may seem to have little bearing on the issue of

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26 Dit is nou nie veilig om my atletieke dogter

integration in the school, there can be no doubt that coming - as it did - from a parent of one of the learners at Van Den Berg High School, the tone of the letter is a vivid illustration of the kind of attitude towards other races that some white learners were still exposed to at home during the early stages of desegregation. For all practical purposes, such attitudes and influences would have a significant effect on the way the child made - or failed to make - friendships with other learners across the colour divide and, thus, the work of the integrationists would remain undone in the circumstances.

Another incident - showing a similar form of racial intolerance to which some white learners were still exposed to by their families - merits attention to underscore the point. In this particular case, a professor at a local university was complaining about

> …the time wasted at every School Governing Body meeting discussing the reasons why we should admit learners from other races while my child's bicycle was stolen[27] (Letter pasted in SJ1: 182).

Without saying that the few black learners - who had already been admitted to the school at the time - were responsible for the disappearance of his child's bicycle, the tone of the letter clearly leads one to that conclusion. The following extract from the principal's report during the same period supports my argument

> Theft has become a real problem amongst the English learners[28]. The school will have to quickly formulate its stand point on that issue. Some aspects of the Hotel School are affected because of that and, therefore, attention must be paid to that area as well[29] (Principal's report, 23 November 1998).

Another parent wrote a letter to the school and the following is an extract from that letter.

> On 3 November 2001, I confronted a black person who was on the school premises and was washing his clothes in the school laundry basin. This man told me that he works at Number 14 and as far as he was concerned the school property was public property! I cannot understand how these black

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27 Die tyd word gemors
28. English learners - black and white English-speaking learners/the English stream of the school.
29. *Diefstal is besig om werklik 'n groot problem onder veral die Engelse leerlinge te word. Die skool sal dringend 'n beleid standpunt hieroor moet formuleer. Sekere aspekte van die hotelskool se beleid in die verband moet ook aandag kry.*

people think[30].

These examples of parents' attitudes towards blacks - in and around Van Den Berg High School - tell us that integration is a process which was not, immediately, embraced by everyone - least of all the parent community and, as this study will show, not even by the school itself. It was foisted on the school by both legislation governing education in South Africa namely, The South African Schools Act and the Constitution and by the progressive approach of the headmaster, both of which are discussed in the next chapter.

I argue that change was foisted on the school because - even when the education department tried to use the school as a venue for the training of school governing bodies of mostly black schools in the townships - the school refused on the grounds that it had its own systems in place and could not understand why its premises should be used for training. Admittedly, speculation has no place in matters of research and although one's conclusions - in this regard – could, at best, be dismissed as sheer speculation, it could, nonetheless, be concluded that this refusal had more to do with race in that the school governing bodies - who were to be trained - were from schools in the black townships.

Closely analysed, the same reasons that informed the school's refusal to be used as a venue for the training sessions of school governing bodies also informed the school's refusal to attend the department-organised training sessions on diversity, conflict resolution and other issues. The following statement clearly illustrates this:

> I, hereby, confirm – with reference to our telephonic conversation of 18 September 1997 - that the schools in our group request to be excused from the training sessions on developing a school's mission and vision statements and legislation. The said schools have already progressed far with this matter or have completed it[31] (SJ1: 221).

Because issues of diversity were critical during this time and formed the basis of the

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31. *Ek bevestig hiermee na aanleiding van ons telefoniese gesprek van 18 September 1997 dat die skole in ons groepering versoek het om nie die opleidingsessies met betrekking tot die opstel van 'n visie en missie en die grondwet by te woon nie. Die betrokke skole het almal reeds baie ver hiermee gevorder het of dit reeds afgehandel.*

discussion at these meetings, it is not hard to conclude that schools that did not support the direction that the education department was taking at the time demonstrated this by, literally, voting with their feet. In this particular case, the school would not attend any meeting which sought to encourage desegregation and integration. For example, although the school had already undertaken to integrate the teaching staff, at the time of this research no such integration had taken place. The teaching staff was still 100% white (School Emis Data, 2004). This integration of the teaching staff was, indeed, critical to the whole process; for the effective desegregation of the school to take place, this needed to be all round and not limited to the learners only (Nkomo *et al.,* 2006:29*)*. The lack of integration of the staff was also caused by structural issues.

I happen to identify, personally, with the reasons why most of the white schools did not include black staff members in their schools. I was the first African teacher at a former white English primary school which had desegregated. This primary school advertised a post for a Northern Sotho[32] teacher in 1998 - to begin work in 1999. After three sets of interviews, I obtained the position. I later learnt from the principal that it was because of my 'good education' and experience, coupled with my personality and enthusiasm that I got the position. The position was a six month contract – "to be renewed if my work was deemed satisfactory." I only worked 3 days a week compared to the 5-day week of all the white teachers.

My contract was extended to a year. According to the principal, they "had never seen a black teacher with my competence." I was teaching my first language to people who did not know it. How was my competence being measured? Although I think that this phenomenon of being the only black teacher amongst 37 white staff members warrants a study of the experiences on its own, I think it is at this point that I have to mention how the school treated me from the beginning - when I joined them - and how I was treated five years later when I left to carry out this study. This is relevant for my study because I think it is equivalent to how Van Den Berg High School experienced desegregation in the beginning and how it unfolded until it reached its present stage.

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32. One of the indigenous languages of South Africa - spoken, mostly, in the northern parts of the country. It is also referred to as Sepedi.

My first day at work at the primary school was hailed with a 'press conference' of local newspapers. I was interviewed and photos of me and the Grade 7 learners that I would teach were taken. In the afternoon when I went home, the whole bus of people bought the late final of Pretoria News[33] and everyone wanted me to see my photo - with the white learners – that had made the front page! It was a very big issue for the school to have had the courage to hire a black teacher. I was 'privileged' to have obtained a post in a white school. The headlines read: "Lambrina[34] Primary School Hires the First Black Teacher."

Except for the Doctor of Music - who was retired and was paid by the School Governing Body - I was the only teacher in the whole school who held an Honours degree and - a year later - a Master's Degree. "This is the calibre of teachers we need at our school to teach our children" the chairperson of the School Governing Body told the parents at a meeting when I was introduced. To my surprise, the other white teachers - who were hired at the same time - only had undergraduate degrees and one only had an old college diploma. Things started to warm up when I had to interact with the educators, the learners and the parents. In short, things improved with time. In the beginning it was bad but the staff, the learners and the parents gradually changed their attitudes as they got to know me. Many apologised for their horrible behaviour before they got to know me and some became my very close friends. The younger staff members regarded me as their role model and confided in me regarding most of the things that they could not share with the older white teachers. In a subsequent study of the experiences of black teachers among white-only teachers in desegregated schools, and vice versa I will reflect more on this.

Something that I noted was the attitude of black parents towards their children's learning of Northern Sotho. Ndimande (2006) also alludes to this attitude in his paper where most of the parents that were interviewed did not favour the idea that their children should also be taught an African language. They argued that they wanted their children to learn English. I was faced with many challenges - especially from

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33 The name of the local newspaper
34 A pseudonym for the English primary school that hired me as their first black teacher in 1999.

black parents whose first language was not Northern Sotho. The reason the school chose Northern Sotho to be taught was because the black people in the area of the school spoke that language.

4.4 NOTABLE INCIDENTS OF RACIAL TENSION AT VAN DEN BERG HIGH SCHOOL

The following sections contain examples of incidents of racial tension at Van Den Berg High School.

4.4.1 The rugby match incident

School integration presupposes integration in school sports. However, in most cases, first encounter during these years usually ended up in racial conflict. For example, on 14 May 1997 a rugby match between Van Den Berg High School and Willem High School ended in a serious racial conflict as a result of the parent of one of the white rugby players from Van Den Berg High School - Mrs Blou - using the racist term, 'Kaffir' to a black player from Willem High School who had earlier exchanged blows with her son (SJ1:238). The following statement - drafted by Van Den Berg's rugby coach - illustrates the incident:

> During the rugby game, the undersigned walked up and down the touchline. Shortly before the end of the match an argument occurred between the players from the two teams. According to my understanding the fight happened as follows: When the whistle blew, one of the wings from the visiting school -Willem High - had the ball in his possession. A scrum was awarded to the home team. He didn't want to immediately hand over the ball to the home team. The two players tugged and pulled at the ball. The players from both teams started shoving each other and a few punches went flying. I can't recall a specific punch from any team member that went flying – neither from the home team nor from the visiting team. A lady – who was later recognised as Mrs Blou – shouted at the black player of Willem High school, referring to him as a Kaffir and went on to repeat this derogatory word in spite of my warning that in the new South Africa, such words have fallen into disfavour and should not be used. She said that she would not allow a "Kaffir" to hit her son and that she would continue to use the word because, unfortunately, she is a racist. The final whistle was blown directly after the recommencement of the game and Mrs Blou never used the word again. (Ricardo Van der Merwe)[35]

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35. *Tydens die rugbywedstryd het die ondergetekende langs die kantlyn op en af beweeg. Kort voor die einde van die wedstryd het 'n onderonsie tussen spelers van die twee spanne uitgebreek. Dit het na my mening as volg gebeur: Toe die fluitjie blaas het een van die vleuels van die besoekende skool, 'n swart seun, die bal in sy besit gehad. 'n Skrum is aan die tuisspan toegeken. Hy wou nie dadelik die bal aan*

What this incident tells us about integration at Van Den Berg High School is that - like other incidents of racism referred to above - this incident is a further illustration of the type of attitude towards other races to which the learners were still exposed. For all practical reasons, when a parent refers to black people as 'Kaffirs'[36], the children are more likely to emulate him/her and regard their black peers as Kaffirs. Quite often, the child's attitude towards members of other race groups is shaped by his/her parent's attitude towards such races. Therefore, one may ask why a person would insist on calling others Kaffirs in the post-1994 era. No doubt this was one of the impediments to integration at Van Den Berg High School and whenever the issue of integration was being foisted on the school, such incidents clearly come to mind as prominent examples.

4.4.2 The stabbing incident

According to available evidence, the rugby match incident was not an isolated one that could simply be swept under the carpet as an insignificant occurrence that had no bearing on integration and, therefore, warrants no academic consideration. On the contrary, there were several other incidents - that illustrate in no small measure - that integration at Van Den Berg High School did not take place smoothly and easily. The principal had - on occasion - to refer incidents to the governing body as the following statement suggests:

> Three Afrikaans-speaking boys and one black boy were involved in a fist fight. I referred the matter to the Governing Body to handle because there is strong racial tension involved[37] (SJ1: 67).

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een van die tuisspan se spelers oorhandig nie. Die twee spelers het geruk en gepluk om besit van die bal. Die spelers van beide spanne het mekaar oor en weer begin stamp en 'n paar los houe het geval. Ek kan nie onthou van 'n spesifieke hou van enige speller wat getref het nie - nie aan die tuisspan se kant nie en ook nie aan die besoekers se kant nie. 'n Dame - dit het later geblyk dat sy mevrou Blou is - het skielik geskree dat iemand n "kaffer" is en dit weer herhaal. Ek het haar vermaan dat ons ons binne 'n nuwe bestel bevind en haar versoek om die word nie weer te gebruik nie. Sy het gesê dat sy nie sal toelaat dat 'n kaffer aan haar seun slaan nie en dat sy die word sal gebruik want ongelukkig is sy 'n rassis. Die eindfluitjie het direk na die hervatting van spel geblaas. Mev. Blou het die woord nie weer gebruik nie. Ricardo Van Der Merwe (pseudonymn)1998 February.

36. A derogatory word which was used before and during apartheid by white people in South Africa to refer to Africans. It is illegal to use the word in South Africa today.
37. *Drie Afrikaanse seuns en een swart seun het in 'n vuisgeveg betrokke geraak op die terrein. Ek het die saak na die Beheer Ligaam verwys vir hantering omdat daar sterk rassespanning betrokke is.*

In this incident a black learner with a mental disability was frequently teased by white learners in their everyday interaction – particularly, during breaks. As could be expected, the black learner reported the matter to the teacher in charge who, then, sorted the problem out. However, off the school premises, the incident continued and turned ugly when the black learner was pressed against the school fence and was hit by three white learners. The next morning, one of the white learners, who were involved in this incident, was stabbed in the boys' passage. No one noticed who did this or what weapon was used. The learners pressed against each other in the passage and the perpetrator had a chance to stab without being seen (SJ2:22). According to the headmaster, the school subsequently became very tense – primarily, because by its very nature the incident "was purely racist."

It may be asked why the incident was labelled "racist". Was it because the perpetrator was never identified? It seems as if it was presumed that a black boy had stabbed this white boy in retaliation for the beating of a mentally-challenged black boy the previous day. Be that as it may, the stabbing incident was - as the principal put it - "the most unfortunate incident ever to happen at the time the school was grappling with desegregation." Despite of the principal's efforts to resolve the matter between the parties involved in an amicable way, the parent of the learner who was stabbed - whom the principal described as *verkramp*[38] - took the legal route and enlisted the services of an attorney. "It was a nasty thing. The other two boys subsequently left the school instead of taking punishment" (Follow-up interview with the principal, October 2004). In the end, the school became calm and it was business as usual.

4.4.3   White boys' petition on hairstyle

It is interesting to note that as black learners were struggling with issues of racism at the school - and the way some of the white learners treated them on a daily basis, white learners registered their dissatisfaction about the way they were being treated by the school. For instance, on one occasion the white learners submitted a petition to their prefects in which they complained that in their opinion, they were not being fairly treated by the school. They claimed that the school allowed black learners to come to school with long hair and funky hairstyles, such as dreadlocks, while they

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38. Ultra conservative

were denied this privilege (SJ2: 57). Although there is nothing in the school records to show how this issue was resolved, all indications are that the matter was addressed to the satisfaction of the petitioners because the problem did not recur. What the incident tells us about integration is that - in the process of involving two cultures that had been kept separate for decades to coexist and share the same space, such as the same learning environment - there is, naturally, bound to be a tension which manifests itself in increased racial conflict and misunderstanding of the 'other.'

This issue of hairstyles was a concern among most of the white learners. During my daily conversations with them, I could sense dissatisfaction on the issue of hairstyles. Most learners told me stories about how they were sent home either to wash gel out of their hair or to cut it. Most of the incidents happened in the past, especially in primary school. One intriguing story was told by Daisy, a white girl who grew up in Ethiopia and only came to South Africa in 1996.

In Ethiopia, Daisy told me that she was in a 'black' school literally because as she puts it, whites were in a minority in that Ethiopian school. She had black friends who often slept over by her house and she also slept over by theirs. She came with a braided hair to her new school in South Africa. One day she heard her name called by the principal. She went to the principal's office where she was told to remove her braids. She was brave enough to ask why she had to do it. The principal said: *"Well, the school rules do not allow it"*. As she puts it, she still did not understand because almost all the African girls in that school had braids. At that particular time she had not noticed that the white girls in the school did not have braids.

She went back to her class where she asked her teacher (who was a white lady in her fifties) why she had to remove her braids. The teacher responded, *"because the principal said so"*. Daisy then asked why the other girls were not supposed to remove theirs as they were also in braids. It was then that the teachers said, "Yes, they are black and you are white!" As Daisy put it, she still could not understand and continued to ask, "Are the school rules for white learners only?" At this point the teacher could not take it any longer and shouted 'unfortunately you happen to be in

South Africa my dear; here, blacks are blacks and whites are whites! They will always be treated differently because they are different'.

Daisy was very cross. She then burst out and said, 'why are they allowed to braid their hair and I am not? They are privileged and I am not!' With these words, the teacher was more irritated and also burst out "Do you want to look like blacks? You must be crazy and don't you ever talk to me like that; sit down and tomorrow do not come to this school with braids in your hair, if you want braids, go to a black school!"

Daisy confessed that she never realised how important the colour of skin could be until she came to South Africa. Michael, the white boy sitting next to Daisy also made a comment on the black boys being 'funky' with their dreadlocks but the white boys not allowed to look funky as well. "It is not fair", he said, "We also want to do dreadlocks".

I asked them if they knew that they were different and their response was

> Yes we know that we are different and we must be treated as such- but if we are treated different because we are different, then we get more divided and always are conscious about our differences; while if we could be allowed to do similar things we would not even be aware of our differences (Personal Conversations, 2005: May 12).

They believe that as learners, they should be treated equally in order for them to realise that they are the same. Their conceptualisation of 'equal' referred to 'being allowed to do similar things.' During the time of this research, at Van den Berg the white learners were still not allowed to put on braids and dreadlocks in their hair while black boys and girls were allowed.

The issue of hair needs a study on its own because it is as deep rooted and as old as colonialism. The white teacher in Daisy' class cannot imagine a white girl taking over an African hair style while African learners can straiten their hair to look like white learners. This idea is the same as the one about a 13 year-old student of Middleton Technology College who was sent home because she is the wrong race for her hairstyle. The girl had her normally straight hair put in tight braids at a family outing.

Her school allows only dark skinned students to wear this particular style. She was not permitted to return to school until she removed the 'offensive' hairdo (World, 2005:1). The principal of the college Ms Crompton had the following to say when she was interviewed:

> We don't allow any extreme hairstyles of any description at the school. We are a high-achieving school with high standards and we don't allow any street culture into the school. We are very strict on appearance. Wearing a school uniform signals that children are ready and willing to be a part of the school community. We have smart children who work in a purposeful way because that's the ethos of the school. If we didn't allow some leeway for their cultural and ethnic background I think it would probably be discriminatory (World, 2005: March 22)

I cannot help but wonder how well this would have played if it was a black girl sent home because she was wearing her hair in a "wrong" style?

4.4.4   Black learners' memorandum on racist staff

Among other issues that the principal had to deal with in the process of desegregation at this school was the problem of alleged racism practised by his own teaching staff. The black learners - who perceived themselves as being on the receiving end of the problem - alerted him to this fact. The primary concern was that black learners were not being treated equally with their white peers by the white-only teaching staff. According to the learners, the teachers were giving black learners more demerits[39] than white learners - thereby creating the impression that black learners were a nuisance and that they needed constant monitoring. Upon receiving a memorandum outlining the learners' dissatisfaction in this regard, the principal established a forum and a committee with a very clear mandate for dealing with incidents of racism in the school. The forum consisted of members of the School Management Team (SMT), white learners who were chosen by white learners and black learners who were chosen by black learners (SJ2: 234).

This incident emphasizes what Nkomo *et al.* (2006:29) noted with concern - that

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39. A note of misbehaviour or neglect of duties - ranging from making a noise in class, disrespect and homework not done to the most serious ones of fighting, skipping classes and drug usage on school premises. These were written in a discipline book against a learner's name which then formed part of the learner's testimonial.

learners are desegregated, but the teaching fraternity remains as it was before. As important – and, indeed, imperative – as it is to have an integrated learner profile, it is equally important to have an integrated staff. For a 'problem-free' educative teaching and learning environment to prevail, there should be an integration of different race groups at all levels. Personally, I support Nkomo *et al.* because - during the subsequent years at Meadow Primary School, after I successfully resolved matters among learners and learners and staff - I was elected onto a disciplinary committee of the school which, later, did not have to deal with too many racial problems. The reason for this was the cultural dimension from my side which was, otherwise, lacking from the white staff members. I found most staff members complaining, for instance, about "Sizwe not even looking up at me" when he was being reprimanded and, possibly, not apologising. Most of the problems were, mostly, cultural misunderstandings rather than disrespect. In many Western cultures, a child is expected to look an adult in the eye when being addressed, but in most African cultures that is regarded as disrespect - the child must instead look down. The children are taught something different at home from what they are taught at school. Little things like this can cause a lot of unnecessary friction - if not understood.

Klaas (2004: 239) has also noted that the teaching profile of the desegregated schools – that he researched - still remained intact. For practical reasons, as schools began to enrol learners from race groups - other than the traditional group that it used to enrol - there was bound to be new problems to deal with which emanated, largely, from differences in culture, beliefs, values, etc. With a staff profile that is mainly white, it would naturally be difficult to handle some problems involving the new race groups. In a situation, such as this one, learners are more likely to be concerned with problems of racism which are rather more perceived than real. No wonder the principal set systems in place to meet these challenges. However, there is nothing in the school records that shows how the forum - or even the committee - dealt with the issues of racism. In a follow-up interview with the principal I asked him about the duties of the forum and also for examples of incidents the forum had resolved, he said that the forum had since not had to deal with serious incidents because the incidents had ceased.

4.4.5 Persistent discrimination: Stereotypes among the parents, the teachers and the learners

Sarup (1986) explains stereotyping as a tendency to attribute characteristics – that, supposedly, belonging to a group - to every individual who is considered a member of that group. Stereotyping is one explanation of prejudice which is supplemented by the idea of premature judgment. The parents of Boipelo and of Karen prematurely judged each other in terms of race. They had their own concerns which were based on nothing concrete - as Karen's mother, finally, agreed when I asked her why she was concerned about the friendship. She confessed that she thought it was out of ignorance as her own parents had told her things about black people which she thought was what drew them apart. But, then, Boipelo's father insisted that he did not trust white people as they were "horrible to the black people for a long time." Boipelo's parents were both political activists during the apartheid era, and both had been imprisoned on many occasions. They, finally, agreed that "it was just too soon" for both parties to be close and that they did not have a problem any more.

There were also evident stereotypes amongst the learners, themselves, in the whole school. Amazingly, the stereotypes were, mostly, along ethnic lines amongst the African learners who are, usually, just classified as Africans - as if they identify themselves as such. It is assumed that African learners are the 'same' which - according to my observation at this school - was not the case. There are many disparities amongst different African ethnic groups that (although in the interest of unity, we would wish away) continue to haunt the African children. This is a legacy, that although started by the ethnic wars before apartheid, was rubberstamped by apartheid when different ethnic groups were given different places to stay and were confined there. The separate homelands has imprinted on the minds of most black South Africans - if not all South Africans, the sense that 'we are different'. The differences among the white people and the black people were ignored by the colonialist and apartheid governments. In most cases they were just regarded as black or as white – especially when it suited the government of the time. For most of the blacks, apartheid succeeded in dividing them into ethnicities in terms of which they continue to identify themselves and also to regard the others as 'stupid', 'witches', 'men-stealers', etc. - as is evident in the examples I received from the learners.

The differences are so deeply entrenched that stereotypes and prejudice amongst these African ethnic groups are, unconsciously, passed from generation to generation. The following observations in classrooms and in the schoolyard were evident of those stereotypes. It is amazing to see how we - including myself because I often find myself in this dilemma - as parents unconsciously pass on our stereotypes from generation to generation. These stereotypes, then, become the baggage of which our children have to get rid. However, they may eventually also pass those stereotypes on to their children and the vicious circle may continue, just like the holocaust (Hallford: 2004).

In a society where there is a system of discrimination, there is also widespread prejudice among members of the discriminating group (Sarup, 1986). What is different - from the data - is that the discrimination is not strictly along racial lines as one might expect or as it used to be in the past, but implies other differences - even divisions - and is caused by other mechanisms. The school serves as a place where learners can get involved in projects across colour lines. According to my observations, if a friendship went beyond the school and beyond the racial divide, it was between learners of the 'same' social class. Best friends were, mostly, within a similar language group or residential area. Amongst the African learners, friendship was, mostly, along ethnic lines; among same language groups; or between learners from the same residential areas. Richard confirmed that his friend stays in Kansas - just as he did (Conversation with Richard, 2005: May 4).

Among the African learners there is a tendency to undermine other ethnic groups and to attribute some characteristics to specific ethnic groups. Social categorisation sets a stage for stereotyped thinking (Franzoi, 2003: 124) - usually learned from others and concerns beliefs about individuals' personalities, abilities and motives. In a Hotel Management and Cooking class, the learners were preparing hamburgers for a practical test. Kholofelo, an African girl offered to make a hamburger for me so that I did not sit and watch them while they ate. This comes from the African culture where it is unacceptable to eat while someone is watching you - and you do not offer them food. Another girl shouted out in Setswana - one of the indigenous languages of South

Africa - from the far corner in response to the offer: "No madam, you must not eat it, because Tswanas are witches[40]".

In a Grade 9 class, when a Venda boy, Azwindini, did not get the percentage mark that the teacher expected from everyone in the class, a Xhosa girl, Landiswa, shouted out: "Well, madam, he is Venda that is why - Vendas are *mos somaar[41]* stupid!" Landiswa did not even think of the implications and the consequences of what she said about the boy. She even laughed out loud after uttering these words. Later on - after the class had ended - I confronted her about what she had said in class. She again repeated it by saying: "Yes, my granny told me that Pedis, Vendas and Shangaans[42] are very stupid."

She continued to tell me why her granny said that and how she had told her not to get herself a husband from those ethnic groups. What is of concern is that Landiswa believed her granny and, therefore, ruled out any possibility of anyone from those ethnic groups being clever. The depth of the belief could be picked up from the way she explained it. Given the long life and relationships one expects Landiswa to have, the belief in her granny stories is somewhat unexpected.

The tendency to attribute characteristics - which, supposedly, belong to a group - to every individual who is considered a member of that group (Sarup, 1986:49) is stereotyping. It becomes a dilemma for social groups, who have been subjected to prejudice, discrimination and negative stereotypes and devalued (Crocker *et al*, 1994: 508), to be seen differently - unless education is provided to the people who see them that way.

During break - a boy Skhosana, who is from the Ndebele ethnic group - said to one of his classmates: "You Zulus think you are better than everybody else. This time you

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40. *O a ho fora mam, o se ke wa eja, hape Batswana ba a loya.*

41. Afrikaans utterance meaning *'nothing but';* Landiswa, a Xhosa girl thinks Vendas are nothing but stupid.

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pressed the wrong button. After school I will show you how we Ndebeles fight!"[43] Intervention by a Learner Representative Council (LRC) member sorted out the conflict. The boy said that the Zulus think that they are better than other people – a deep-seated sentiment, considering how cross the boy was when he uttered those words. He really believes that *"thina Amandebele"*, the Ndebele, can fight better than everybody else. This confrontation came as a result of Skhosana not taking care of his part in the group project of which Bongani - the Zulu boy - was also part. As a group, they were all given demerits because Skhosana - the Ndebele boy - did not finish his bit. I later inquired from Skhosana why he did not do his school work. He quickly replied: "Oh, madam, we Ndebeles are not meant to receive education"[44] - thereby implying that education belongs to the other ethnic groups.

The learners' undermining of one another cross the ethnicity boundary to residential areas. Personal prejudice - discrimination which exists on the level of prejudice in interpersonal relationships - is also evident amongst the learners (Sarup: 1986: 49). When I asked Tshepiso - a boy who was standing next to me - to fetch me a chair from the school hall during the Grade 8 welcoming function, Kgothatso - another boy who was standing close-by said: "He will not go, madam, because children from Makushoaneng (township[45)]) do not have respect." [46]

During break - when the girls were playing netball - Marcie shouted out: "Come, my friend, let's show the children from the suburbs/townships how we rural girls play the game of netball."[47] In the past, most learners would rather lie about where they came from, but these learners had outgrown that. Most learners are proud of who they are and they do not hide where they come from - as the following statement shows: "No,

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43. *Nina AmaZulu nixabanga ukuthi nihlanagaphile ukudlula abanye abantu, manje khona uphrese I-wrong button, and ngizo kukhombisa ukuthi thina amaNdebele silwa kanjani ngemva kwesikolo.*
44. *Phela, madam, thina AmaNdebele a se funde*
45. A township was a legislated residential area for urban black people during the apartheid era and, generally, retains this demographic. There is a misconception that townships are poverty stricken and riddled with crime. On the contrary, we have some of the South African millionaires staying in most of these townships and we also experience crime everywhere in the country
46. *A ka se ye mam, gape bana ba Makushoaneng ba a tella.* This statement is in Sepedi - an indigenous language of South Africa.

47. *Etla chommy re bontshe bana ba kasi gore ko diplaseng re e betha bjang gentla.*

madam, I stay in a shack, we do not have electricity."[48] I found this blunt acceptance of who they are; where they come from; and what they can do, amazing - because of my personal experience.

When I grew up in the rural area of Zebediela in Limpopo Province, I admired children who lived in Lebowakgomo and Seshego townships because they seemed - from a distance - to be better off than we were. They had running water and sewerage while we had to fetch water from the windmill two kilometres from the house, and also used pit toilets. I would, therefore, not 'willy-nilly' tell strangers where I came from in case they laughed at me. I regarded it as a disgrace to stay in a rural area - especially when I found myself amongst other learners from townships, more so that they always had a tendency to make one feel inferior.

Most learners were subjected to perceived injustices that the school imposed upon them. School rules, such as what your hair should look like when you come to the school, was amongst those. The white girls wanted to braid or plait their hair like the black girls because they thought the blacks girls where being privileged and they where not. The white boys also wanted to have dreadlocks in their hair. In the school rules document, one reads that "No dreadlocks are allowed in this school." The argument of the white boys is that if the school rule does not allow dreadlocks, it should apply to the black children as well and, therefore, the rules should stop allowing some and denying the rest.

A coloured boy – Delmaine – who was the cricket star of the school alluded to other coloured boys who came from the same location as himself. He told me that when they are at home, they humiliate him because of his dark skin and say he must join "the blacks"[49] because he is one of them. To be dark-skinned amongst the coloured community is as humiliating as it is amongst the African people. In the following statement, Delmaine alluded to his frustration because of the colour of his skin and he

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48. *Aowa mam, gape nna ke dula ka mokhukhung, ga re na mohlagase* (Sepedi).
49. *bo dakie*

lashed out at me because, sometimes, he thought I represented the government of the day when he said:

> Madam, I wonder when the coloured people will be privileged. In the past when white people used to have privileges it was hard for us because we were not white enough. You see, like at present, you blacks have the government and we are not black enough (Informal Conversations, 2005: April 17).

This statement confirms the views of Richard van der Ross - the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape - who was chosen to represent the Coloured viewpoint on how far South Africa progressed in forming a national identity. In his article, entitled *Not white enough, not black enough*, he wrote:

> Before 1994, we were not white enough, now we are not black enough. We, who are we? We are the coloured people. Oppression by whites must not be replaced by oppression by Africans. Yes, people still talk in terms of these terms and, probably, always will. We cannot be wished away (The Sunday Times, 26 September 2003).

If academics of such high calibre talk in terms of not being black enough and not being white enough, what can one expect from a Grade 11 learner? From what I could deduce from Delmaine's statement, the dark-skinned coloureds are also discriminated against. Their community teases them about their 'blackness'. I explored this idea of the 'dark skin and the concept of beauty' among other learners. Even though most African learners told me that they do not regret being black, I felt that there was a sense of inferiority amongst the ones with darker skins, such as Mpho - one dark-skinned African girl who said: "Sometimes I just wish I wasn't *this* black", pointing at the skin on her hand. When I asked her why, she said:

> Because the boys tease me about it, and sometimes my friends also tease me. I feel like I should be a little lighter at least, but then I remember that I have to love myself as I am, because that is what our Life Orientation teacher teaches us (Informal Conversations, 2005:April).

I did not go out to find out the role of teachers in shaping the thinking of the learners about themselves, but surely Mpho's Life Orientation teacher teaches her to accept

herself as she is, which also assists in building a strong self- image of the learner. The aversion of - and belief in - racial inferiority were, probably, important reasons in the USA for forcing children born of mixed couples to affiliate with blacks (Ogbu, 1999:651), probably because they were not 'white enough?' . Black is associated with evil, ugliness, the devil, darkness, etc. African and Coloured learners tease each other about the darkness of their skins. Delmaine sadly maintained that "As long as you are dark-skinned, you are ugly - finish and *klaar*." [50]

 The idea of beauty amongst the learners and, possibly, throughout the black communities is somewhat *distorted* (Golden, 2004 : 148) Golden says: "I watched in horror as what Nigerians come to call 'yellow fever'- the use of skin lightening creams - spreads across the country like a modern day plague." The lighter your skin is, the more chance there is of people seeing you as 'beautiful' - and *vice versa*. She conducted an interview with Audrey Chapman - who is an author of several books on 'black male-female relationships'; was a therapist at the Howard University Counselling Centre; and hosted a popular talk show that focused on male-female relationships at that time. Amongst statements - confirming of the effects of the colour complex - he had the following to say:

> I have a lot of women who come to see me, and when we start examining where their low self-esteem springs from, it is all about hair or skin colour or features. The young men would really admit that they rarely used the word *pretty* to describe even the most attractive dark girl. One young man said: "We say that a light-skinned is pretty and a dark-skinned girl is okay" (Golden, 2004: 148).

That is why - even amongst the black communities - parents tease their children about the colour of their skin. Golden (2004) shows what her half-century of interracial and intraracial personal politics looked like as well as the dualism that existed in her home where her dark-skinned father encouraged her to be "black and proud" and her light-skinned mother would - on many occasions - shout at her to

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50 Finish and klaar combines two English words and one Afrikaans word and it means "over and done"

> Come on inside the house - it is too hot for you to be playing out there. I have told you don't play in the sun, because you will have to get yourself a light-skinned husband for the sake of your children!

This is a stereotype amongst men and women who think every dark-skinned black is ugly. Golden clearly reflects this idea in the following statement:

> There are dominant stereotypes of white as civilized and black as barbarous. Some whites simply feel more comfortable around light-skinned blacks than they would otherwise do around dark-skinned blacks (Golden, 2004: 117).

Such representations - in turn - mirror patterns of inclusion and exclusion from citizenship rights as well as playing a role in shaping social identities in South Africa (Chisholm, 2004).

This conversation reminded me of my childhood days when I would be referred to by my siblings as "This black thing!" every time I did something wrong. Five of my siblings are all light-skinned while one of my elder sisters - to whom this thesis is dedicated - and I are dark-skinned. We grew up with a negative attitude towards our own skin colour because of what people around us said about dark skins. Like Golden, "I hated my dark black skin" Golden (2004: 116). Golden succeeds in showing how ludicrous the notion of *colourism* can be as well as the painful legacy it has created for all of us.

We live in a society which was founded upon divisions of race and colour and, therefore, light-skinned children imbibe a sense of racial and colour superiority with every breath they take (Golden 2004: 127). Beauty is subjective, personal and culturally determined. All of these perceptions are the result of the culture that has given us the language to assess beauty - as well as the perspective that defines it (Golden, 2004:133). A 1991 study found that 80% of American boys prefer blondes to brunettes or redheads (*US News and World Report: 1991*).

There are stereotypes amongst the white learners and teachers as well. When I was in a Grade 11 mathematics class, the learners had to give answers to sums. There is a

tendency amongst white teachers and learners to associate the colour of hair with intelligence. All blondes are looked upon as being stupid. After Lucia - a white girl with a nice blonde hair - got the answer wrong, the mathematics teacher - a white male - said to her, "do not answer like a blonde." Manenge - an African boy - rubbed it in when the class was over and shouted at Lucia: "Hey you, *Blondie*, there is nothing you can tell me unless you pass the Maths test first."

When the teacher said that, everyone in the classroom laughed. Later on, I followed up on why they laughed. They told me that it was because Lucia gave a stupid answer. According to them, it is normal for blondes to give stupid answers and for the brunettes to give clever answers. Afterwards, when I asked Lucia how she felt, she said: "Do not worry, madam, I just had my blonde moment. Tomorrow it will be different." In confirming this 'blonde' and beauty thing, Golden says: "I woke up the other day and half the women I knew where all blonde" (Golden, 2004: 120).

According to Golden, black women in the USA dyed their hair blonde because everyone with a blonde hair is considered beautiful. These stereotypes are transferred from generation to generation by parents because attitudes play a very important role in regulating social relations (Franzoi, 2003: 373) The blonde hair fetish is not an artificial one among white learners - it is real and it affects the way those learners are perceived and valued by their families; by men; and by employers (Golden, 2004:139). I cannot understand how hair becomes an academic matter, just as I do not understand what skin colour has to do with academia and with beauty. When I grew up I just knew that "black is beautiful." I learnt that from my mother, but the community outside told me something different.

Unfortunately, forms of student behaviour that suggest a deeply entrenched intolerance of each other would persist in spite of all efforts against it - as Vernon observed:

> Yes, all that I can say is that I have seen and heard a lot of the Afrikaans people saying things against black people behind their backs and the black

people also doing the same. What I have noticed is that none of them is doing this publicly, probably for fear of confrontation (Vernon.txt - 2:25 [51:52]).

According to Kobus, one of the learners in the sample, the learners know that they have to get along - as he puts it: "At least we know that" (Kobus.txt - 10:27 [38:40]).

4.4.6 The newspaper clipping about retaining Afrikaans as the only language of instruction

In the post-apartheid period, the right to receive education in the official language of choice in public educational institutions is guaranteed by the Constitution (RSA: 1996 Section 29 [2]). In this particular instance the language of choice refers to either English or Afrikaans. Be it as it may, some of the parents of the school did not want to have English as a language of instruction at Van Den Berg High School. They sent newspaper clippings to the school - challenging all who took part in the decision to make the school bilingual. One of the newspaper clippings was a speech by Inkatha Freedom Party politician, Ben Ngubane, at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) where he was quoted as saying that Afrikaans is an integral part of South Africa's economic development and, therefore, its importance cannot be over-emphasised. All sentences that were pro-Afrikaans were highlighted by this parent (SJ2: 176)

The reader should know that the struggle for the recognition of Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning - as opposed to English - is not a struggle that started at Van Den Berg High School in 2004. It was a struggle as old as the Great Trek where the Afrikaner people fought for their own nationalism. This struggle was amongst the three major challenges facing Lord Milner. In the Dutch-English conflict the British Milner was "preoccupied with a permanent obsession with the growing Afrikaner nationalism which appeared as a threat against his imperial ideal" (Cross, 1992: 118). From conversations with my white English and Afrikaans-speaking teacher colleagues I learnt that when Peggy Archer, one of the English-speaking teachers was still of school-going age, stones used to be thrown at her when she was passing the local Afrikaans school - on her way home after school (Conversation with Peggy Archer, 2005: May 23). This rivalry between the Afrikaans-speakers and English-speakers started in 1820 when Britain decided to send people (the 1820

Settlers) to the Cape to "make it English" (Malherbe, 1925:19).

Although the Anglo Boer War and the South African war do not form part of the scope of this study, it is important to note that they were basically struggles – although mostly economic - for supremacy of who should rule South Africa. What is note-worthy in this study about this period is that after Britain emerged victorious from the war, she wanted to assimilate the Boers into the English way of life with English as the language of instruction at schools. Most important were Milner's ideas of the future which were based on racial segregation as a dominant strategy in all spheres of life, including education (Cross, 1992: 119). His ideas – as well as those of the leaders who followed - propagated racial segregation in education. After the National Party won the elections in 1948, they refined the ideas of their predecessors on racial segregation and discrimination. In fact, the Nationalists just perfected a system that had been in leaders' minds for a long time.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The attempts at Van Den Berg High School to break down apartheid education – which, according to Cross (1992: 67), appeared "irreversible," was not without challenges. This chapter has focused, mainly, on a discussion of the process of desegregation as it unfolded at Van Den Berg High School - with regard to challenges and obstacles.

The next chapter concentrates on a more positive account of the process and draws on the learners' accounts of the present. What the next chapter highlights, though, is what most researchers in the field of integration overlooked in South Africa: the learners, themselves, are integrating. The internal factors at Van Den Berg High School provide an atmosphere conducive to the integration process among the learners. Learners do not live in a vacuum - they are social beings. The role of social structure interplay in the lives of the integrating learners cannot be underestimated. The external social structures of politics, exposure, family, peer group, the church and

fashion that Dolby alludes to, play an indispensable role in the type of learners that different schools ultimately produce (2001:67).

There has been a notable shift of events at the school. If one examines the factors that led to desegregation - and later on to integration - at Van Den Berg High School, one can conclude that integration is a process. The school started admitting learners from other racial backgrounds in 1996. During that year there were not many black learners. In 1997 the number of black learners increased. There is a record of letters of complains from parents and neighbours of the school, beginning in 1997 - after the school admitted a number of black learners. During a larger part of 1998 and 1999 – and into 2000 and 2001 - the letters of complains decreased in number (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:59 [(109:109]).

CHAPTER 5

THE ADULT STAGE: IS CLOSE PROXIMITY JOY OR PAIN?

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, Chapter 4, focused on the metamorphosis of the desegregation process at Van Den Berg High School – based, largely, on document analysis and personal observation. It, therefore, set the tone for the discussion and analysis in this chapter which seeks to draw attention to the issues of desegregation and integration as seen through the eyes of the learners, themselves. I was particularly interested in learners' views on the following questions:

- How do learners experience the desegregated school environment?
- To what extent does prejudice - resulting from the long history of discrimination and racial polarisation - influence learners' perceptions of one another?
- How do such perceptions aid or impede integration?

In the light of the above, the primary focus of this chapter is on the learners' daily experiences at the school - which forms part of their social world. These are, indeed, critical questions that have assumed an increasingly central place in general educational discussion and in academic comment (Kalb *et al.*, 2004:21). Responding to the challenges of racial diversity in schools is sure to raise complex and wide-ranging questions which have general relevance to school management today (Heystek *et al.,* 1999:187). I was not only interested in learners' perceptions, but also in the views of the school management. The data analysed here opens up possibilities for understanding learners' perspectives on different issues of diversity which have a significant bearing on the day-to-day running of the school.

During the data analysis process in this chapter, it was very difficult to separate what the learners said from who they are. For this reason, the ethnographic context of the study signals a relationship between the sampled learners and the context within

which they found themselves. Developing directly from Chapter 4, this chapter - which constitutes the last stage of the metamorphosis process, i.e., the adult stage - not only discusses the emerging themes of integration at the school, but also sets the stage for the concluding chapter that follows.

5.2   THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN INTEGRATION

Perhaps, it is at this stage of my narrative that I should draw attention to the character and personality of the principal of Van Den Berg High School - as the primary agent of change - whose progressive views on issues of desegregation have contributed in no small measure to making integration possible at this particular school. Both the teaching staff and the learners regard him very highly because he leads by example. It is important to understand that education is, fundamentally, a character-forming and developmental activity that often occurs through the values that are consciously - or unconsciously - modelled by the education system. The promotion of values is, therefore, an inevitable function of education.

From the evidence gathered in the course of my research at the school - and based on both personal observation and interviews, the principal of Van Den Berg High School does not only encourage his learners to accept 'others', he also makes everyone feel accepted. He played a crucial role in driving this process. I was bombarded with "the principal told me this; the principal taught me this." One of the learners at Van Den Berg High School was blunt when she said:

> I was racist when I came here but the principal taught and helped me to build relationships and to accept other learners different from me. I now have a close friend who is black, and I love her (Karen.txt - 12:106 [268:270])

In Boipelo's opinion, "he makes everyone feel at home, yet at school" (Boipelo.txt - 16:56 [69:69]). Some of the learners attribute the values of *ubuntu*[51] - which characterise the school community - to the personality of the principal. As Saloosha put it: "The principal taught me to respect other people and to be best friends with

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51. Humanness. It encompasses the treatment of other people as human beings or as you would like to be treated if you were in their position.

them - to really like them and accept them" (Saloosha.txt - 17:36 [54:55]). Karen shares Saloosha's view when she stated - in almost the same words: "The principal taught me to respect other people and not to discriminate or judge them because they are different from me" (Karen.txt - 12:108 [269:270]). Closely analysed, respect and acceptance of the 'other' are values that are fundamental to the whole process of integration. Hence, the contention in this chapter - among other significant determinants - is that success or failure of integration in any institution is linked to the quality of the leadership itself. The more the leadership understands and buys into the vision of the education department, the easier it will be for everyone involved to buy into the following mission statement of the DoE:

> Our vision is of a South Africa in which all people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities which will contribute towards improving the quality of life and build a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society (DoE, 1996: 3).

It is, therefore, my considered view that had the principals of those schools that dominated the news headlines - because of their inability to handle racial integration - inculcated the values of *ubuntu* in their learners, those schools would not have become the flashpoints they turned out to be. This principal, for instance, removed the old South African flag and put up the new South African flag on the same day that the old one was removed (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:51 [101:102]) - a move that showed a preparedness to not only accept change, but to be its pioneer. Admittedly, reducing the deeply embedded race, class, gender and institutional inequities - which characterised the education system from 1948 - is still a serious challenge, requiring not only the dedication of everyone in school management but, more importantly, requiring the selfless commitment to change from the principal who is the ultimate manager of the school.

The principal's role in making the conditions at Van Den Berg High School even more conducive to racial integration was captured most appropriately by Kobus: "the principal cannot give you a heart-attack" (Kobus.txt - 10:80 [128:128]). Susan, the learner with disabilities emphasised the atmosphere at the school which is conducive to integration by saying, "It is not like a prison here" (Suzan.txt - 11:38 [73:74]). Hence, Karen's conviction that - given another chance to decide where she should

attend school - she would still prefer this one: "If I can choose any high school in this area or wherever, I would choose Van Den Berg High School" (Karen.txt - 12:59 [137:137]). Asked what the biggest attraction to this school was for her, she unhesitatingly responded: "The principal makes me want to be here" (Karen.txt - 12:58 [132:133]) As if to concur with Karen, Saloosha pointed out emphatically:

> In this school things are more relaxed. I do not mean relaxed in terms of being lazy, but you do not feel like the school is driving you crazy. The headmaster is cool. He makes everyone feel special" (Saloosha.txt - 17:60 [108:109])

Suzan, was even at a loss for words to express it:

> Uh! I am not sure what you want me to say but, I like being here. From what I hear from other schools, this is like a much better school than Orentjies and Gladys High Schools[52]. My one friend is complaining that she is very unhappy over there and they are like very strict over there. You won't find children running around like here. Here the principal and teachers understand that we are children. It is very nice to be here (Suzan.txt - 11:41 [81:81])

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Indeed, on the basis of the evidence presented so far, it is hardly surprising to note that the principal of Van Den Berg High School was acknowledged in parliament by the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, as a pioneer of diversity management in this part of the city. "The country would be lucky to have school leaders like you," said the minister on the occasion of handing the racial integration award to the principal (*Education Dispatch*, 2004: 12). Perhaps, what is even more revealing is the fact that Van Den Berg High School - in collaboration with other schools in the vicinity - has developed a programme whose primary objective is to teach their learners about the different cultures. This is, no doubt, another prerequisite for integration that should be encouraged in all situations where people who have been legally segregated for decades now have to coexist and share the same living, working and/or educational space.

I deliberately draw attention to the character of the principal in this section of the chapter in order to create a better context within which to discuss other aspects of the school with regard to integration. Other factors which are beyond the control of the

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52 Pseudonyms

principal also have a significant bearing on the direction that the school takes in terms of these matters. Among these other aspects are the attitudes of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the School Management Teams (SMTs). However, there is no doubt that if all these organs are led by a headmaster who is committed to making desegregation and integration work, it stands to reason that desegregation and integration will become a living reality. However, if they are led by a principal who is himself/herself not convinced of the need to embrace desegregation and integration in the post-1994 era, it would certainly be extreme optimism to expect desegregation and integration to happen without friction - as witnessed in the racial outbursts alluded to elsewhere in this study.[1]

5.3 SOME PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVES TO MAKE DESEGREGATION POSSIBLE

The following points are indicative of initiatives that could facilitate the process of desegregation in schools around the country - initiatives which were used at Van Den Berg High School.

5.3.1 A change in the school's language policy

In the previous chapter, I briefly referred to language as the key to educative teaching and learning. In the history of South African education, the importance of language - as a primary determinant of success in one's educational endeavours - was demonstrated by the tragic events of 16 June 1976. On that day students from Soweto - a black township in the Southern part of Johannesburg - took to the streets to protest against learning through the medium of Afrikaans and against general Bantu Education for Blacks. It was on that day that the apartheid police shot students - resulting in student uprisings all over the country and in the massacre of even more people in subsequent unrests. The 16th of June is now commemorated in South Africa as Youth Day. It is, therefore, against this background that the importance of a school's departure from its traditional language policy should be understood.

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1. Racial outbursts at places, like Vryburg, Richmond, Delmas, Groblersdal, Potgietersrus and Edgemead, have characterised some of the responses to racial desegregation and integration in the education sector (DoE, 2006: 2).

Prior to the dramatic political developments that swept the African National Congress into office in 1994 and, thus, heralding what became internationally acclaimed as the "small miracle of the 1990s", Van Den Berg was a single-medium, Afrikaans-only high school. It was a school that served a mainly Afrikaans community in whose midst black people were - in terms of the provisions of the *Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950* - legally forbidden to live. Therefore, it would have been practically inconceivable to expect the school's language policy to be different.

In the previous chapter I pointed out that in the aftermath of the school's desegregation – and as happened in other schools - as black learners entered the school in large numbers, there was an exodus of white learners to other white public and private schools that were still racially segregated. This is understandable, because a nation emerging from such a racially divided past as South Africa cannot readily embrace change without some form of coercion. It should be remembered that the apartheid system was intended - overtly and explicitly - to link concepts of ability and potential for learning to culture and race and to build, and reinforce, particular social cultures (DoE, 2006:3) – hence, the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* and its subsequent amendments.

Among the first steps taken by the school to bolster its numbers in terms of learners was not a change in language policy, but its attempts - albeit to no avail - to recruit coloured learners whose first language was Afrikaans, particularly from the Eersterus area of Pretoria to which they were confined by the apartheid laws (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:59 [109:109]). This move was clearly calculated to keep the school Afrikaans.

Available evidence suggests that the recruitment of coloured learners did not yield the expected results (SJ2: 267). The next attempt was the change from a single to a dual medium language policy that included English. The intention of this strategy was to attract the white English-speaking learners to the school. The latter effort was clearly calculated to keep the school white - because the initial objective of keeping it Afrikaans had not materialised (Principal.1st interview.txt - 1:59 [110:110]).

Since 1994 South Africa has recognised eleven official languages and, therefore, every learner in South Africa - irrespective of race or geography - has a legal right to receive education in the language of his/her choice. Section 6 of the *Language in Education Policy* states:

> The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education system to promote multilingualism; within practical limits a learner shall have the right to language choice in education (DoE, 1997: S6).

Thus, in an effort to implement this clause, Van Den Berg High School's language policy - which was duly approved by the Director of Education - puts an emphasis on the following:

- Teaching is done through the medium of English and Afrikaans - parallel medium.
- Northern Sotho is taught as an extra official language to interested learners.

Closely analysed, there are flaws in this policy because – on the one hand - English and Afrikaans-speaking learners could come to the school and demand to be taught in either of these languages and it would be reasonably practicable to do so. On the other hand, the same could not be said for Zulu, Xhosa, Venda and Tsonga learners whose rights would be limited because they could not immediately exercise this privilege - on the grounds that this "was not reasonably practical." This explains why most white schools - which did not support desegregation - used language as an instrument of exclusion (Carrim, 1992: 21). In the case of Van Den Berg High School, the learners chose either to learn through the medium of Afrikaans or English and they chose not to attend Northern Sotho classes - which forced the school to cancel these (SJ2: 76).

The introduction of a parallel-medium language policy was not without challenges (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:6 [20:21]). The principal's concern was the cost of running a dual-medium school because - as he put it - "is very high because everything has to be done in two languages" (Principal. 2nd interview .txt - 18:26 [61:62]). As a former Afrikaans-medium school, the majority of the teachers are

Afrikaans and, apart from English, they had been teaching all the subjects in Afrikaans. With this change, the same teachers were expected to teach, effectively, in both languages. This was a serious challenge for which many teachers were not ready, while the learners were at the receiving end. One Chinese learner - who had never learned Afrikaans before – maintained: "I do not have any problem, it is just the language that is a problem - they speak in Afrikaans and I don't understand Afrikaans" (Yang Chuang. txt - 7:20 [39:39]). The teachers agreed to teach in the two languages even though they were not schooled to do so. Evidence displays that the teachers were willing to teach in both languages and would go all out to do their best. One of the teachers - who spoke to me about her experiences - mentioned that she works closely with the Biology teacher at the neighbouring English high school when preparing her English lessons. Another teacher, teaching Social Sciences goes all out, with the help of the Department of Education Social Sciences specialist, to get activities that would be relevant in a multiracial set-up, and also include African heroes in the study of history to allow learners to be open-minded and feel acknowledged. (This is the teacher who established the Awareness campaign where multicultural learners do home visits in order to learn from other cultures different from their own)

Thando - a learner who came from a township school to Van Den Berg High School in Grade 8 - shared the sentiments of Yang Chuang. She complained that at the beginning the teachers were clearly not used to teaching in English and they would revert to Afrikaans in the middle of a lesson – something which all the teachers seemed to do:

> When I got here, I had to study Afrikaans and I was struggling for the first year. And when I got to Grade 9 I really struggled with Afrikaans and English. As you know there is first language English and second language English, I was in the first language English (Thando. txt-14-67 [169-170]).

Vally - an Indian learner - supported this fact: "I repeated Grade 8 because the teachers were still teaching mostly in Afrikaans and I did not understand most of the work (Vally. txt-3-17 [18:19]). As if to concur with Vally, Boipelo added: "Sometimes he just teaches in Afrikaans forgetting that ours is not an Afrikaans class" (Boipelo. txt-16:46 [50:50]).

In the process, the Afrikaans-speaking learners were at an advantage because they did not have to struggle with the language. However, when they did not do better than learners who belonged to other language groups, it was as if they were not up to the standard of the school. The principal was equal to the challenge and requested the education department to provide the school with more resources - both human and material - but without success (Principal. 1st interview. txt 12:24 [22:23]). The principal conceded that the introduction of other indigenous South African languages in the curriculum was a long term project which depended on the availability of resources. The learners were given a choice to study Northern Sotho, but most of the parents refused to let their children learn this language. This is in line with a study conducted by Howie (2005: 23)[53] in Cape Town, in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Eastern Cape where teachers agreed that the learners' parents did not want them to study their home languages.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, what is important is that Van Den Berg High School made every effort to desegregate by changing its language policy - albeit under severe pressure from other structural developments that were hard to ignore. As in the issue involving the name of the school - which follows below, in the language issue members of the parent community had a stronger voice and influence. Ironically, however, it was only those parents who were resistant to change who were the most vocal. For example, the former Kwazulu-Natal MEC, Ben Ngubane, had made a press statement acknowledging the importance of Afrikaans as a language "in the economic development of the country." (Beeld, 12 July 1997) This article provided the ammunition needed by one parent - who wrote a letter to the school, highlighting Ngubane's words - who demanded that Afrikaans be left alone because it was critical to the economic development of the country (SJ2: 123). Be that as it may, the decision to change the school's language policy - with the overriding objective of accommodating learners from other racial groups who might not be at ease with Afrikaans - was a clear demonstration of the adult stage of the school's

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53. Part of a larger study by the University of Cape Town - in partnership with the University of Kwazulu-Natal and Rhodes University. The University of Pretoria's Centre for Evaluation and Assessment was contracted to carry out an evaluation and assessment of the project. This included classroom observations and interviews with Maths teachers who had to do code switching during their teaching, but assess only in English. I was a researcher on the project.

metamorphosis towards integration. During the same period, many Afrikaans schools still "clung jealously - and rigidly - to their language policies in order to exclude others" (The Star, 21 March 1999).

5.3.2 Attempts to change the school's name

Although it may, at first, sound absurd to include the failure to change the name of the school - in line with the political developments since 1994 - as part of the adult stage of the metamorphosis of the school's desegregation process, there is no doubt that the very thought and willingness to do so in the first place indicates a certain political maturity of the school and its parent community to warrant this treatment. I have pointed out elsewhere in this study that the school was named after one of the key ideologues of Afrikaner nationalism, who was one of the architects and refiners of the apartheid policy.

Like all processes that seek to deal with the legacies of apartheid, such as Affirmative Action (AA) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), the process of changing historical names, such as Verwoerdburg to Centurion; Pretoria to Tshwane; etc., are – understandably - emotional issues. Attempts to change the school's name were accompanied by emotional outbursts from those who still regarded Van den Berg as their hero. For example, in the school journal there is a letter from one member of the parent community - with a pasted article from an Afrikaans newspaper about a journalist who had asked President Nelson Mandela to comment on the changing of the name of a building in Cape Town which was also named after Van den Berg. On that occasion, Mandela's comment reflected his commitment to the ideals of the *Freedom Charter*[54] when he stated, unequivocally, that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it and the history of the country is not only about black people" (Beeld, 10 June 1997). He, therefore, suggested that the name should rather stay as it was - which explains why the building still carries that name today.

Thus, clearly given ammunition by Mandela's views on name change, the parent had highlighted - in green - Mandela's statement in the article and had sent it to the school to serve as guidance for those who were still wedded to the idea of changing the name

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54. A document in which the people who belonged to different political parties which believed in democracy were actively involved in formulating their own vision of a free South Africa.

of Van Den Berg High School to something else (SJ2: 183). The parent concluded: "We must also leave the name of our school as it is."

As part of the process of changing the name of the school from Van Den Berg to another one that had not yet been decided on, a referendum was held in 1999 to address the issue. In this way, the views of the learners, the teachers and the parents on the subject were canvassed. In the final analysis, it was found that about 53% of parents supported the idea of a name change and 57% of learners also voted in favour of a name change. Perhaps, even more important, is the fact that of the 13-member School Governing Body (SGB), only one voted against the idea of a name change.

To reiterate the point I raised earlier, it is not surprising that the school did not change its name - despite all these efforts. What is, in fact, surprising is that a genuine attempt was made to recognise the political correctness of doing so. It is on this basis that I regard the process as part of an adult stage of desegregation and, more so that - after these efforts - the name of the school came to represent something so much more different from what it had earlier stood for. As one learner so aptly put it, "I don't care what the name of our school is. Whether it is Van Den Berg or Mandela, it has no relevance to what is happening in the classroom and what the overall results of the school will be at the end of the year" (Anne-Marie.txt - 9:88 [112:113]).

For Thando, the name is not important. What is important is what the people do at school. For instance, she stated:

> I think with the same name we can actually get very far. I think the name is not such a big thing among all people in the school; it is just those few students and their parents as well who think the name should change (Thando.txt - 14:25 [42:42]).

Almost all the learners - both black and white - seemed to share Thando's view on the subject because many of them saw no connection between the name of the school and the actual teaching and learning process. Karen's response was even blunter - to say the least:

> I do not know who the hell Van den Berg was, and how he can affect my life now. It sounds a little bit stupid, but I do not know who Van den Berg was. I

know he was a big racist or a communist or whatever, I don't know (Karen.txt - 12:42 [95:100]).

It is often said that time is the greatest healer and that is why basic changes require time. Underlying the importance of time is the fact that all the learners at Van Den Berg High School today - black and white - have only a scant idea of the political significance of Van den Berg. This is critical for integration because - in this case - while the future is the domain of goals and dreams and of hopes and fears, the past should be understood as the domain of memories and of wrongs that can never be corrected - only forgotten. Hence, for those learners whose memories do not take them beyond their birth dates, what Van den Berg did - or failed to do - remain inconsequential. Be that as it may though, the school retained Van Den Berg as its name, despite of the outcome of the referendum.

In an effort to achieve the objective of a name change, a meeting of School Governing Body decided to run a competition whereby the person who could come up with a name that may, eventually, be selected and be acceptable to most people would receive R500 (SJ2: 36). However, this process was nipped in the bud when a certain Mr Vermaak[55] - who was, supposedly, not happy with the idea - suggested that due to the costs involved, and until at least one person donated R200 000 towards this process, the item of a name change should be dropped from future Governing Body meetings[56] (SGB Minutes, March 2000:). Having reached consensus on the issue, the School Governing Body closed the matter for which they had earlier voted by 12 to one.

Ironically, however, of the 16 learners sampled for this study, 13 were against the use of Van den Berg as the name of the school. However, this was not because of their own misgivings about the name but, mainly, because they now knew that the name was closely associated with the ideology of apartheid and, therefore, it prevented sponsors from other race groups. As Vernon put it in the following quote - in response to a question on what he would like to have changed in the school:

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55 pseudonym

56. *...stel voor dat totdat daar 'n persoon is wat bereid is om 'n skenking van R200 000 te maak omdat daar koste sal wees om die naam te verander, die saak in die sakely verwydersword. Almal teenwoordig stem saam.*

> I would probably change the name of the school honestly. Because of what and who Van den Berg was, and what he represented. It brings a lot of negativity among the students - especially the black students - because of what he represented. He was a pure racist. I mean honestly that adds a little bit of pressure and doesn't create a very good impression and image of the school (Vernon.txt - 2:79 [156:166]).

Koos alluded to the same factor:

> The problem is really going to a company and asking them to sponsor the school with something. First of all - even though people are not supposed to base their decisions on the school's name, you get a black person as the head of that company; he looks at Van Den Berg High School, looks at another school, Phakeng High School, for example. He would obviously want to sponsor Phakeng High School than Van Den Berg. So I think it is going to benefit the school much more if we changed the school's name, because now the school is very poor. Van Den Berg is that guy who wanted others to be excluded, he was actually looked at as one of the worst South Africans, why, I don't know, he was not good (Koos .txt - 6:14 [22:32]).

Sihle was especially worried about the association of their school with the name Van den Berg when he said: "Van den Berg was a very bad name; our school is wrongly still associated with him" (Sihle.txt - 13:91 [118:119]).

A closer examination of the school records; an in-depth analysis of the School Governing Body minutes; and personal observations reveal that the name of the school is not in any way a reflection of the attitude of the school community towards other race groups. On the contrary, the school community seems to have been the most successful in managing the challenges accompanying transformation. By keeping their children in this school - and in spite of the arrival of large groups of black learners - the white parents had clearly demonstrated how far - in a space of a decade - they had managed to move away from the separatist believes and practices of apartheid. This observation should, however, in no way be misconstrued to suggest that there were hardly pockets of still racist parents, such as Mrs Blou and Mr Vermaak, whose primary motive for keeping their children at Van Den Berg High School was to keep the school theirs and to do everything in their power to prevent transformation.

5.3.3   The desegregation of the School Governing Body

The quality and the character of the principal - an important factor in the leadership of the school - are fundamental to the twin processes of desegregation and integration in any school. This is largely because of the decisive role played by the School Governing Body in the routine governance of the school and the SMT's management of the school - in terms of the *South African Schools Act* (SASA). There can be little doubt about the influence that these two bodies have on matters which are pertinent to desegregation in any particular school. For all practical purposes, a School Governing Body that is 100% Afrikaans-speaking would not readily endorse the decision to equate Afrikaans with any other language, including English. Similarly, if the School Governing Body does not embrace transformation of any kind at the school, it would block such transformation and the school would not desegregate.

Against this background, it goes without saying that one of the first steps to take in the process is to desegregate this important organ of school governance to reflect the demographics of the school and that of the parent community. Thus, as a demonstration of the school's maturity in this regard and with effect from 2001, the School Governing Body of Van Den Berg High School was, itself, desegregated when black parents were elected as members for the first time since the establishment of the school in 1937. This development partly explains why the principal's approach to the challenges of integration was successful. He did not have to deal with a rigid and inflexible School Governing Body that was resistant to change. The present School Governing Body is desegregated.

The school contributes to diversity by giving the learners projects and by constantly discussing issues of inclusion and of diversity - with race issues - across the curriculum. It is evident that learners in this school and, possibly, in some schools like this one cope with diversity better than their parents do - mainly due to this exposure.

Unlike learners form other schools, learners at Van Den Berg would like to be educated and develop South Africa because they are optimistic about the future. Examples of the projects to promote diversity include:

- The Cultural Awareness project that is given to the Grade 8 learners at the beginning of the year. The learners are divided into groups of four. Ideally, in each group the four race groups are represented. Usually, the Indian learners are in a minority and most groups do not have an Indian learner. The project is a month long or it takes four weekends. During each of the weekends the learners rotate and sleep over at one of the four families' home. What they are, then, expected to do is to write down all the 'strange' practices that take place in the visited family's home which do not happen in their respective cultures. They compile a report at the end of the exercise. After the report is submitted, the classes interrogate the contents and the learners agree that it is an eye-opener for them and their teachers. This platform assists them to deal with stereotypes and myths about other racial groups.

- Another project that informs the learners about issues of diversity is given in Grade 10. The learners compile a portfolio in which they argue that they are 'African'. The essays are discussed in class and after the discussions there are reflection sessions during which the learners show how much they have learnt about views different from theirs.

- The prefect camp activities teach learners to work as a team despite their differences.

All these efforts are in line with the Stanford University Educators' second dimension of diversity. This dimension is diversity-related teaching where learners are taught - and are given space to indulge in - diversity issues at school. It can, also, be in line with diversity initiatives where the school deliberately alerts learners to their diverse environment.

Most of the learners have attended school together since the first grade. Some of them have become very close friends who will continue to coexist - even in work situations in the future. It will be easier for them to interact with one another than it has been for the older generations. This will be possible if parents stop telling their children unfounded stories about other races that are different from their own.

5.4 LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF THEIR CHANGED ENVIRONMENT

Most learners are aware that they live differently from the way in which their parents did. Most of them appreciate the fact that the government has changed and that it is striving to bring the people in the country together - in spite of their diversity. Except for two boys, all learners - despite problematic personal experiences - centre their energy on studies and their hopes for the future. Most of them want a bright future. They are aware that education can be the key to success. Four learners aim to enter the medical profession; three would like to be in business; one wants to be a forensic scientist; one wants to be a computer engineer; another wants to be a programmer and graphic designer; while four want to join crime prevention units. Learners, generally, interact at school. Most of the friendships - especially amongst the white and black learners - end at school. However, amongst some of the learners - both black and white - the friendships cross the school border into the home, usually with the support of the parents.

During the process of desegregation, there were schools that were resisting change and research has documented sad stories of inter-racial confrontations. Such fights could hardly be resolved without expensive court actions ensuing. However, for learners at Van Den Berg High School, the situation is quite different because they know that they have to be a rainbow nation.[57] Suzan alluded to that when she said:

> Yes, our school is a reflection of the rainbow nation, because there is not that much discrimination or anything. We are used to get along quite well here. We are not really fighting about issues of racism, or sexism - stereotyping people on the basis of race or sex. Yes, there are fights, but more for simple stuff you know (Suzan.txt - 11:67 [221:222]).

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57. A spoken metarphor for South African unity - aspiring for one country, with many peoples.

One could have expected Abuja to allude to problems that she encountered in the school, but to the contrary - and just like Suzan, she is very happy to be a part of the 'Berg family'. She said:

> At this school, we are like a big family; we know each other's strong points and weak points. We can see if someone is down and we lift each other up, spiritually (Abuja.txt - 8:114 [151:151])

When I asked her if there was anything that made her sad, she laughed out loud; kept quiet for a while; and then alluded to some learners who laughed at her English accent as well as to her black neighbours - at home - who called her family *magrigamba*[58] (Abuja.txt - 8:78 [119:121]).

She seemed very sad, indeed, which made me probe further and ask what the concept meant. She explained that it was just a "bad word they give to very dark skinned people - especially from the African countries." She emphasized that it did not happen at school but rather at home and that the white neighbours did not use the derogatory word - only the black neighbours. What happens at home usually has an impact on what happens at school. The black neighbours who referred to her family as *magrigamba* where using this term to hurt them. As she said later on: "They just want to hurt us."

Abuja spoke about a xenophobic tendency amongst South Africans who think that black people from other countries in Africa have come to South Africa to 'steal' their jobs and that they are the ones contributing to the high level of crime in the country. This xenophobic tendency can be very ugly at times when people are being assaulted - and even killed. In his study, Klaas (2004:147) refers to *kwerekweres* - a term with almost the same meaning as *magrigamba* which is dominant in Kwazulu-Natal. The term, *magrigamba,* is used mainly in Gauteng. What is surprising, though, is that there are also white people who come to South Africa to seek assylum or to look for jobs but who are not given any derogatory names.

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58. A degrading term - usually given to black people with a darker skin colour from other African countries by South Africans.

It is commonplace that learners usually succumb to peer-group pressure, and that one often does what his/her peers are doing - even if this means discriminating against the 'other' because a friend, who had been taught at home to discriminate against members of other racial groups, does so. However, for the majority of learners at this school the situation is viewed differently from that of their parents. Quite often they reacted to their family restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebelliousness.

The learners are aware of what is happening around them. They know that South Africans were segregated according to race in schools and in settlements. They show awareness - across the colour-line - that they are all human beings and, therefore, should be treated as such. Samantha - the coloured girl - witnessed this by saying:

> We are like sort of happy now. We are not exactly different, and we learnt that we are not actually different as they used to make us believe (Samantha.txt - 5:17 [30:30]).

When asked who the "they" in her statement referred to, she said: "It is the apartheid people."

As Thando put it, the learners at Van Den Berg High School see themselves as people - not as black or white. She alluded to their choice of learner-leaders when she proudly said:

> I know that most of the black students and the white students in my class voted for me. Because they saw that I am really serious about what I am doing. We do not mind your colour - sometimes we even forget about it (Thando.txt - 14:108 [256:258]).

Kobus supported the girls - in this instance - and he even gave a reason why the fighting stopped: "We do not fight because now we know each other" (Kobus.txt - 10:25 [37:37]). According to Kobus, they used to fight because they did not know each other, but now that they know each other, they trust each other and, therefore, the fighting stopped.

It looks as if the problem that the school has is with people from outside the school. The people inside the school get along very well. They have formulated their own ways to cope with their situation and most of them seem to be happy with that. The people who are not at the school - and who are not affected by the school's everyday events - are the ones who "worry too much about whether things are right or wrong[59]." On this issue, the principal gives an example of the choice of learner-leaders - which is done, democratically, among the children themselves. In the English classes, especially - because those are the most integrated classes, the learners choose their peers - not necessarily looking at their colour. Those learner-leaders end up being black and white. People question this and ask: "Why don't you have so many blacks or so many white learners on your LRC." The principal continues by saying that it becomes a problem when they have followed democratic means of choosing the LRC and it results in being predominantly white or predominantly black. "Why should the school management manipulate it because the learners chose those particular learners to represent them?"

5.4.1   Academic integration

Data from the interviews shows that the participants valued the equal opportunities that they - as learners - had, and which were maintained by the schools' social norms of tolerance and equality. This is reflected in the school's mission and vision statement where it is clearly stated that the school strives to provide equal education opportunities for all the learners who enrol at Van Den Berg High School. From the evidence presented in this study, it is clear that there are specific features of the school that distinguish it from the other schools in terms of motivating all learners to strive to achieve the highest possible academic levels. What I could deduce from the views expressed by the participants in this study was that they are constantly 'fed' with the notion that they are '80 % or A' class students by their teachers.

This procedure has given rise to a unique culture in the school which seems to suggest that all "Bergies" - all learners at the school refer to one another as "Bergies" which is

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59. The third Interview with the principal in January 2006

derived from the name of the school, Van den **Berg**, and whereby they regard themselves as part of the 'Berg family' - are special. It further suggests that 'they have got talent' which only needs to be sharpened by means of academic programmes. Consequently, the will to achieve and to make their school proud of them seemed to be the motivating goal of each of the sixteen learners who participated in this study. What is particularly notable is that this attitude cut across the racial divide and each individual learner saw himself/herself as a valued member of the group. For the purpose of this study, this factor - more than any other - attests to the progress of 'integration' in this particular school. The following quotes from Vernon and Thando support this claim:

> In this school you just wanna do it. You wanna work for the school and for yourself. You get given opportunities and it is up to you to achieve like in sport and in academia. I am not personally a sports person. I concentrate more on academia, it is quite nice but opportunities get given to you, like in academia and in sport. You get motivated to achieving; to get an A; or to get a consistent 80% (Vernon - a learner who joined the school from an English high school nearby) (Vernon.txt - 2:68 [136:139]).

> They told me and I saw that this school is a school of achievers - not only academically but sports wise. I used to get 50% in Grade 8, but now I am in the eighties or eighty-five and all that. It has improved and now I am in the top ten again (Thando - a learner who joined Van Den Berg High School from a township primary school and has strived to get 80% in Afrikaans which she could not even speak when she joined the school!) (Thando.txt - 14:71[174:174])   .

Learners see themselves in relation to others. If they are not in the top ten, then they consider themselves to be inadequate. This is important to the learners in this school, but the school tries to develop the learners as a whole - in sports and in cultural activities. There are also cooking classes which are compulsory in the lower grades to reinforce the school's aim to develop the whole human being. The learners do not feel under pressure to perform, but they know they have to.

The concentration on grades and on whether one gets an 'A' or not - while important - does not occupy the learners' whole school life. Because the school thinks it would rob the learners' of their everyday experiences that could not be recaptured in life, it

allows them to have fun too. Parents are also supportive of the learners. Richard clearly refers to this in the following statement: "Unlike those who would put you down, my parents always encourage me"(Vernon.txt - 2:61 [120:121]). For most of the African learners, achievement - at present - was for self-affirmation (Wexler: 1992: 132). Thando - a learner from Makushoaneng who came to the school as a result of the Science Development Project - confirmed this in the following quote: "We are also clever and we also have brains" (Thando.txt - 14:147 [329:331]). According to Thando, for the learners who come from the township schools to be recognised at this school, they needed to prove themselves academically.

5.4.2 Integration through sports

In moulding its learners to excel in competencies other than just academic ones, Van Den Berg High School - like all schools - encourages learner-participation in various sporting and cultural activities. In the area of sport, it is remarkable how - irrespective of their racial or ethnic affiliation - the spirit and the will of the learners to perform at their best has been inculcated. As Klaas explained: "It appears that models of racial integration could be developed using the strength of friendship and sport" (Klaas, 2004: 263). Watching a soccer match between Van Den Berg High School and another school during the course of my research, one could not fail to appreciate the role of sport as a unifying factor among a people long separated by an ideology. Indeed, the inspiration of the *team spirit* cannot be overemphasised - something the learners express in song:

> We have got the spirit. Yes, we do.
> The Bergie spirit. How about you?
> We have got the spirit
> The winning spirit. Yes, we do.
> We have got the spirit. How about you?
>
> We have got the players (sometimes, here reference is made to the star in the team)
> The winning players, yes we do.
> We have got Katlego
> The winning player, how about you?

To this song the opposing team would reply in whichever way they wanted to, but the Bergie team (explain which team it is) spirit would just overwhelm them - to an extent

that, in the final analysis, they would lose the game because of the 12th player in the form of supporters than because of the field of play. In the process, it does not matter whether a person is black, white, Indian or coloured. If he/she excels he/she becomes the hero of the entire school community. As soccer in South Africa is largely a black sport, most of the learners who turn out to be the best in soccer are black, but everyone cheers them with the same emotion as they would at a rugby or cricket match. Vernon clearly attested to this when he said:

> Apart from all the achievements, I would have to say what brings us together is mostly our spirit in sport. I think our school has the most incredible spirit. I mean you do not have to come and call us to cheer, like in sporting activities. We will just cheer throughout. We are very motivated - especially in sport. We always support our school (Vernon.txt - 2:70 [140:143]).

While on the issue of sport, the following codes are offered at the school. Before desegregation, soccer was not one of the sport codes, but it was introduced when the school desegregated. My attention was caught by the budgeted amounts for different sports in the 2001 sport budget.

- Athletics: R6000
- Hockey: R5000
- Netball: R2700
- First Aid: R3000
- Rugby: R3000
- Tennis: R2700
- Cricket: R7000
- Soccer: R1000
- Target shooting: R1500 (SJ2: 156).

The soccer budget for 2002 was increased from R1000 to R3000 and the one for cricket from R7000 to R7500. If one takes a quick look at the budget, one can quickly jump to conclusions about the lesser amount budgeted for soccer. Soccer is played mostly by black and coloured learners in the school - with very few white children participating. If one looks at the increase in percentages from the 2001 to the 2002 budget, there is a 200% increase of the soccer budget. If one thinks of the idea of introducing the sport which was not one of the school sport codes before the process

of desegregation - and bearing in mind the past history of the school - the idea of introducing soccer at the school after the admission of black children cannot be underestimated in school integration. I am comparing soccer and cricket in this budget simply because the one received the most while the other one was given the least. During this research, the cricket stars in the school were coloured learners and athletics was the most integrated of the sports.

In the course of my interviews, I was particularly humbled by the response to a question I deliberately framed with the aim to check the learners' level of racial integration. For example, when they were asked who was the best soccer player in their school, Vernon did not hesitate to give me the boy's name, but when I enquired about the race of that learner, he paused for a moment to think about it because he could not visualise him in racial terms, but only as their soccer hero. Later he confessed that he could not make it up because he is not sure if the "guy" was white or coloured. This was very revealing to me because in a little more than a decade ago, it was easy to see a person first as white, coloured, Indian or black before one could see him/her as just another human being as, honestly, I would have done.

5.4.3   Social relations

On inquiring about the possibility of intercultural friendships among learners, it became evident that it was largely those learners who came from culturally diverse communities who answered in the affirmative. For the rest, it was in only a few cases that learners had actually forged such friendships – friendships which emanated, directly, from their interaction at school. Interestingly, most of such friendships - though few - went beyond the school grounds, while others ended at the school gate. This was largely due to parental influences where many parents had not yet embraced the kind of desegregation in their social life that their children were exposed to on a daily basis. These parents were still wedded to the cultural purity of the apartheid years which was only feasible through the separation of the races. It, therefore, implies that residential integration brings about social cohesion.

For some learners, there was no clear explanation why the friendship did not go beyond the school gate. Kobus said: "Yes, I have friends here at school but not at

home. But no, we do not visit each other at home. I don't know why (Kobus.txt - 10:94 [178:178]). Expressing the same thoughts, Vernon explained:

> It is just the fact that we are friends here at school and we do not really get together outside the school. There is absolutely no reason but it just doesn't happen. I never really thought of it. I thought of him as a buddy here at school (Vernon.txt - 2:87 [187:187]).

For Snail - a coloured boy who is also a cricket player - the situation was different. Of course, as a popular player it was easy for him to make friends across the colour divide as he explained:

> Yes, I do have friends from other races. There is always a problem somehow, not really because of their colour, but because of their character.... There are few people I don't get along with I suppose, but not because of their colour. I have friends from the black and white communities (Snail.txt – 4:42 [175:177]).

Carrim's 1998 study concluded that there are new forms of discrimination - in addition to the existing ones of colour and race. Snail talks of character. He does not get along with some of the learners because of their character, and not because of their colour. It is more about the personalities and whether they like the same things, I suppose - as Klaas found in his study (2004:151).

As part of the history of racial separation, some learners come from families that not only embraced the racial policies of the apartheid government, but also believed in the inherent superiority of the white race. Even in the new dispensation, there are still pockets of parents who insist on maintaining this racial separateness and want their children to see and treat black children as different and, therefore, constituting 'the other'. It is among this group of people - albeit in the minority in this school - that the attitude of 'us' and 'them' thrives. However, this attitude gets overpowered by the large number of learners who have changed the meaning of the 'us' and the 'we' to mean 'everybody in our school.' The family - as an institution - has a role to play in the life of its children. If the learners are taught something different at home to what is taught at school, they will be confused and they will make the choice of which route to follow.

There is a shift in reference from what the learners used to say when they referred to one another. The white learners referred to black, Indian and coloured learners as *'they'* or *'them'* and to themselves as *'us'* and *'we'* (Carrim, 1992). They used to say *"they came to our school so they must do what our school wants them to do"* (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). This reflects the assimilatory stance that the former Model C schools of that time took, but at Van Den Berg High School it does not seem to be the case. The *'they'* and *'us'* have changed their meaning and, presently, at Van Den Berg High School - when they refer to one another - the learners talk about *'us'* across the colour line and when they refer to learners from another school they talk about *'them'*. The learners are part of the big family of Van Den Berg High School and each one is a *'Bergie'*- as the following statements suggest:

> That's the way we live now, we no longer have apartheid and stuff like that. And we are all living together; we don't have like a place where black people have to go and white people have to go to another place, we are not really fighting about issues of racism, or sexism (Koos .txt - 6:42 [113:114]; Suzan.txt - 11:14 [23:23]).

> I think the good thing about the new South Africa is that we are having a lot less conflict than other countries of the world expected. The way we see ourselves is not the way the world sees us; we look like much better and more stable country now than we were in the past. We are trying to make everybody understand each other's cultures (Vernon.txt - 2:136 [262:263]).

In both the above statements, when probed further the meaning of the 'we' clearly includes all the people of South Africa and is no longer specific to race or colour. The learners have made an important shift. They are aware of what happened in the past and they do not like it. They have, therefore, broken away from it. According to Sihle, "The world sees us as role models for being able to resolve conflicts peacefully; therefore, we should live as such. Our school has a very bright future" (Sihle.txt - 13:63 [76:76]).

The learners acknowledged that "we are only trying to make everybody understand" (Vernon.txt - 2:95 [202:203]) "Everybody" seems to mean parents who are against

integration; communities who are against integration; and even the countries of the world who seem to doubt the people of our country's ability to become reconciled with one another. The learners have crossed the colour and racial line - as Karen's statement clearly indicates: "We do not give a damn; we do not care about black, white or whatever" (Karen.txt - 12:25 [65:65]).

5.4.3.1 Extra-ordinary friendship

Some individual learners, teachers and parents may have had privately held intolerant beliefs, but the school environment did not let those intolerant beliefs prevail. Instead, the social norms of the school supported equalised opportunities in gender, ethnicity and class. In the lives of the 16 learners who were sampled for this research, the school social norms offered freedom from the racial codes they learnt from home and gender codes of their homes (Kathleen Gewinner in Walford, 2004: 213). This is demonstrated very well by Karen and Boipelo's friendship where they both reacted to their families' restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebelliousness.

Most of the interracial friendships were not as intimate as the one between Karen and Boipelo. Unlike many friendships that ended at the school gate, Boipelo and Karen's friendship crossed over the school gate and into their homes - in spite of the disapproval of their parents. This section deals with Boipelo and Karen's friendship. Notwithstanding the foregoing, however, and perhaps towering above the rest, was the unusual friendship of Karen and Boipelo. Karen is an Afrikaans-speaking white girl of 17 in Grade 10 and Boipelo is a Setswana-speaking African girl of 17 in Grade 11. Indeed, their friendship tended to be so emotionally intimate that it began to worry even their parents, who had been socialised to understand social relations in racial terms for a long time. Karen and Boipelo had a lasting friendship. It was not just a casual relationship that ended at school; it crossed over to their homes - even with the disapproval of both their parents - as it is evident in the following quotation:

> I mean one of my best friends is Boipelo and so my mother did not enjoy it hearing that one of my best friends is black or whatever. So, we are like best friends and we are enjoying each other's company and we weren't there when

our parents were in the apartheid era or what, so they can't force us to be like them. I do not have other friends. I only have one friend, the black one (she laughs). Yes, she is incredible! (Karen.txt - 12:36 [87:87]) I think I would visit her even if she stayed far from me. Distance doesn't come between us. We went to Margate in December with my mom last year and my friend stayed here; we phoned each other and stayed hours and hours on the phone almost everyday. I missed her (Karen.txt - 12:104 [266:267]) .

Karen had a parent who was resisting change at this school until circumstances forced the parent body to allow black learners to be admitted at the school. I do not think that she thought that one of those black learners would become her child's best friend. I had a chance to speak informally to both Boipelo's parents and Karen's mother at school functions - to get their sides of the story so that I could confirm what the two learners had told me. It was just too much for Karen's mother - and also it happened very quickly.

Boipelo's parents had their own concerns. Leticia, Boipelo's mother, could not understand why her child had chosen a white friend out of all the children at the school. When I asked her what the problem was with the choice of a white friend, she said:

> You know we respect white people; we were never socialised to live with them; now, suddenly, a white child has to come and sleep over at my house for the whole weekend. It was just not on; I did not know that white children are just like our children and that you can reprimand them as well. I just felt like I will make a mistake and end up in jail.

She finished with a laugh. Papi, Boipelo's father, was also worried and as he put it: "…had mixed feelings about it" - more like a "we will see" attitude and they ended up by allowing Karen to visit.

Mangcu comments on the issue of young parents' phobias on the South African Reconciliation Barometer. He alluded to the dilemma that Boipelo and Karen's parents found themselves in - which is a problem that most young parents in South Africa grapple with. In the following quotation he acknowledged that

> …as a young black parent who grew up during apartheid, I am often torn by two clashing instincts. On the one hand, I want my children to understand the history that has informed our collective political and social identities as black people. On the other hand, I want them to be able to define their world as

they see it, and that is as autonomous beings, unburdened by my issues (Mangcu, 2003: 9).

Holman (2004) titled *After Such Knowledge*, a set of meditations on the Holocaust, begins to offer conceptual tools for understanding this racial distancing between white and black parents in the South African context. Holman as quoted by Jansen (2004: 4) tries to understand why and with what effects knowledge of the Holocaust is transferred intergenerational to families of victims of this great human tragedy. How does memory affect the so-called second-generation i.e., those who have no direct experience of the Holocaust but who nevertheless carry powerful and consequential knowledge of this event? Holman refers to this phenomenon as the paradox of indirect knowledge.

Jansen (2004) translating Holman with some caution into the post-apartheid context, poses some questions on the behaviour of students at the University of Pretoria, where he was Dean of the Faculty of Education: "Why is it that white students who have no experience of compulsory military service or the horrors of policing the apartheid state or the material and ideological conceit of white power--how is it that such students have such powerful views of black students? Similarly, why do black students, born long after the Soweto Uprising of 1976 and whose youth blossomed in the post-1990 period, have such firm views about white students? Where and how did these students, white and black, learn the discourses of struggle and the routines of domination?"

This indirect knowledge, demonstrates the inheritance that white and black survivors of apartheid consciously and unconsciously "give" to their children (Jansen, 2004:5). It is a terrible legacy which, rather than breed consciousness and responsibility, has drawn out the worst racial stereotypes, prejudices and aggression among students (Jansen, 2004:5). This argument enhances the comprehension of how the young parents, both black and white, grapple with the issue of accepting their children's friends from other cultures

What Boipelo and Karen were doing - against the wishes of their parents - is in line with the findings of a study conducted by the South African Reconciliation Barometer

which found that more young people appear to be more positive in their evaluations of present and future race relations for South Africa. In that study, 79% of the youth in South Africa agreed that the government should include topics in the curriculum that would help children understand the customs and ways of groups of people from other racial, religious or cultural backgrounds (Mangcu, 2003: 11).

Karen's friendship with Boipelo stands out as testimony to the fact that differences between men are differences within a community. Underlying all differences of race or colour, a common humanity exists. Karen, emphasizing this idea, remarked:

> We weren't there when our parents were in the apartheid era or what; so they can't force us to be like they are. In the beginning my mom was kind of against it. Yes, she told me it was wrong for us to be friends like that. It is not fair - she was fighting or arguing or whatever so I told her that she lived 48 years ago, it was her youth, and I told her I am sorry[60] I am enjoying it; and she is my best friend and I am not going to worry who says what (Karen.txt - 12:23-36 [63:64-87:87]) *(Karen seemed so cross and emotional when she uttered those words.)*

During my interview with Boipelo this idea of parental disapproval of their friendship came up again and she confirmed that:

> Karen is my friend; we have been friends since primary school. She did not do well in her Grade 10, so her mom said she must repeat Grade 10. I love her a lot. She also loves me. We kind of had a tough time with my parents in the beginning of our friendship, they said, Boipelo, why do you have a white friend? I said, what is wrong, they could not come out very clear. I did not understand what their problem was [61](Boipelo.txt - 16:29-30 [28:29]).

Boipelo confirmed her awareness of her environment which was different from her parents childhood days:

> This is the new South Africa. There was supposed to be no more racism. …all cultures are mixing and there is no problem. Yes, I love my friend, I was not even aware she was white until my parents told me. I wanted to go to her sleep over party in grade 1 and my mom asked me if she was white or black. I told my mom that Karen is skin colour, and she laughed. She then

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60.J*ammer*

61. *Bare, Boipelo, why o na le chomi ya lekgowa? Kere kgane what is wrong, they could not come out very clear Ke ne ke sa utlwisise hore problem ya bona ke eng?*

told me that Karen is actually a white person. I did not understand her. We have been friends since Grade 1. Our school is ninety nine percent like the rainbow nation (Boipelo.txt - 16:20 [16:16]).

From this evidence it can hardly be denied that - unlike their parents - the learners in this school have, truly, embraced the concept of a 'rainbow nation'. As one learner bluntly put it during the informal conversations, "The rainbow nation is getting together here! I don't worry about anything else here. It is just lekker[62] (Heloise.txt - 12:85 [199:200]).

Boipelo and Karen are girls. This confirms what Jansen (2004: 6) observed with the female students at the University of Pretoria where he says "through weekly lunches with ten of my first year students, young women students make the transition much easier than their male counterparts", but to contradict Jansen's view about female learners and students, there were other friendships amongst the boys, who even learnt one another's languages in the process. Koos - the Ndebele boy - had three friends: one white and two coloured. They visited him at his home and, usually, they would swim together. Koos' dad spoke to them in IsiNdebele – an indigenous language of South Africa. Koos translated for them, later on, the boys tried out IsiNdebele words and were eager to speak Koos' language. -

This attitude towards the rainbow nation idea is in contrast to the idea of whiteness that was so characteristic of Fernwood High School where Dolby carried out her research - Fernwood "*actively rejected an engagement with the emerging discourse of the rainbow nation or the practices of a new democratic state*" (Dolby, 2001: 48).

5.5 CONCLUSION

It is often said that one of the most important results of the war against Hitler's Nazism was that it brought ideas about racial superiority into disrepute. When the National Party launched its ideological propaganda in the 1940s and institutionalised its racist policies in the 1950s and 1960s, it went completely against the grain of post-

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62. Nice

World War II opinion (Terreblanche, 2002:303). Thus, in the course of implementing its apartheid policy, the National Party built a mammoth organisational structure in order to control not only the movement of Africans but also their living and working patterns - as well as their intellectual lives. Although much of the apartheid legislation was concerned with the control of black labour, the *Bantu Education Act, Act No 47 of 1953* did not only ensure that black and white learners received their education under different institutions, but it ensured that for over four decades these two race groups developed myths about the 'other' that would take more than the elimination of apartheid in 1994 to correct.

Of course, the studies conducted before I undertook this one have clearly revealed that the integration of the learners of the different race groups in terms of the South African Constitution - as well as the South African Schools Act - is more pain than joy. Yet, the evidence presented in this chapter clearly suggests the opposite of what Carrim (1992); Carrim (1998); Vally and Dalamba (1999); Metcalfe (1999); Nkomo et al. (2004) have found. Admittedly, their studies were conducted under different circumstances and at particularly different stages of the metamorphosis of the country's desegregation process. On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, I am inclined to argue that factors other than just the maturity of the country's democratic order (Carrim, 1998) were more decisive in making close proximity at Van Den Berg High School more of a joy than a pain. 'One of the most powerful factors in determining whether you become friends with other people is their sheer proximity to you' (Berscheid & Reis, 1998: 196)

Franzoi reports on different research projects by different researchers who explored the relationship between proximity and relationships of people. Numerous studies found that close proximity fosters liking. "Chances are, most of your friends live in close proximity to you, or at least did so in the past' (Franzoi, 2003:367). There is another study by Ebbe Ebbesen (1976) that contradicts this finding. Ebbesen found that just as much as close proximity may foster liking, it can as much develop enemies. How many of us love our neighbours? "They may have loud parties late at night, throw trash on your lawn, and just generally get on your nerves!" (Franzoi, 2003: 368)

In this school specifically, among other critical factors, I have referred to the personality of the school's principal who - as the manager - had first embraced racial integration before he expected his staff and the learners to integrate. While I concur with the view that proximity may foster liking, it takes more than just proximity for people to like one another. I have also argued in this chapter that though the document analysis – as presented in Chapter 4 - suggest that desegregation at this school was initially marred by racial conflict and concomitant confrontations across the colour divide which included members of the parent community, such as Mrs Blou; desegregation and diversity - as seen through the eyes of the learners, themselves - is alive at Van Den Berg High School and it is, therefore, possible in other schools.

In conclusion, therefore, I think it would not be out of place to suggest that, despite initial indications, close proximity of the different race groups would be a pain - as evidenced in the racially motivated stabbing incident referred to in Chapter 4 - the lived experiences of the learners make me accept the view that close proximity at Van Den Berg High School is in fact a joy, at least for most learners.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this chapter, it is difficult to understand the rationale for separate education systems because the learners of the school - who were researched - are coping well after desegregation. Learners are resilient until parents intervene to spoil it. The case of Karen and Boipelo provide a living example of the fact that the basic qualities of the human mind are the same among all peoples. They have the same dominant instincts; the same primary emotions; and the same capacity of judgment and reason. The learners' friendships have proved to me that people of different races - no matter how long they have been separated - are able to understand one another.

They can judge each other's motives and discriminate character in other races. They have proved that the more intimate their contact with one another - even in schools or in the communities that still resist change, the more ready they will be to endorse the Psalmist's verdict: "He fashioned their hearts alike" (Psalm 33:15). The fact which is unquestionable is that it is possible for friendships to be formed between learners of different races - friendships as intimate, close and rich as members of the same race -

shows that there are no insurmountable barriers or fundamental differences between the minds of different races.

From this study, however, it has become evident that wherever integration is embraced at the highest level of school management, many of the pitfalls resulting from the legacy of the past can be eliminated. Although possibly under duress, the school management embraced change and reacted to it in a positive manner. In my view, in responding to the demands of integration it is not enough that black learners should be helped to fit into white schools or that their cultures and home languages should be reflected in the curriculum. The most important issue is that all learners require - and their parents expect them to receive - equal opportunities and equality of treatment without regard to race or ethnicity that Banks (2004) alludes to in his definition of school integration.

For the schools, the challenge is to rigorously and systematically examine practices and assumptions to eliminate the deeply embedded effects of racism as well as the effects of a long history of racial separation - alluded to earlier in this study. Yet, more positively, it means the reorientation of educational institutions, generally, so that they provide equality for all learners. I am convinced that it is on this basis that the ethnic diversity of society as a whole can be integral to the educational experiences of all children.

Some institutions try compensatory programmes, but those programmes are ineffective if they do not include attention to culture, identity and agency. A multi-level approach is also critical in reducing inequalities, but this reduction in inequality should not be at the expense of self-identity and cultural belonging. Mere exposure to learners of other cultures can lead to positive attitudes (Franzoi, 2003: ix). Van Den Berg High School consists mostly of teachers who are receptive to different perspectives and, therefore, found themselves having to operate a recursive system that was able to develop - and adapt to - the interest and needs of the learners.

With the notion of diversity, one is not looking for uniformity amongst the different people involved, but for the recognition of difference - working towards cohesion. I do not think the aim should be to make "Turks Germans" (Mncwabe, 2003: 24) because it has proved not to work (Kozol, 2005: 45; *The Detroit News Special Report*, 2002). More than four decades after Americans in the US fought and died to end segregation, many in the Detroit Metro are comfortably living apart - divisions along colour lines are dismissed by politicians and accepted by residents (The Detroit News, 13 January 2002).

The experiences of the learners at Van Den Berg High School show that there is a willingness to integrate for reasons other than state policy and a desegregated school may re-segregate - unless deliberate efforts are made to prevent such an eventuality. According to the principal of Van Den Berg High School,

> Most of the learners are still bussed into the school, but I think due to the zoning that the Department of Education is introducing, the school may end up - maybe in five years - not having learners from outside the area (Principal. 2nd Interview. txt - 18:9 [24:25]).

This zoning prompts schools to admit only learners who are resident in the area of the school or whose parents are employed in the area of the school. It may bring an end to the learners who are bussed into the school from township schools.

The lack of legal barriers has led some Americans to think that segregation no longer exists (Jacoby, 2002: 44). In a survey of Bloomfield Township in America which was - during the time of the survey - 88% white and 4% black, a white resident had the following to say about the status of integration in his block:

> I think it just happens that way. I don't think people would scream if Blacks moved in. If you can afford to live around here, I do not think it is a problem.

In an American township, a white American man still says: "I don't think **people** would scream if **Blacks** moved in." Who are the "people" in his statement and who are the "Blacks"? Does this particular white person not regard the black people as people? His statement refers to being able to "afford to live here" - a class issue and not a race one.

Martin Luther King statement below should sum up the whole idea behind the process
of integration and social cohesion:

> We were fighting for the right to live where one chooses. Today we have
> self-segregation. Everyone should have the right to do that …but I think the
> goal in America is for people to live in truly diverse communities. Only then
> can we begin to understand each other (Detroit News, 2006: May 25).

Even though King school of thought wishes for diverse communities, segregation is no
longer seen as a problem in other parts of the world. A black resident of Detroit had
the following to say:

> I happen to live in a city that is heavily populated by blacks, but I am not
> racially segregated. No one in Detroit feels isolated. No one in Detroit feels
> segregated. (Detroit News, 2006: May 25)

I am tempted to inquire about the necessity of understanding one another. Possibly
Anne Marie gives the answer to this question when she said: "I have learned that all
people are the same - even if we are different, we are still the same" (Anne-Marie.txt -
9:75 [97:97]).

Anne Marie's statement is in line with what the president of the Transvaal United
Teachers Association (TUATA) and former principal of Giyane High School in
Limpopo for many years and a respected academic in his area, Eric Nkondo, had to
say. In the quest to grasp what experienced people would say about being human as
opposed to race, I asked him for his opinion on segregation, desegregation and
diversity. His answer was:

> I have lived amongst different people and have studied them closely, and have
> come to the conclusion that there is no native mind distinct from the common
> human mind. The mind of a black man is the mind of all mankind; it is not
> separate or different from the mind of the white person or Asian, any more than
> the mind of the English is different from that of the Scottish or Irish people
> (Personal Conversations, 2005: April 2).

In the United States of America the movement to eradicate racial segregation in
schools has been regarded as "one of the most monumental developments in school

law in the twentieth century" (Kemerer, Sansom & Kemerer, 2005: 406). However, the eradication of legally segregated schooling systems led to more fundamental questions. The first question that comes to mind is; "If the cessation of forced racial segregation does not result in racially integrated schools, should school principals and governing bodies be forced to use racial or ethnic heritage information to diversify their schools?" Secondly, "Are racially homogenous schools detrimental to their learners?" This study concludes that under normal circumstances, students cannot learn what they are not taught - no matter how highly motivated and how capable they are. "Children naturally play together, are resilient, until an adult is in the picture" (Hallinan, 1977:446)

To elaborate the discussion further, there is another view on the same issue. A study of black students - who grew up in elite families alongside the white students – and who have their best friends as white students; grew up in the same environment; watched the same movies; ate the same food; and wore the same clothes had the following to say:

> Even if we grew up together, we will never be the same. When we watch similar movies, we do not relate to the characters in the movie the same way. If the movie is about criminals, being arrested and taken into custody, I relate very closely to that because my cousin somewhere is in jail and theirs not. We will never be the same (Manghezi, 1976:74).

This fact agrees with what Michelle at Van Den Berg realised when she said:

> I cannot change the fact that I am white and financially able, but I can change my attitude towards learners different from me in many ways, black learners, poor learners, learners with disabilities, academically challenged, HIV positive learners because they all did not choose to be whoever they are, they found themselves not being able to be anybody else but themselves (Personal Conversation, 5 April 2005).

The newspaper, The Detroit News, reports on empirical research done in America's Detroit city where residents live in segregated townships. Kozol's research is on American schools segregating again along the colour line (Kozol: 2005)). This segregation is happening – even though all structural laws to separate people had been repealed a long time ago. This process is, therefore, occurring through choice and not by law. People choose where they want to stay. It just happens that some areas are populated by Blacks-only while others are Whites-only. This new segregation

frustrated the long-time civil rights leaders and raised new questions about the necessity and meaning of integration. Are we fighting racism or segregation? Is it integration that we need?

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - IS INTEGRATION THE ANSWER?

6.1   INTRODUCTION

It is important to reiterate that the focus of this study has been on the learners' lived experiences of diversity and integration at a former Whites-only Afrikaans medium high school. As a way of positioning these experiences within the ethos of the school, I have used an ethnographic approach in terms of which I interviewed both the learners and the principal at this school. Since an ethnographic research often goes beyond searching for intellectual knowledge and involves the researcher in other ways (Prowller, 1998), I cannot deny my own personal involvement in shaping the process and outcome of this study (Klaas, 2004:237), and this factor is elaborated on in the section on 'limitations of the study' in chapter 1.

6.2   OVERVIEW

In introducing the thesis, Chapter 1 covered aspects, such as the intention; the research problem; the research question; and provided the justification for the study. It suggests the research approach which was followed in the study - as well as the research site. In a nutshell, Chapter 1 set the scene for the study. Following on the tone set by the first chapter, Chapter 2 argued that the separation of the races in South Africa, in general, and in education, in particular, predated the coming to power of the Afrikaner Nationalists in 1948. An attempt was made to trace the historical roots of what the Nationalists only made worse when they took control of the state apparatus. It was found that racial segregation in South Africa went as far back as the 17th century Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope (Malherbe, 1925). Successive Whites-only governments not only found it viable, but also expedient to govern the various racial groups as separate entities rather than as a homogenous South African nation - albeit with varied cultures. Ironically, it was under the pretext of recognising

this diversity of cultures that the Nationalists justified their introduction of Bantu Education in 1953.

Chapter 3 is the methodology section of the study. It presents a description and discussion of the reasons for the choice of a qualitative research paradigm - together with its theoretical framework. The research design and methodology that were followed during the research process are explained – as is the data collection strategies. The sampling of the school and the selection of participants – together with the reasons for these - were elaborated in this chapter.

In Chapter 4 an attempt was made to demonstrate that the commendable progress towards racial integration at the school under investigation depended, to a greater degree, on the creativity and the versatility of the headmaster. As the key role-player in the desegregation process, the headmaster acted swiftly and proactively to mitigate the impact of transformation on a community that was not yet ready for such radical changes. It was argued that as efforts were made to desegregate, instead of removing their children from the school as it was the case in other desegregating schools, the parents of this school kept them at Van Den Berg High School. The headmaster - supported by the School Governing Body - resorted to increasing the school's enrolment by other means.

I argued that - depending on his convictions - a principal's attitude towards transformation can either advance or impede the transformation process. If the principal is not convinced about the need to transform, it would not only be futile to expect him to lead a transformation agenda, but it would also be irresponsible of the education department to leave such an agenda solely in the hands of the principals - without monitoring the process. The document on the *Strategy for Racial Integration* referred to in this study (DoE, 2006) is a welcome indication of how seriously the department takes the whole process. It is an acknowledgement by the department that racial integration in schools cannot merely happen without intervention by the authorities, or that the school principals can ensure that it happens unaided.

Against this background, one may ask: "What did desegregation and racial integration mean to the principal of Van Den Berg High School and what role did he play in the

process's metamorphosis?" An attempt was made in Chapter 5 to answer this question and to show that part of what made the school a commendable story - what it turned out to be in terms of integration - is the progressive approach of the headmaster, himself. This is, however, not intended to suggest that those schools that have since failed to transform, have failed because their principals did not buy into the integration concept. However, it would not be inaccurate to assert that the active and deliberate commitment of the headmaster - and to an extent the School Governing Body - is critical in determining the success or failure of the whole process. In this chapter, the evidence given by learners shows that - while in other schools it was difficult for African, Indian and coloured learners to be accepted and integrated into the school primarily because of the lack of encouragement of physical interaction - the headmaster of Van Den Berg High School actively encouraged such physical interaction in sport and other cultural activities (SJ2: 26).

As a concluding chapter, an attempt is made in this chapter, Chapter 6, to pool the findings from each of the previous chapters and to make recommendations. In this chapter, therefore, it is argued that the key elements of racial integration and of the desegregation of the learning environment are the headmaster; the School Governing Body; the school community; and the active involvement of the education authorities. However, of all these elements the most critical is the headmaster and the staff- as the people on the spot, they are better placed to influence the attitudes of the learners on a day-to-day basis. It is, therefore, concluded that if the headmaster does not embrace change, the other role-players - referred above - can do very little to bring about such changes. If the headmaster does not actively encourage racial integration, the learners and the educators would not buy into it. In the final analysis, the headmaster, although with the assistance of his staff and the SGB - remains an important factor in the drive for the diversification of education in the country.

6.3   FINDINGS

6.3.1. Introduction

The discussion in this section of the thesis follows the pattern which the thesis had followed. I will highlight the findings from the literature and intertwine the discussion with the data gathered through document analysis, observations and interviews. The recommendations and conclusions will emanate from the findings.

6.3.2. Findings from scanning the literature

Scholars have already pondered the question of inter-racial proximity. However, my findings differ substantially from most of the research already carried out. For example, Vally and Dalamba examined desegregated schools and found that most of the former Whites-only schools encounter many racial conflicts and find desegregation very problematic. According to them, close proximity is more a pain than a joy because learners are almost always involved in racial conflicts aggravated by public resistance to school integration (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). In contrast to this - my examination of learners' perceptions in a former Afrikaans Whites-only school yielded different results, as shown in chapter 5. While the Vally and Dalamba's study show a lack of social integration in desegregated schools, this study found that under particular circumstances - and with the commitment of those in authority - integration of learners from different racial backgrounds is possible. The findings of these earlier studies on integration which, clearly, regard racial integration as a utopian dream for people who had been kept apart by decades of institutionalised racism - this study has found that *racial integration is not only possible*, but is evident at Van Den Berg High School. Of course, one must be careful not to romanticise Van Den Berg High School as a success story in terms of racial integration and, thereby, fail to acknowledge that the road to such integration was not free of racial tensions. As in many schools at the time of this inquiry, the road for Van Den Berg High School was both rough and steep and the school had ups and downs of its own.

Literature on what actually transpired and continue to happen in some US schools and residential areas - with regard to segregation, desegregation and now re-segregation - has been critical in providing the much needed background for this inquiry. This literature reveals a three-stage development which brings into question the whole idea of integration. While many people in the US had fought - and some had died - to end segregation, the majority of the people still prefer living apart. The literature suggests that although the historically legal restrictions on housing are no longer in place - as is much of the outward hostility black people used to face in white neighbourhoods - the two racial groups, including those of equal incomes and same social status, *continue to live separately - albeit out of choice* (Detroit News, 2005: May 25) As one writer so aptly puts it:

> From Commerce Township to Cass Corridor, our neighbourhoods are starkly divided along colour lines. Unfortunately, residents accept the divide while the politicians do not, despite evidence that segregation carries financial and social costs (Detroit News, 2005: May 25)

There is an acknowledgement that most US schools have desegregated, but the learners have not integrated and the process is, in fact, in reverse gear towards re-segregation (Kozol, 2005; Orfield, 2004). Although - at the time - she was speaking in her capacity as the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, the present South African Minister of Education's biggest frustration was apparent when she asked the question: "Are we making progress in our schools?" (Pandor, 2004: 11). This question was directed to researchers at a school integration colloquium, to find answers through research into those challenges facing desegregation and integration in South African schools. My study is a contribution towards finding those answers.

Against this background, it is understandable that despite all efforts that are made to desegregate, learners may still not integrate and the process may revert to resegregation - although I doubt that this scenario will take place in South Africa. Re-segregation in US may be caused by - amongst other things - the fact that white Americans are in a majority. The opposite is the case in South Africa. Although most black people are still concentrated in areas where apartheid put them, they are now found everywhere in the country – this is especially true with the rise of the black middle class who can now afford to buy houses in former white residential areas and

send their children to former white schools. It is, therefore, unlikely that South Africa can be resegregated.

6.3.3. Contrast of data

There appears to be a contrast between the story told by the school documents and the story told by the sampled learners at Van Den Berg High School. The fundamental reason for this discrepancy is that the documents tell the history of the school *wie es eigentlich gewesen*[63,] while the learners tell of their own lived experiences of diversity at the school. This argument is supported by data from Van Den Berg High School which took into account the diversity of the learners who participated in the study. The findings were drawn from data from school documents; from accounts by participating learners themselves (Walford, 2001:4); as well as my own personal observations (Franzoi, 2003:5).

While being conscious of the fact that to research 'race' is to construct it - the very fact of using the concept brings it alive - it is also important to realise that ignoring race does not erase or diminish its influence (Clough and Barton, 1995). In fact, for all practical purposes, it could be asked how 'race' could possibly be ignored when it continues to haunt the lives of everyone the world over. In contrast to this finding, this study also found that learners from different racial groups at Van Den Berg are able to live together. Although a number of earlier studies in this field seem to exaggerate the impact of the history of racial separateness, in this study I am inclined to concur with Klaas that "*racial barriers based on negative racist stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings can be broken*" if people are willing to establish some common ground as a basis for constructive social engagement – which, itself, depends on greater social familiarity with the 'other' (Klaas, 2004:237).

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63 As it happened

6.3.4. Shift in mindsets

One of the important findings in this study is the inclusive way in which learners perceive, think and talk of each other as demonstrated by their use of the concepts 'we' and 'us' to refer to themselves. Quite often when the white learners and the black learners at the school say 'we', they mean both the black and the white learners of the school. This was, certainly, not the case during apartheid days and in during the period when earlier studies on school integration and desegregation were conducted. Then, when they talked of 'we' they meant only the white learners of the school with the exclusion of the 'other' - black - learners. In Naidoo's (1998) study, the Indian teachers and learners referred to the incoming African learners as 'they/them' and to themselves as 'we/us'. When Vally - an Indian boy - told me about a cricket ball that hit Shaun - a white boy - he said: "We cry when something bad happens to someone" and when I inquired about the meaning of the "we" he said: "All of us - the children in the school" (Vally.txt - 3:64 [71:72]). "'They' try to make you feel welcome" (Samantha.txt - 5:36 [74:74]); "but now 'we' love each other and 'we' are taught that the school belongs to all the learners who are registered here" (Abuja.txt - 8:108 [150:150]). Every time I asked the learners what they were referring to when they said 'we', they all answered "the learners in the school – all of them."

In prior studies 'they' were viewed as intruders who had come to invade "our" learning space and, similarly, the use of 'us' has shifted from referring to 'us - white learners' to include the black learners at Van Den Berg High School. Initially, the use of 'us' and 'them' referred to us as being the white learners and them being the black learners in the same school. They never saw themselves as members of one big family. Yet, unlike before, today 'them' refers to learners of other schools, such as visitors who come to the school to play sports. This is very evident especially during sports (OS[64] 1: 2004 September 12). This is one aspect that goes a long way to show that - though still a utopian dream in some schools - desegregation and integration is taking place amongst learners at Van Den Berg High School. It may be possible elsewhere - as long as an enabling environment is created for it to happen - which suggests that racial integration in schools cannot happen unaided.

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64. Observation Schedule

This is a shift from what Carrim found in his follow-up study. In Carrim's first study, teachers and learners of the host school referred to the incoming learners - who in most cases were black - as 'they', 'them' and to themselves as 'us' which "indicated the racially exclusivist ways in which they defined their own identities and also the predominance of assimilationism in their experiences of desegregation of their schools" (Carrim, 1998: 2). There seems to be a shift from those identities.

6.3.5. Economic impact on the process of desegregation

For economic and other reasons associated with the country's history, only certain schools - the majority of which were former Whites-only schools - have desegregated. Meanwhile all the former Blacks-only *rural and township schools are still racially segregated* in that their learner composition is still entirely black. A conclusion can thus be drawn that *factors other than a government decree to this effect may also account for lack of transformation in many schools*. Of course, such is the legacy of decades of segregation and apartheid that even the most industrious and well-intentioned education ministry can do very little - if anything - to correct the situation.

It would, indeed, be extreme optimism to expect Indian learners, Coloured learners and White learners to move to the under-resourced rural and township schools solely to change the racial composition of schools. Therefore, until the rural areas are developed into economically viable areas to attract Indian, Coloured and White residents whose children would populate the rural schools, there can be no reverse to the trend of rural, black learners migrating to former white schools. The success and failure of racial integration in South African schools must, therefore, take into account factors such as the geographical location of the schools.

In line with the above discussion, the other finding is that learners, who come from racially integrated residences, happen to get along more than those who do not. Similarly, while one could expect that the 'other' learners who joined Van Den Berg High School would want to have their first languages introduced at the school as part and parcel of the department's transformation agenda, the contrary is the case for most learners.(See discussion on 6.3.3)

6.3.6. Resistance to change followed by acceptance of change

Admittedly, the numerous flash points that are identified in Chapter 4 of this thesis, such as the stabbing incident; the case of Mrs Blou; etc., are a reflection of the tensions and the arduousness of the road to integration that many would, otherwise, rule out as a utopian dream. The foregoing are not uncommon hiccups, and could accompany any racial integration process - not dissimilar to the tensions and conflicts in other schools, such as the Babeile case; the Edgemead, Groblersdal and Potgietersrus incidents; and the Richmond, Delmas and Vryburg episodes, referred to in this study (DoE, 2006: 2).

Originally, the approach at most schools was that black learners could not be fully integrated unless they were assimilated into the white culture and white ethos - what Klaas calls "*conservative* multiculturalism, which advocated one dominant culture above other cultures" (Klaas, 2004:241). It would seem that it was almost normal in many schools to expect that only the black learners had to change and be assimilated into the existing school culture for integration to succeed. This perception would not go away unless the leadership of the school played the kind of role that the principal and the staff of Van Den Berg High School played during the critical stage in the school's metamorphosis process. An example of this is allowing black learners to have hairstyles which white learners could not have. He did not opt to force the black learners to look like white learners; instead he allowed flexibility on the hair issue.

This study has also highlighted the school's initial efforts to resist change by sticking to Afrikaans as the language of instruction. Some of the strategies to realise this objective included efforts to attract mainly coloured learners to the school. Since Coloureds are Afrikaans-speaking, the implied - yet unstated - intention was clearly to exclude black learners - particularly those from township schools. It was felt that - for various reasons - they would not be adequately prepared to learn the various subjects in Afrikaans. It should be noted that only after the strategy failed to yield the desired results, did the school decide to change to a dual-medium one that included English as the language of instruction. This move was calculated to attract white-English-speaking learners rather than African, Indian and Coloured learners. The switch from

Afrikaans-only to both English and Afrikaans represented a giant leap forward in the school's metamorphosis. This process went a long way to ensuring that - contrary to conventional rhetoric and in contrast to the views of numerous pessimists alluded to in this study - integration was within the realm of possibility.

6.3.7. The composition of staff and the curriculum

Closely analysed the approach to desegregation and ultimate integration - preferred by other schools - only went as far as admitting learners of other racial groups, while the staff composition, the curriculum and the cultural ethos remained largely intact. According to Klaas, this kind of strategy - to admit 'other' learners while maintaining the institutional structure - implied an assimilationist tendency and an unwillingness to embark on complete transformation. The retention of a traditional curriculum embedded in a white cultural ethos was a reflection of the lack of commitment by these schools to bridge the racial divide (Klaas, 2004: 240, 242). This was also the initial approach taken by Van Den Berg High School until student numbers of the 'politically correct colour' or race – i.e., white – dramatically plummeted down and the only practical strategy to boost the school's enrolment was to change the language policy to accommodate African learners as well, whereas the staff remained predominantly white. According to the principal, there are efforts to diversify the staff as well, but they fall short because the teachers of colour who apply for the advertised positions, are excellent teachers who unfortunately can teach their learning areas only in English while the situation at the school, calls for dual medium teaching. A teacher has to be able to teach the same learning area in both Afrikaans and English. This requirement for this school specifically, derails the deracialisation of staff. During an interview with the school principal, he mentioned the fact that he wrote a proposal to the education department proposing the creation of more positions of teachers so that it would be easier to include teachers who could teach learning areas in English classes only> The main aim of this proposal was to diversify the staff, because most black teachers would most unlikely be able to teach through the medium of Afrikaans.

The curriculum is no longer the choice of the school. To a large extent the Department of Education (DoE) decides what the learners must be taught. The constant curriculum changes which have their own unique problems are not the focus of this

study, but the attitude of the school towards curriculum change - as suggested by the DoE – is usually positive because immediately something new comes to the school from the Department of Education, the principal notifies the parents and begins implementing it. An example is the new Further Education and Training (FET) curriculum which - at the time of this research - was introduced in Grade 10.

In a situation such as the one prevailing at Van Den Berg High School during the period under review where learners from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds suddenly came together to share the same learning space - there were bound to be problems to contend with. The issues that gave rise to the petition and memorandum by white and black learners respectively should be seen as unavoidable outcomes of a process which sought to bring together cultures that were legally separated for decades.

6.3.8. Learners think differently from their parents

Learners usually succumb to peer-group pressure even if doing that means discriminating against another person. These behavioural patterns of discriminating against members of other racial groups are normally learned at home. However, the evidence from the learners who were part of this study shows that they view life different from what their parents do. Quite often, they react to their family restrictions and anxieties with a mixture of negotiation and rebellion. The learners are aware of what is happening around them. They know that South Africans were historically segregated according to race in terms of the schools they attended were to attend and residential areas they lived in. They show awareness - across the colour-line - that they are all human beings and, therefore, should be treated as such. For this change in thinking, they commend the principal for his Tuesday assemblies where he taught them the importance of embracing one another, despite their differences. They also commend some class projects which their teachers give them. The parents' perceptions of racial integration were clearly influenced by their past history which had been influenced and shaped by decades of apartheid policies. Hence their difficulty in accepting their children's experiences of integration at the school as demonstrated by Boipelo's friendship with Karen. Their friendship who disproved the

original idea of the school to make racial desegregation a survival imperative and not a social justice response (Jansen, 2004: 2) .

6.3.9. The issue of language

Many of the learners prefer English as a medium of instruction and will not study IsiZulu or Northern Sotho - even if these languages are offered. Katlego - one of the learners - pointed out:

> I cannot leave my rural school and pay so much school fee only to learn Northern Sotho - to which I am exposed at home. (Personal Conversations, 2005: April 12)

This sentiment was shared by many other learners, including Malose, Boipelo, Koos and others, who made it very clear that though they would welcome the introduction of their home languages at Van Den Berg High School, they would not be as excited about it as to want to have those languages as their medium of instruction. According to Boipelo, who wants to be a Minister one day, the most important thing was her command of English:

> If I have a good command of English, I will be equipped with the ability to choose more careers within and outside South Africa than one could imagine with Northern Sotho (Boipelo.txt - 16:59 [74:75]).

Thus, the continued absence of an African language at Van Den Berg High School may be viewed as one factor that limits the chances of full integration at this school. Ndimande (2006: 12) also found that most middle class African parents' choice of school is influenced by the school's use of English as a medium of instruction.

Despite the learners' comments on the learning of indigenous languages, all learners from all races show an interest in learning one another's languages. Koos - the Ndebele boy - had three friends: one white and two coloured. They often used to visit him at his home and, usually, they would swim together. Koos' dad spoke to them in IsiNdebele – an indigenous language of South Africa - and Koos translates for his friends. As time went by, the friends tried out a few IsiNdebele words. Abuja - from Nigeria - could not speak a word of Setswana – another indigenous language of South

Africa - and her friends are, mostly, Setswana-speaking. She is now able to converse in basic Setswana. All the sixteen learners - especially those who were in the English classes – could, ultimately, speak Afrikaans. Although Afrikaans was included in the school curriculum and they seemed to study it under duress, their attitude towards other languages is good. They generally want to be multilingual.

Another notable fact still on the issue of the medium of instruction is that teaching in Afrikaans in learning areas, like Accounting, is slowly disappearing. Afrikaans-speaking learners are finding themselves in the minority within specific learning areas. If the number of learners within a specific learning area is small, those learners cannot be allocated a teacher. Mostly, this happens to learners who want to study in Afrikaans. They end up choosing to attend the English classes in that particular subject because their numbers are so small that they cannot be allocated a teacher (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:8 [23:24]). Although this is against what their parents would wish, it happens and the learners are the ones who make a choice in this regard. Instead of abandoning Accountancy all together - because it is not offered in Afrikaans – Afrikaans-speaking learners choose to attend the English Accounting classes. They still do very well in the subject even though it is taught in English.

6.3.10. The role of leadership in school integration

This study has also examined how micro-level practices facilitate or hinder transformation in a specific desegregated school in South Africa. The education manager and the school governing body - together with the school community - are responsible for developing and encouraging these micro-level practices. These practices have to be in line with the national policies and legal frameworks. I have used these legal frameworks as a lens to discover what experiences learners have of racial diversity in their school.

From this study, however, it has become evident that success or failure of integration in any institution is linked to the quality of institutional leadership. Data from the learners' interviews showed that wherever integration is embraced at the highest level of school management, it can contribute to the elimination of the past racial problems and prejudices. In the case of Van Den Berg High School, *the critical role played by*

the headmaster in ensuring that the school was driven in the right direction in terms of integration cannot be overemphasised.

Usually, the learners do not see themselves in terms of colour - the school speaks of its learners as English and Afrikaans and not as black and white because there are white learners in the English group and there are black learners in the Afrikaans group (Principal. 2nd interview txt - 18:18 [48:49]).

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that emanate from the results of this study are divided between general recommendations and recommendations for further research.

6.4.1   General recommendations

6.4.1.1 Sport

The main contention in this study is that - in spite of what happened in Van Den Berg during the early years of desegregation reflected in chapter 4 above - integration is possible. Perhaps, what is particularly instructive about Van Den Berg High School's willingness to accommodate the 'other' was its active encouragement of learners to participate in different sporting codes, including soccer, which - in contrast to rugby and cricket - was believed to be mainly a black sport. The principal and the teachers recruited black learners for cricket, rugby and hockey. The school recognised the necessity of bridging the racial gaps through sport by encouraging learners to play as a team. Letters were sent to the parents of black learners requesting them to encourage their children to play cricket, tennis, rugby and hockey and to also support them in terms of buying them equipment for particular sporting activities.

The school's two soccer teams, the A and the B teams combined consisted of 27 players which were racially representative. Although the school concentrated on diversity, they encouraged voluntary participation and also opted for excellence from the participants. In 2005, one would still find four white players in a soccer team of eleven players and no Indian player. These figures should be analysed with the learner

composition of the whole school, where amongst the black learners Africans, together with white learners were in a majority.

As demonstrated in the study, team spirit was inculcated in various ways - without making an issue of racial and cultural differences of the learners. Everyone saw himself/herself as a 'Bergie' on whose shoulders the responsibility lay to make the school proud. The following statement by Thando sums this up:

> You know it is your school and you want to excel, for your own sake, for your schools' sake and for the sake of the country, or even for the sake of the other learners at the school (Thando.txt - 14:135 [306:307]).

The use of sport in terms of racial integration can be problematic because of its role in relation to assimilation, but sport is, nonetheless, important in that it creates possibilities and moments for physical racial integration (Klaas, 2004:243). All sport codes in Van Den Berg High School were, during the time of this research, desegregated. It is recommended that schools that embark on a desegregation and integration processes should consider using sports as a tool to achieve that goal. Van Den Berg School has demonstrated that, with proper support and commitment from the school, sport can be used as a rallying point for learners to overcome racial tendencies. The schools should encourage learners from different racial groups to participate in sport. The process should not stop at encouragement; the spirit of patriotism for the school should be inculcated into the learners by using rewards for participation while opting for excellence. .

6.4.1.2. Staffing issues and integration

Desegregation and integration challenges can also manifest themselves at the level of staffing where with the desegregation of learners which is not accompanied by desegregation of staff, white staff might continue to exhibit racist practices which might provoke responses from parents of minority groups. In this case, it is recommended that such complaints/concerns be sensitively handled by leadership of the school or the concerned staff. The success in handling these would result in success in mitigating the effects of such complaints.

For practical reasons, the teachers - who had not been taught how to handle and work within a multicultural environment - should be forgiven for failing to deal with a situation which caught many unprepared. In the light of this, I recommend *teacher training that takes cognisance of the student composition* (Nieto, 2006: 9) so that teachers stop operating from an ignorant *perspective regarding learners as the same* and of always blaming the victim (Kailin, 1998: 34). Hence, it is not surprising that failing to meet some of the challenges of an unfolding multicultural environment, the predominantly white teachers at Van Den Berg High School were accused of racism in black learner petitions. What is, in fact, surprising is that such concerns and accusations were professionally handled and dealt with - thanks to the ability of the headmaster who rose to the occasion and resolved the matter to the satisfaction of all parties, although compromises were also made.

Desegregated schools should also desegregate the staff in order to harmonise the different cultures within a school (Sleeter: 2001: 4). I have already alluded to the fact that I do not suggest that only black teachers can teach black learners. If this was the case, it would not have been possible for the white teachers to teach black learners. If white teachers can teach black learners, then black teachers can also teach white learners. Actually, any teacher, with a relevant type of training is able to teach any type of learners. A teacher is also a carrier of culture. The cultural ethos of the school will change if there are teachers from other racial groups. One of the learners I interviewed alluded to this by saying:

> I do not want to sound racist here, but I don't know how else I can put it. I think white kids are friends with white teachers and black kids would also, maybe, like someone they will be friends with, the teachers they can be friends with. I really think it will make a difference if there are black teachers (Karen.txt - 12:116 [279:281]).

Karen's statement means that there are issues of culture that may be better understood by a teacher of the same background and culture of the learners rather than by white teachers. Ladson-Billings' research also revealed an important issue to support this argument. She discovered that the best teachers for the kids of colour come from the kids' communities (Ladson-Billings: 1997: 210).

6.4.1.3 School name change

The process of change that takes place against the background of racial oppression and domination sometimes requires changes that could signal a move away from the past to embrace the future. Name change is one of symbolic gestures that could be effected to signal this change. It is recommended that where this is chosen as an option, there should be proper consultation with the relevant stakeholders associated with that institution or process. Once there is support for that change, name change should be effected. It should be further recognised as it was the case at Van den Berg High School that there may be those who resist the process, and may use financial constraints as reasons to block change. In such cases, the decision to effect change should also be accompanied by the deployment of resources to realise that change.

According to the learners a name does not make integration a 'mission impossible'. Such concerns serve to show that it takes more than just institutional commitment to change in order for change to take place. With regard to change, it is important to note that the school - as an institution - was both willing and eager to change the name of Van Den Berg High School, in line with the political transformation sweeping through the country from 1994. Be that as it may and, perhaps, armed with Mandela's response in this connection, one parent suggested that the name issue should not - in any way - be viewed as a factor impacting on integration. I recommend that in line with trends in the country, especially where the community agrees on the name change, in the way that the Van Den Berg community did, the name should be changed. Although the SGB gave financial constraints as a reason to not changing the school's name, it could have been done if there was commitment. This issue raised unpalatable questions amongst the school community.

6.4.1.4 Desegregated residential areas

According to the data, learners who are best friends and play together after school come from same residential areas. Although social transformation is not the responsibility of schools alone, it is obvious that schools play a key role in the process of deracialisation, desegregation and integration. In shared social space which the

school provides, learners are forced to socialise and be exposed to one another way of doing things, values and mannerism. Hence what happens in schools matter, and matter enormously; the choices young people make depend crucially on their experiences of schooling, including the experience of living with others or living with difference (Jansen, 2004: 16).

The school cannot do this alone and requires the community to assist in enhancing the process of integration and attainment of social cohesion. In this case, desegregated residential areas play an important role as the experiences of learners in the school could be extended to their communities and vice versa. Although it may seem out of reach of this research, it is recommended that South Africa should create systems that cater for residentially mixed communities. Communities should be mixed in terms of race and class where possible.

6.4.1.5. Diversity learning programmes

Diversity programmes play an important role in desegregation and integration processes and they expose learners to all kinds of experiences and inculcation of values which have not been part of the past experiences. It is recommended that such programmes should not only be targeted to the leadership or Leaner Representative Council but should involve all learners in the school. The teaching of diversity issues should also underpin all teaching and learning as well as incorporated in other school projects. The seating patterns in a classroom, which the teachers were encouraging at Van Den Berg, attest to some innovations that could be embarked upon in the quest to promote integration.

6.4.1.6 Virtues in a diverse environment

As Banks (2004) argues, respect, understanding, acceptance and tolerance of difference, celebration of sameness, unconditional love, care, appreciation of the other form the basis of a successful diverse environment. Nkomo *et al* (2004) add social justice to the whole list and a human rights culture in a school to enhance living

together. Desegregated schools should also start with the process of accepting that learners are different and follow up with the inculcation of the mentioned values. If the need arises policies should be drawn at school level to promote these values.

6.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The following recommendations are made concerning further research:

- Research should be conducted into diversity in rural schools which have not desegregated because - even though they are one-race schools - they also encounter problems of discrimination in terms of ethnic stereotypes.

- Another important area for future research should be the role of the manager/principal in shaping a school's desegregation and integration process There was insufficient time or space in a thesis on "the experiences of diversity in a South African public school" to dwell on the importance of the school management in the entire process - except to show how significant the principal has been in this particular school. Although my focus has been on the learners' lived experiences of diversity, I could not underestimate the principal's role in the process.

- Research should be conducted into the experiences of black teachers who are teaching at former White, Indian or Coloured schools. The experiences of the white teachers, who for the first time have to work with black colleagues, also need to be explored. Knowledge of their experiences will shed more light on the debate on school integration and staff desegregation, in particular.

- Research on the experiences of white teachers who are teaching at township and rural schools and white learners in such schools will shed more light on - and show a more complete picture of - how desegregation is unfolding at South African schools.

- The topic and reasons concerning African learners who do not want their mother tongues to be taught at their schools, also warrants investigation.

- Learners who are taught in their own language could be expected to pass with flying colours, but amongst the top ten learners in most of the classes at Van Den Berg High School, were learners from the English second language classes. What happened to the learners who are taught in their first language -

Afrikaans in this case - or the English first language learners? Does teaching in one's first language affect one's results? This should also be investigated.

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APPENDIX 6

Kaleidoscope of desegregation in most South African Schools

a. Learners from a township primary school 15 kilometers from the city of Pretoria

b. Learners from a primary school in the Eastern side of the city of Pretoria

c. These are learners at the same school, but put in different classes according to their colour

IN BLACK AND WHITE: Black pupils in their classroom, left, and a class made up overwhelmingly of white children, right

Pictures: JACKIE CLAUSEN

PICTURE: KENDRIDGE MATHABATHE

d. Learners from a 'Muslim' school

The faces of teachers at most desegregated schools in South Africa

Appendix 7 Demographics of learners at Van Den Berg

EMIS NUMBER:

2.3.1. Number of learners (excluding LSEN) according to race, gender and grade

Grade	African		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Other		Total		Grade Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Pre-Grade R													
Grade R													
Grade 1													
Grade 2													
Grade 3													
Grade 4													
Grade 5													
Grade 6													
Grade 7													
Grade 8	21	38	3	7	1		63	55			88	100	188
Grade 9	23	34	5	7	1		49	51			78	92	170
Grade 10	38	37	2	5		1	54	46			94	89	183
Grade 11	33	52	3	1	4		34	43			74	96	170
de 12	20	28	1	2			36	45			57	75	132
st Matric													
TOTAL	135	189	14	22	6	1	236	240			391	452	843

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