

**MAPPING NON-WHITE EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES IN CHANGED  
RACIAL CONTEXTS**

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## DECLARATION

I, Reena Devi Raghoonanan, declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research study to my husband, Addy Behari, who has given me support and encouragement throughout my years of studying. I thank my children Sayuri and Akshi for being patient and giving me the time which I so desperately needed. I appreciated the consistent and warm presence of my dog, Freeby, who has made every computer workout a tail-wagging occasion.

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## ABSTRACT

President Mandela, in his inaugural speech of 1994, inscribed the metaphor of a rainbow nation as encapsulating and expounding the principles of democracy. The metaphor of a rainbow also thrived in the apartheid era but here all colours of the rainbow converged into white light, uplifting the dominant positions of white people to the detriment of other race groups. In post-apartheid democracy the divergent colours of the rainbow underpin democracy, equity, diversity and equal participation for all people in South Africa. Hence, it becomes critical to monitor changed racial contexts to evaluate the move towards social justice in a country torn apart by past racial divisions, oppression and inequalities, which had been cemented into subjugation and subordination of non-whites. While racial segregation and inequities typified the education system, in the apartheid era, democracy has opened doors for interracial contact in the school environment.

In the light of revolutionary changes, dictated by a political agenda, this study focused on experiences of educators in changed racial contexts. It takes into consideration newly formed interracial contact amongst educators in schools and concentrates, specifically, on non-white educators taking up positions in a formerly white-only school. Four non-white educators participated in interviews about their experiences in a racially changed teaching environment. It explored the critical question of non-white educators' perceptions and understandings of their experiences in a formerly white-only school. Critical argument is provided for the choice of non-white educators only.

The findings suggest critical awareness of race and acts of racism amongst non-white educators in this particular school context. It unravelled the subtle and insidious forms of racism into themes while exploring relationships among white and non-white educators in a specific school site. It provided evidence that schools are hot spots for racism amongst educators and explored notions of ambivalence, progressiveness, the reconstruction of identities and spatial fights.

## PREAMBLE

My personal experiences, entrenched in an apartheid system, directed the formation of my identity. Demarcated spatial areas ensured that I lived in an Indian area, played on specific beaches, hung onto fences staring into privileged and wonderful spaces for whites-only and my early reading experiences continually reinforced by the “WHITES ONLY” signs which littered our cities. I was so obsessed with no-go privileged areas, which barred me entrance, that I failed to notice the sparse and substandard spaces created for blacks. I trotted past these areas without a second glance.

I attended an Indian-only school and after school I played with my Indian neighbours on the road. I interacted with only Indian people at tertiary level. On completion of my studies I proceeded to teach in an Indian-only school, with desegregation coming very much later. I interacted within the Indian culture on a daily basis and this was a normality, which did not need questioning. It is these incidences, which have unconsciously constructed my racial lenses for the major part of my life. This limited my interaction with other race groups to a very superficial level and reinforced the idea of difference.

As an educator in a desegregated school, I embarked on a range of questions to better understand my position and experiences within the school. I began to ask questions on race and racism. I forged ahead to find out who I was in this racially changed context. I constructed and defined myself in new and different ways. I constantly re-positioned myself as an Indian, female, heterosexual educator in a formerly white-only school. While I placed myself at a subordinated level through race and gender, it was essential that I simultaneously acknowledged the various ways in which I had power and privilege. This is attained from class, location, and educational level. My position as a minority provided me with an insight to the many challenges faced by non-white educators who were outside the majority culture. I could not stand apart from the social, political and historical factors, which moulded me and lay claims to the objectivity of an “outsider.” It is against this backdrop that I engage in this study.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### CHANGING CONTEXTS, CHANGING EXPERIENCES: AN INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In 1994 the boundaries separating different race groups in educational contexts collapsed. Many educators were transferred to multi-racial environments for the first time in their teaching careers. This spurred the arrival of non-white educators onto the plains of formerly white-only schools manned by white educators only. The outcome was a changed teaching context where educators had, for the first time, begun teaching amongst colleagues of different race groups. Changing contexts, such as the one cited in this study have become the focus of interest and a site for interrogation by those directed by the principles of social justice (Kitano, 1991 and Ndebele, 2001 and Ramphela 2001a, 2001b). This study seeks to explore the experiences of non-white educators in a formerly white-only school in Durban.

This chapter offers an introduction to the idea of change. It focuses on the transition from apartheid to democracy and its impact on education. It provides a rationale for the study and examines the issues of desegregation, the researchers personal experiences, the discrepancies between policy and practice, the expanding literature on the impact of whiteness on people of colour, gaps in research concerning desegregation amongst educators in South Africa and the importance of focussing on non-white educators in changed racial contexts. This study focuses on the experiences of four non-white educators in a formerly white-only school. The critical question investigates how do non-white educators perceive and understand their experiences in a formerly white-only school? Interviews were used to unearth experiences of non-white educators. This chapter also illustrates the dilemma surrounding the choice of the term “non-white” and the inevitability of its continued use.

#### **1.2 Changed Colour Divisions**

Prior to 1994, South Africa was an apartheid state typified by racial segregation. Racial divisions, oppression and inequality cemented the foundation for domination and subjugation among racial groups (Steyn, 2001). A distinct set of social

relationships, based on racial identity, determined who got what. This became the gatekeeper to stratification in jobs, food, housing, health care, education and political clout (Powell, 2001). It created a fragmented education system and perpetuated the social distance between and amongst people. In education this distance was clearly outlined in separate educational systems for the different race groups. During these years, whites held the dominant position in society and benefited enormously from the unequal distribution of national resources (Vally and Dalamba, 1999).

The long and hazardous fight against apartheid ended in 1994 and saw the rising of democracy epitomized in the appointment of Mr. Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected president of South Africa. The inherited education system, a sad reflection of exclusion and subordination of non-whites, was no longer congruent with the new constitution. A new political dispensation evolved which articulated changing educational principles, in accordance with the values of democracy. Le Roux (1998) emphasized the need for changing structures and sectors, which upheld the new vision. He described the new vision as being egalitarian, emphasizing human worth by bracing equity, redress, autonomy, access and mobility. With democracy as the compass needle, it pointed to the delivery and creation of a new society and educational system eradicating divisions, subjugation and inequalities. It became imperative to address the discrepancies in education and break down barriers that perpetuated and maintained inequalities.

One such initiative was Rationalization and Redeployment of staff. It attempted to deal with inequalities of staffing between the various schools and was driven by the Post Provisioning Norms as set out by the education department. Taking this staffing norm into consideration, many educators were declared in excess at their current schools. Most discussions during this period centered on meeting the inequities between the urban and rural areas, where there was a shortage of qualified educators and resources. The process of rationalization and redeployment also underpinned the movement of non-white educators into formerly white-only schools and assuming positions to which they were previously denied access. This was made possible by the Employment Equity Act. HRM circular (No. 51 of 1998:9) iterated the position of the department as an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. It stipulated, "to meet the needs of the requirements of the Equity Employment Act, the school

governing bodies should utilize the redeployment process to address an imbalance.” This led to revolutionary changes in the racial compositions of educators in schools. Lewin (1991) identified “revolutionary change” in education as a total break from the past, bringing to the fore something new and completely different and “evolutionary change” as building on existing practices values and needs. Changed racial contexts in schools supported a revolutionary change with political underpinnings. Educators attached new and different meanings to their experiences. The change did not only mean learners having teachers of different races but educators, themselves, working with a racially diverse staff in new and varied contexts. Thus, revolutionary changes have pushed educators out of “comfort zones” created by the apartheid monster and made changed racial contexts a possibility. Social distance between racial groups was slowly replaced with interracial contact and shared working environments. Schools moved towards becoming multiracial. New and different identities were forged. Erasmus (2001), James and Lever (2001), Powell (2001), Ramphele (2001a), Ramphele (2001b) and Steyn (2001) are some of the researchers who have investigated these newly evolving racially integrated environments in social justice studies.

It is clear from research that apartheid cannot simply blend into the mirage of democracy. Ramphele (2001a) points out that South Africans had to confront the depth of inferiority and superiority complexes, which had its roots in 350 years of racism. Ndebele (2001:14) supports Ramphele (2001a):

Perhaps the most serious manifestation of racism on its victims is how much they have internalized it to the extent that they may continue to experience and exhibit low self-concept long after the institutionalized forms of racism which have induced this negative self-concept have disappeared.

Ndebele (2001) elucidates the need to acknowledge the negative outcomes of apartheid and the mark, which it has left on its victims. “The legacy of racism and the deep structural inequalities that are part of the postapartheid landscape” continue to direct South Africa’s transition to democracy (Ramphele, 2001b: 63). Therefore the historical patterns of racism in South Africa impacts on how educators have internalized racist attitudes, which they may continue to exhibit and experience in desegregated schools. The extent to which each educator has internalized information on apartheid, prejudices and racial issues will impact on the manner in which they

evaluate their experiences in the school. Powell (2001:380) iterates “that such experiences play a crucial role in creating and shaping the self and individual and shared identities.” Razack (1998) iterates that marginalized individuals live, experience and interact in a world moulded by racial hierarchy. Hence, Powell (2001:387), in writing about racism in the United States of America, South Africa and Brazil, supports Razack (1998) in maintaining that “identities and realities take on certain assumptions, expectations and norms along racial lines.” The majority of educators themselves initially attended schools and eventually taught in schools with homogeneous race groups. Educators, in this study, entered these multiracial school contexts as racialized, gendered and classed individuals.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Research Study**

The rationale for undertaking this study is multifold. Spurred by an interest in issues of race and racism, I will discuss the following issues on which my rationale is constructed.

- ❑ Issues of desegregation;
- ❑ The researcher’s experiences;
- ❑ The discrepancy between policy and practice;
- ❑ Expanding literature on the impact of whiteness;
- ❑ Gaps in research; and
- ❑ The need to focus on marginalized educators.

#### ***(i) Issues of Desegregation***

Desegregation of schools initiated racial changes in school contexts. However, whites still hold the majority of teaching posts at formerly white-only schools. According to Balkaran (2004), in a baseline study of educator desegregation in KwaZulu Natal, formerly white-only schools consist of only 517 African educators, 462 Asian educators and 95 Coloured educators. Vally and Dalamba (1999:26) point out that “only learner composition has changed” and had estimated that “close to 98% of educator staff in formerly white-only schools remain white.” Sujee (2003) pointed out numerous formerly white-only schools in Gauteng with a majority of black learners who are taught by a predominantly white staff. One needs to examine the nature of desegregation at formerly white-only schools. Vally and Dalamba (1992:22) state that:

Many researchers describe desegregation as a mechanical process that involves simply establishing the physical proximity of members of different groups in the same school, without interrogating the quality of the contact.

These changed contexts needed examination to understand how educators, specifically non-white educators in this study, perceived their experiences within the school. Increasing racial proximity amongst educators does not automatically guarantee diminished racial inequalities. An interrogation of this context was needed to determine whether superficial relationships were established.

### ***(ii) Researcher's Experience***

The researcher's employment as a non-white educator in a formerly white-only school has given her an opportunity to evaluate the context through her own personal experiences as well as through collaboration with her non-white peers. Interactions within the school began to point to various questions concerning race and racism. Non-white educator's reluctance to conform to a context of whiteness initiated the recognition that they are each implicated in "systems of oppressions" (Razack, 1998) that direct their understanding of their experiences. The politics of race and representations of social difference came into focus. Spurred by the notions of justice, equality and equal opportunity, it became necessary to investigate these racially changed environments to understand how interracial contact within the school and among the educators get manifested.

### ***(iii) Policy and Practice***

Although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the Schools Act of South Africa (1996) provide strong support for equality and diversity in schools, examination of changed racial contexts could reveal insidious forms of racism. The Constitution provides a firm foundation for the recognition of "human dignity" and the "achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights" (Section 1 (a) of the Constitution, 1996). The preamble to the South African Schools Act (1996) states:

WHEREAS the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation; and WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress the past injustices in educational provision.....advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination.

The possibility of discrepancies between policy and practice provided the catalyst for an investigation into this changed racial context. Ramphela (2001b: 63), focussing on combating racism in South Africa, maintain that “the country faces a major challenge in living up to its own constitutional commitments.” James and Lever (2001:50) support Ramphela (2001b) by iterating that despite “deinstitutionalized” racism in South Africa “it would of course be naïve to conclude that racism and racial hostility have disappeared.” Breaking down structures in support of non-racism does not automatically eradicate racism. Jordan (2001:12) states, “Uprooting racism will also entail unlearning centuries of racial prejudices and altering the mindsets in which such prejudices are embedded.” Essed (1991) explored the notion “everyday racism,” as entrenching itself in our daily practices and serves to reproduce and sustain systems of domination. James and Lever (2001:50) also explored the notion of “modern racism” in South Africa as incorporating “sporadic everyday incidences” which upholds racist behaviour.

#### ***(iv) Gaps in Research***

Literature on the impact of whiteness on other racial groups is growing within the discourse of education (Dyer, 2000; Flagg, 1997; Kivel, 2002; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Razack, 1998 and Richardson, 2000). Examination of texts written by the above mentioned authors provided strong support for this particular study as it examined the experiences of marginalized individuals in the context of whiteness. A critical evaluation of whiteness provided an apt description of how whiteness, consciously and unconsciously, function to subordinate and subjugate other race groups. Paul Kivel (2002) in his book “*Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work For Racial Justice*” encouraged and guided white individuals to identify the privileges of whiteness and understand how it works to the detriment of other race groups. Schools are substantive sites for the analysis of the effects of whiteness on the experiences and perceptions of subordinate groups. An understanding of how relations of domination and subordination direct and regulate encounters of non- white educators in formerly white-only schools thus became essential.

A literature search revealed an abundance of research studies on race and racism among learners in schools (Vally & Dalamba, 1999; O’ Neil, 1997/1998; Soudien, 1994; Moletsane, 1999; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; Shepherd, 1999; Harber, 1998,

and Dolby, 2000, 2001). Vally & Dalamba (1999) provided a comprehensive account of racial tension in ninety schools, ten from each province. Despite its large scale, it focussed predominantly on learners. Harber (1998) in his article “*Desegregation, Racial Conflict and Education for Democracy in the New South Africa*” like other racial studies in schools, did not explore the possibilities of racial tensions amongst educators. He examined the mechanical process of desegregation of learners as opposed to a concerted effort of integration through democratisation of management structures in order to instil democratic values in one school in South Africa. O’ Neil (1997/1998) wrote about “*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together.*” Moletsane (1999:31) reviews “the different ways in which South African schools are responding to diversity in education and the extent to which those responses are adequately addressing the needs of all learners.” Soudien (1994:283) attempted to “identify emergent trends in schools and their classrooms with respect to race.” Lawrence and Tatum (1997) focussed on the impact of antiracism on classroom practice. The above-mentioned researchers focussed the impact of desegregation on learners excluding racial dynamics amongst educators. A literature search revealed that there is a gap in research on experiences of educators in desegregated schools in South Africa. Since the researcher could not find information on experiences of educators amongst a desegregated staff, she had to utilize literature on a general theorizing of race and racism to overcome this gap in research and form a conceptual framework.

#### ***(v) Marginalized Educators***

The experiences of marginalized non-white educators have special validity in the process of knowledge production concerning race and racialized practices. Sefa Dei (2000:36) iterates that “oppressed voices enriches and strengthens critical race studies of personal experiences... It also requires an interrogation of the system supporting white privilege and dominance.” It relates to the daily adversities that educators of colour have to confront and the impact that it has on their experiences. This study uncovered experiences of non-white educators in a formerly white-only school with a view to identifying problematic areas, possible sources of inequalities, successes and possibilities for change. Here, voice became the vehicle through which the researcher analysed the openness, engagement, and dynamic nature of this changed racial context in this school.



#### **1.4 Focus of the Study**

This study deals with the impact of changed racial contexts of schools on educators, as a result of desegregation. It specifically investigates the experiences of four non-white educators in a formerly white-only school.

#### **1.5 Critical Questions**

Recognizing the need to uncover the exact nature of the engagement of non-white educators in predominantly white environments, it became imperative to ask questions, which yielded greater understanding into the individual experiences of non-white educators. The critical question, which encapsulated this study, was:

- How do non-white educators perceive and understand their experiences in formerly white-only schools?

#### **1.6 Synopsis of the Methodology**

This research is a qualitative study of the experiences of non-white educators in previously predominantly white schools. This study focuses on the period 1999 to June 2004. Interviews were conducted to uncover responses to the critical question. This research method is a qualitative inquiry, more specifically a social inquiry, of interracial contact at the school level. The validity of the research has been ensured through repeated interviews and clarification of responses through cross-questioning.

#### **1.7 Difficulties with Terminology**

The researcher experienced difficulty in trying to categorize educators who were not white under one umbrella term. The term non-white was inappropriate as it portrayed educators in terms of their lack of whiteness. The term “black” on the other hand was just as unsuitable as it included a variety of educators who were Indian, coloured and black. It also supported the negative connotations underpinning the black/white binary paradigm. Perea (2000:346) in support of criticisms against the notion that only blacks and whites are prominent players in the debate about race states:

I define this paradigm as the conception that race in America consists, either exclusively or primarily, of only two constituent racial groups, the Black and the White. Many scholars reproduce this paradigm when they write and act as though only the Black and the White races matter for discussing race and social policy.

According to Dyer (2000:543) the term “people of colour”, on the other hand insinuated that subordinated groups have colour while whites do not. Ultimately, the term non-white, as disagreeable as it may appear, was the only term, which could provide the umbrella for all educators of colour. In this study blacks, Indians, and coloureds are categorized as non-whites. The negative connotation of this term was eliminated by focussing on individual experiences of non-white educators and creating individual profiles for each educator. The notion that they exist and perceive their experiences within the school as a homogenous group was eradicated.

### **1.8 Format of the Dissertation**

Chapter one introduced the idea of change in schools in the post-apartheid era and outlined the context of the research problem. It highlighted the need for an investigation into non-white educators’ experiences in formerly white-only schools. It provided a brief discussion of the methodology and underpinned the difficulties of using the term “non-white.” The researcher’s position as a non-white educator in a formerly white-only school has been declared.

The second chapter provides a discussion of concepts used in this research study and provides a literature review, which forms the conceptual framework. It interrogates the concept “whiteness” and its power to subjugate minority groups. Current literature on race and racism is synthesized within the research problem.

The qualitative research method and its effectiveness in a social inquiry are explored in the third chapter. It includes a description of the school and educators in the sample. It outlines interviews as the research tool and provides a composite list of semi-structured questions used during the interviews. It provides a detailed discussion and supporting evidence for the choice on non-white educators only. Issues of validity are investigated.

The fourth and penultimate chapter focuses on the results of the experiences of non-white educators in this research study. It incorporates an analysis of the qualitative data obtained from interviews. The main findings are presented in themes to explore the critical question: How do non-white educators perceive and understand their experiences in a formerly white-only school?

Chapter five encompasses a discussion of findings presented in the previous chapter. It explores the notion of progressive and ambivalent educators. It acknowledges the fluidity of identity and the possibility of changed racial contexts leading to new and different questions about the self. It presents the idea of spatial fights between racial groups in schools. This chapter also provides the limitations of this study, possible future research and a conclusion to the research study.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

In a post apartheid era, this study is important because it focuses on dynamic interracial contact in racially changed school contexts. Its value, from a social justice perspective, is vital as it seeks to understand the power relations in these contexts. This study represents the voice of non-white educators and articulates their lived experiences in a predominantly white context. It provides an understanding into changed racial educational contexts and serves to inform significant role-players about pertinent issues of multiracial schools.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A THEORETICAL REVIEW: UNEARTHING RACISM

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Humans undertake their daily routines with little regard to the impact of race on their lives. Sometimes they remain oblivious to their positions of power and how they, themselves, have the potential to dominate or be subjugated. This chapter will highlight essential aspects of this discourse and seek to focus, through a review process, the positions of non-whites in society and contrast it with whiteness. Due to the lack of research available on desegregation of educators in South Africa, the researcher will focus on a general theorizing of race in order to form a conceptual framework.

Definitions of concepts used in the research will precede a discussion of multiple systems of oppressions, a deconstruction of the concept whiteness and how it is maintained in society in the form of colour-blind approaches supporting subordination and domination, and critical exploration of diversity and tolerance. It will highlight how non-whites are overlooked, stigmatized and subjugated in society and considers the role of conflict in resisting racism. The argument being presented is that changed racial compositions of educators in schools are located within a context of stratified power, which has its roots in the apartheid system. It acknowledges that the notion of race and identity is a fluid one.

#### **2.2 Definition of Concepts**

There are various concepts or terms, which need to be defined in order to promote understanding of the research study. The terms race, racism, whiteness, groups, prejudice and interracial contact will be defined in the next section.

##### **2.2.1 Race, Racism and Whiteness**

- **Race:** According to Solomos & Back (1996) race refers to a human construct, an ideology which upholds regulatory power in society. Wildman & Davis (1997:314) point out that “race” is often defined in terms of black and white, sometimes it is defined as white and “of colour”. They iterate that although these

categories may appear “neutral on their face”, “these words mask a system of power, and that system privileges whiteness.” In this study blacks, coloureds and Indians will be categorized as non-whites.

- **Racism:** Goduka and Swadener (1999:37) view racism as a “system of privilege and penalty emanating from one’s race” and having two facets. These two facets are a belief in the “inherent superiority of some people and the inherent inferiority of others” and goods, services, respect and dignity are allocated in accordance with these judgements. Sefa Dei (2000) acknowledges the historical basis of racism and constructs it as being more than an ideology and structure. This acknowledges the complex nature of racism. Longres & Seltzer (1994) supports this notion by ascribing racism to policies, processes and procedures of formal and informal social systems rather than to a single action of the individual. Essed (1991) discusses the concept of “everyday racism” where the micro daily practices contribute and build on macro structures to reproduce and sustain systems of domination and subjugation. James & Lever (2000:50) in writing about “*The Second Republic: Race, Inequality, and Democracy in South Africa*” focussed on modern racism as an outcome of “deinstitutionalized” racism and defined it as “sporadic everyday incidents and rearguard actions in association and community life”
  
- **Whiteness:** Richardson (2000) refers to whiteness as an ideology, a social construct, that determines how white people in society perceive and relate to black people and other people of colour. This research study is couched in a context of whiteness. A formerly white-only school, with a majority white staff, is the site of investigation.

The above definitions erase the neutrality of the terms ‘race’ and ‘whiteness’ and acknowledges its power to stratify people. It brings to the fore that the principles of democracy do not automatically lead to equity and fairness.

### 2.2.2 Groups, Prejudice and Interracial Contact

- **Groups:** Healey (2003:9-10) describes minority groups where membership is defined at birth, members experience a pattern of disadvantage or inequality, share a visible trait or characteristic that differentiates it from other groups and is a self-conscious social unit. The group does not have to be necessarily numerically small. Healey (2003:9-10) iterates that “In South Africa, as in many other nations created by European colonization, whites are a numerical minority (less than 30% of the population), but despite recent changes, they remain the more powerful and affluent group.” It has more to do with the distribution of resources and power rather than with simple numbers. (Healey, 2003:10) views the dominant group as the group, “which benefits from and tries to sustain the unequal arrangement.” In the context of this study whites are the dominant group.
  
- **Prejudice:** Devine (1995:486) defines prejudice as “negative feelings towards persons based solely on their group memberships.” and views discrimination as acting out of prejudice by “expressing ones negative thoughts and feelings in terms of negative behaviours.” Healey (2003:25) maintains that:

Individual prejudice has two aspects: the **cognitive**, or thinking, aspect and the **affective**, or feeling, part. A prejudiced person thinks about other groups in terms of **stereotypes**, generalizations that are thought to apply to group members. Examples of familiar stereotypes include notions such as “blacks are lazy”
  
- **Interracial contact:** Pellebon (2000: 10) conceptualizes interracial contact as “an individual’s perception of intergroup association, group interdependence and equal treatment in school.” He sees school policy, authority figure’s attitudes and behaviour being crucial in directing interracial contact. In this study interracial contact in previously white-only schools is being investigated.

Dynamics within and amongst groups are very powerful in directing interracial contact. Prejudices can either be broken down or reinforced to strengthen barriers between racial groups. The above discussion served as an introduction to the concepts used in this study.

### **2.3 Literature review**

There is a gap in research on the impact of desegregation amongst educators in changed racial contexts in South Africa. Thus, the literature review will focus on common discourses in racism and will include the following topics:

- ❑ Multiplex systems of oppression;
- ❑ The domination model;
- ❑ Interrogating whiteness;
- ❑ The non-neutrality of race-neutrality;
- ❑ Towards a kaleidoscope;
- ❑ Black is same, black is less;
- ❑ Considering conflict; and
- ❑ Managers of colour.

The above-mentioned topics will be used to develop a conceptual framework for the notion of race.

#### **2.3.1 Multiplex Systems of Oppressions**

It is imperative to acknowledge that the experiences of non-white educators are complex and cannot be understood in a linear fashion. Experiences within the school cannot be the outcome of race alone.

Lopez (2000) rejects the “common sense” approach to race underpinned in a set of interpretative codes and racial meanings, which is evident in interactions of daily life. She iterates that this means shifting from a competitive, dichotomous, simplistic black-white binary approach to a more inclusive one and refocusing on the relational aspects of race and difference. Therefore, seeing non-white educators in respect of colour only is not sufficient in understanding their experiences within the school. Bhana (1999: 22) states that “focusing on race alone will not capture the realities of difference...A focus on race precludes the possibilities of other forms of oppression.” Sefa Dei (2000) and Franklin (2001) caution that the full impact of the social aspects of race must be understood in the intersection of all other forms of social oppression and privileges. The intersection between race, class, gender, religion, (Arriola, 2000 and Kivel, 2002) age, educational level, location, physical ability and sexual orientation (Arriola, 2000) cannot be ignored in a richer analysis of race. Wildman

and Davis (1997) point out “no individual really fits into any one category, rather, everyone resides at the intersection of many categories.” One should take cognizance of interrelating factors creating unique, compounding patterns of discrimination, which affect educators’ special social identities. Razack (1998:12) maintains that it is essential to explore the interrelating factors in a historical and site-specific way as they come together to structure individuals’ in “different and shifting positions of power and privilege.” Perea (2000) iterates that mentioning marginalized individuals of colour without careful attention to their voices, histories and presence, becomes a reassertion of the black/white paradigm. Bishop (1994) cited in Sefa Dei (2000:30) emphasizes that “oppressions do not necessarily operate in the same way or at the same time.” These oppressions inform, constrain, shape and direct experiences.

Consequently, experiences of educators cannot be viewed as homogenous or related to race only. What this actually means is that the experiences of black male educator from an upper class background are fundamentally different from a black female educator from a middle class background. The female educator experiences gender and class subjugation although they share the same racial category. Therefore, both educators, although they belong to the non-white group, are not equal in power. Power differences between the dominant and subjugated groups need to be acknowledged. The next section will focus on the domination model (Kitano,1991:49), which will be used to understand how uneven stratification is maintained between the dominated and the dominant group.

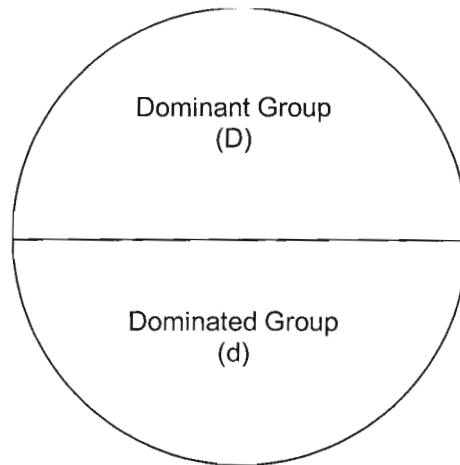
### **2.3.2 The Domination Model**

Kitano (1991:48-49) illustrates the domination model (Figure 2.1) as a tool to understand domination and subjugation. Unequal stratification in the domination model is based on the premise that dominant group members (D) are superior to dominated group members (d). This stratification is reinforced through boundary-maintenance mechanisms. The table outlines that actions (prejudice, discrimination, and segregation) produces mechanisms (stereotypes laws and norms) which are used to subjugate and has the resultant effects of avoidance, disadvantage and isolation. The domination model outlines the possible subjugation of non-whites. In this study the domination model will be used to analyse and understand the experiences of non-white educators. Some of the themes, which have been outlined, will be compared to



the domination model. The following diagram elucidates the power positions of dominant groups over dominated groups.

**Figure 2.1: Model of Domination**



**Table 2.1: The Effects of Privileged Positions of Dominant Groups over Dominated Groups**

<b>BARRIERS</b>			
	Actions	Mechanism	Effects
Common	1. Prejudice	Stereotypes	Avoidance
Actions	2. Discrimination	Laws, Norms	Disadvantage
	3. Segregation	Laws, Norms	Isolation

(Kitano, 1991:49)

The above table outlines how actions and mechanisms act in ways to produce particular effects which sustains the privileged positions of dominant groups over less powerful groups.

### 2.3.3 Interrogating Whiteness

Since the school in this study is a formerly white-only school, whiteness plays a very significant role in contextualizing the school site. This supports the investigation into the concept of whiteness as it impacts on the lived experiences of non-white educators. Creating open and equal opportunities in formerly white-only schools, which postulate effective social outcomes for educators of different races, means understanding and disrupting the dominance of whiteness.

It is important to understand the historical, social and political connotations which whiteness holds for South Africa. Steyn (2001:87) portrayed this picture succinctly:

Within South Africa, whiteness was championed by successive regimes, culminating in state-enforced whiteness through the policy of apartheid. This policy acted out the ideological underpinnings of whiteness in a literal and thorough way, thus deliberately bringing a world that seem to confirm that whites were, indeed superior. State structures manipulated the economy, labor, the media and the education system to produce a society that apparently evidenced the superiority of whites. Everywhere they looked, whites saw meniality of blackness, confirming the appropriateness of their social entitlement- they were better equipped to deal with leadership and management and to make education and capital work to the benefit of self and nation. The accumulation of assets seemingly accrued to them because of their inherent qualities; an arrangement that seemed as logical as it was natural.

Sefa Dei (2000) and Dyer (2000) iterate that whiteness is a social marker of power and privilege and as such defines normality. Dyer (2000:540) mentions that the notion of whites as non-raced is evident in writings as well as habitual speech of white people: “We (whites) will speak of, say, the blackness or Chineseness of friends, neighbours, colleagues, customers or clients, and it may in the most genuinely friendly and accepting manner, but we don’t mention the whiteness of the white people we know.” Dyer (2000) maintains that this can lead to the assumption that whites are just people whereas other colours are something else and it is this, which contributes to the marginalization of people.

Levine-Rasky (2000) emphasizes that the conceptualization of whiteness is symbolic or political rather than biological. When interrogating whiteness in schools, the focus not should be on “who” is whiteness but rather how and why is whiteness produced

and maintained in the social order. Sefa Dei (2000) cautions us not to conflate a critique of whiteness with criticisms of white people. He iterates that whiteness is not the universal experience of all whites and there is no homogenous community of whites. One needs to explore how gender, class and sexuality shapes an individualized experience of being white for each person and how varying degrees of power are also ascribed. Sisulu (2001:4) supports (Sefa Dei, 2000) in his statement: “The enemy rallies the whites on the basis that their survival is at stake. This is false. What is at stake is their privileged position.” Also the benefits of whiteness are available to all dominant groups, regardless of class, gender and sexual positions (Sefa Dei, 2000).

In direct contrast to the above approach of whiteness, Levine-Rasky (2000:264) bypasses neutrality and focuses on the “problemization of whiteness as an active component in systems of domination.” She iterates that encouched in whiteness are “social and historical dimensions, the denial and legitimization of white hegemony, how whiteness is constructed and practiced, how it structures social relations, how it converges with other social categories that can both modify and fortify white privilege, and diffuse tensions associated with prompting whites to challenge the social order from which they benefit.” McIntosh (1992) cited in Wildman and Davis (1997:316) defines white privilege as

An invisible package of unearned assets which [she] can count on cashing in each day, but about which [she] was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear, and blank checks.

The advantages accrued to a system of whiteness must be used to create a resisting space that challenges the hegemony (Giroux, 1997, cited in Sefa Dei). Therefore it becomes essential to investigate how non-white educators are evaluating the impact of whiteness on their experiences. Solomos & Back (1996) iterate that whiteness is equated with normality and as such is not in need of definition. Such critique is useful in drawing the cloak of invisibility off whiteness and forces it to be seen as a colour. Steyn (2001) brings to the fore that white is a colour and now occupies just one band in the South African rainbow. Also enmeshed in this context are colours of other educators’ (blacks, Indians, coloureds) that need to be brought to the fore to see how they interact with whiteness.

Literature on white racial identity, white privilege and white racism is growing within the specific discourse of education. One of the most comprehensive studies of whiteness amongst thirteen teacher candidates was undertaken by McIntyre (1997a) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000:265) which underpinned “how uncomfortable the participants felt in dealing with race” through the process of “white talk,” coined by McIntyre. McIntyre (1997a: 46) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000:265) outlined strategies which included “derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counter arguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent, interrupting speakers and topics, and colluding with each other in creating a “culture of niceness” that made it very difficult to read the white world.” Sleeter (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000:264) observed patterns of “white racial bonding, and resistance about learning about whites’ role in constructing social difference and its unequal effects on dominant and subordinate groups.” Flagg (1997:629) supports Sleeter in discussing the transparency phenomenon, a form of unconscious racism, as “the tendency of whites not to think about whiteness or about norms, behaviors, experiences or perspectives” that are specific to white people. Steyn (2001:88) sees the outcome as a pervasive blindness to “how lives are affected by race, and how their own whiteness is premised upon others being positioned as blacks with all that such a positioning entails”. King (2001:296), in writing about United States’ society, maintains that this emanates from “dysconscious racism”, which an “uncritical habit of mind” that justifies inequity and exploitation by unquestioningly accepting the current order as ubiquitous. King (1991) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000:264) confirmed dysconscious racism amongst teacher candidates “as a tacit acceptance of dominant white norms, which justify social and economic advantages, white people have as a result of a subordinating diverse others.” Flagg (1997) supports the idea that transparency underpins the imposition of white norms on non-whites by white decision-makers, who do not consider their white supremacy. Flagg (1997), King (2001) and Steyn (2001) support the notion that the outcome becomes assimilation rather than pluralism, which is the articulated goal. This promotes substantial power of white educators over non-white educators, despite decision-makers working towards substantive racial justice. Those serious about social justice in these changed racial South African contexts will have to make a concerted effort to look for ways to diffuse the transparency effects amongst educators.

#### 2.3.4 The Non-Neutrality of Race-Neutrality

The rush to move beyond race among educators, in our newly formed democratic country, underpins the denial of racialized positions of power and privilege. Many feel that we live in a phase of race neutrality. Powell (2001) in a comparative discussion of South Africa, Brazil and The United States critically evaluated the impact of non-racialism (South Africa), colour-blindness (the United States) and racial democracy (Brazil). Powell's position in this debate of race neutrality is as follows:

“In the United States this denial of race has masked the real racial inequalities that exist. Lack of truly enforceable anti-discrimination legislation in Brazil has led to privileging of whites and the subjugation of everyone else. Inequality... has worsened so much since the 1950s that whereas the United States was the more racially, unequal it is now Brazil...Brazil's denial of race provides a lesson for both United States.... and South Africa, which hopes to become “non-racial,” which is that ignoring race can lead not to “*supraracalism*” but to “*superracialism*” (Powell, 2001:374).

Gotanda (2000:36) supports Powell (2001) that the colourblind technique, which is “often regarded as superior to race conscious ones”, advocates non-recognition, which is in itself self-contradictory, and can “ultimately support the supremacy of white interests”. Gotanda (2000:36) maintains that a “racially colour-blind individual perceives race and then ignores it.”

Black educators functioning in a context of colourblindness may experience the systematic denial of racial subordination. The application of this technique may suggest neutrality and objectivity. In the changed racial context it can cause “psychological repression” of non-white educators' recognition of that subordination, thereby ensure its continuance. It can ultimately support the interest of the dominant group (Gotanda, 2000).

Morrison (1992) cited in Sefa Dei (2000:26) maintains that the notion of “colour-blindness and/or racelessness is not a social equalizer, it is a racial act.” Charter (1996) cited in Sefa Dei (2000:26) supports Morrison by viewing racelessness as an “enactment of white normativity and dominance.” Sefa Dei (2000:26) maintains that

“it masks and denies the existence of racism and provides an excuse for complacency or the outright dismantling of anti-racism programs and initiatives.” Instead of being colour neutral we need to be more acutely aware of the impact of colour (Kivel, 2002) of educators’ in the school situation. In contrast to the notions of racelessness and colour-blindness, pluralism acknowledges the value of different groupings. This work emanated from Kallen (1915) cited in Kitano (1991) who was impressed by the ability of ethnic groups to preserve their own language, religion and culture when adapting to varying regions and situations. Kallen acknowledged that the imposition of conformity is a violation of individuals’ ideals and pluralism encourages the right to be different but equal. (Kitano, 1991: 3) iterates that in its extreme form it would be “one nation with many languages, diverse cultures and multiple value systems in which groups live side by side” Slabbert (2001:15) supported diversity in his discussion of Sisulu’s piece: “*We shall Overcome*”:

the vision he articulates of what SA can become: A unified country, driven by national unity and inclusive tolerance, where racism has to be eradicated without destroying diversity, where racial inequality and exploitation has to be constantly combatted and where all of us are inspired by a common patriotism.

Schools, which deny the racial identity of educators, promote a false sense of unity. These schools can become hot spots for racism and promoting the interests of the dominant group.

### **2.3.5 Diversity and Tolerance**

Diversity is one of the strategies, which can be used to promote equality in changed racial contexts in schools. Rittner & Nakanishi (1993:6) in “*Challenging Stereotypes and Cultural Biases Through Small Group Processes*” in the United States of America maintain that “Workers, uncertain of their ability to work with those who are different, may avoid those from different backgrounds.....these tensions can even intrude in the interactions among workers.” Latting (1990) cited in Rittner & Nakanishi (1993:7) underpin the difficulties experienced in “helping people become adept within multicultural settings, without discriminating and without dichotomizing.” Both, Bonal & Rambla (1999), in exploring the process of educational diversity in Spain, and Rittner & Nakanishi (1993) view diversity as the best strategy for fair and equal opportunities. Rittner & Nakanishi (1993:7) maintain

that “it requires individuals to differentiate their worldview from that of others and respect both equally.” Bonal & Rambla (1999:298) iterate that diversity is beneficial in its “critique of the dominant culture” and the “marginalization of silent voices”. As schools are becoming racially and culturally diverse, it is imperative that school personnel create an atmosphere that celebrates diversity and recognizes individual differences (Olsen and Wilczenski, 1995).

Ideally, diversity suggests equal participation and recognition of all educators. One can see how the space created for the recognition of diversity and individual differences support the race-class-gender nexus to fully understand and acknowledge teachers of different colours. This narrows the pathways of subordination and marginalization of non-white educators.

Diversity is fundamentally different from non-white educators being tolerated in a particular educational setting. “Tolerance for” is encapsulated in negativity and is fundamentally different from “having respect for” (Essed, 1991). Rutstein and Morgan (1996:34) cited in Goduka and Swadener (1999:48) iterate that “implicit in the notion of tolerance is the idea that diverse individuals are irreconcilably different.” In changed racial contexts this may mean that white educators may tolerate non-white educators’ presence but feel no affinity for them. Goduka and Swadener (1999:48) maintain that tolerance is ambiguous and does not transcend the status quo of a particular set of social contexts. Pharr (1988), cited in Goduka and Swadener (1999:48) maintains “that when previously excluded groups seek equality, this is usually misconstrued as asking for tolerance, compassion, understanding, acceptance or benevolence.” Therefore the term “equality” is more than tolerance and embraces the recognition of social injustices (not favours granted to the less fortunate!) and allows room for shaping behaviour towards social justice. However, Gillborn (1995) warns that work on difference and diversity is important but it is not an end in itself. He cautions that one can become “typified by a fascination with difference and exotica” (Gillborn, 1995:136).

### 2.3.6 Black is same, Black is less

Marginalized groups are viewed as homogenous and are considered inadequate in many ways. Ross (1997) in his article entitled "*Innocence and Affirmative Action*" discusses how a white rhetorician can distort the meaning and purpose of affirmative action to fit the stereotypes of unconscious racism and thereby feed the racism. Herein lies the fallacy that the white person (reference is made to whites and blacks as the categories of race) as the innocent victim of affirmative action. Ross (1997:29) provides the following example to elucidate how blacks are burdened in a myriad of ways because of the persistence of this type of unconscious racism:

On a racially integrated law faculty, for example, a black professor must overcome widespread assumptions of inferiority held by students and colleagues, while white colleagues enjoy the benefit of the positive presumption and of the contrast with their black colleague.

Ross (1997:31) maintains that affirmative action confirms that the black person does not deserve what the black person gets and it is perceived that "the lazy black seeks and takes the unearned advantages of affirmative action." Steel (1992) cited in Ramphele (2001b) identified stigma as the culprit that can undermine black achievement. Thus, blacks find themselves under constant "suspicion of intellectual inferiority" (Steel, 1992: 74 cited in Ramphele, 2001b: 68). This has a devastating impact on the self-esteem of many black people. Ramphele (2001b) calls for a shift in perspective to liberate those encapsulated by this stigma. Parallel to this idea is the issue of equity and merit. Black people entering domains from which they were previously excluded have become synonymous to the idea of "falling standards" and "what is fascinating is that the standards over which so much concern is being expressed have in many cases never been spelled out" (Ramphele, 2001b: 82). The outgrowths of racial isolation is interpreted by many whites and even some non-whites, to be "proof of laziness, irresponsibility, and criminality of non-whites and thus the meritorious nature of whites' position of privilege (Powell, 2001:388).

Sleeter (1995) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000:265) portrayed how "white teacher candidates rationalize their social distance from others in order to avoid a re-evaluation of their own assumptions about their personal merits." Kivel (2002) maintains people of colour are seen as homogenous groups, are difficult to differentiate from each other, and whites have difficulty in telling them apart and



easily confuse them. Kivel (2002) iterates that they have to be ready to respond to employers or supervisors who could have stereotypes, prejudices or lowered expectations about them.

Investigating the black-white binary, Perea (2000) reveals that blacks are pre-occupied with white peer approval and are in their way just as pre-occupied with whites as whites are with blacks. However, Ramphela (2001a), maintains that while South Africans, both black and white, are focussing pre-dominantly on differences underpinned in the black-white binary, the commonalties between black and white are overlooked.

The above discussion is of particular significance to this research study, which examines non-white educators in the context of whiteness, as it brings to the fore hidden social issues that can serve to disadvantage non-white educators. They can be under suspicion of being intellectually inferior. They can become associated with falling standards within institutions. They can be associated with laziness, irresponsibility and criminality. Employers can react to them according to stereotypes, prejudices, and lowered expectations

### **2.3.7 Considering Conflict**

No social situation is free from conflict. Social justice studies must focus on conflict experienced by non-white educators. It should aim to critique and transform the social, political, cultural, ethnic, racial and gender structures that constrain and exploit human kind, by engagement in confrontation, even conflict (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Conflict must not be seen as having a negative effect on multiracial school environments but rather as the fuel, which will turn the wheels of justice. Wiewiorka (1995) iterates that the weaker the degree of social conflict, the greater the space for racism. Levine-Rasky (2000) warns that it is not the presence of tension that should anticipate crisis in education, but the absence of it. Gosetti (1995) and Ginsburg (1988) cited in Levine-Rasky (2000) confirm the positive correlation between absence of conflict and commitment to dominant social positions.

Anger is a feature of tension. Kivel (2002) iterates that this is legitimate anger and it is not their oversensitivity but our lack of sensitivity. Kivel (2000: 56) maintains that

analysing this anger is essential in order to bring to our attention “a problem that need solving, a wrong that needs righting”. Kitano (1991) ascertains that power relations often lead to some sort of aggression or retaliation, direct or masked so that it is barely detectable. He cautions against taking the absence of overt aggression as a sign of contentment as there are often indirect and hidden ways in which subordinated groups show their hostility to and resentment of their subjugated positions. Kitano (1991:74) cites the term “aggressive meekness to illustrate a style of adaptation that masks ...true thoughts and feelings.”

### **2.3.8 Managers of Colour**

Kitano (1991), writing in a general context of the United States, identified the absence of racial minorities in top decision-making positions as a significant marker for the measure of inequality and distinct racial hierarchies. Kitano (1991) suggests equal-status contact is effective to a certain extent in reducing prejudice. He iterates that they can also be threatening or uncomfortable for both the dominant and subordinate groups. Kitano (1991:62) suggests that the dominant group member may become irritated at “the uppity minority group member and the ethnic individual may be sensitive to any sign of condescension from the white peer.” Wiseman (1993) cited in Powell (2001:392), writing specifically in the context of South Africa, underpins the importance of transformation of public services:

The transformation of the public service is ...the most important condition for black advancement....Transformation is also necessary in order to change the image of certain government departments that have become symbols of oppression and humiliation to blacks ... Unless competent blacks with good political credentials are appointed to key positions in these departments it is going to be very difficult to turn them into symbols of nation-building that they should be. It therefore follows that black advancement in the public service must not only come gradually from the bottom, but there must also be appointments to strategic positions at senior levels.

This extract is especially applicable to this study as non-whites were barred from the privileged white schools due to apartheid laws. All non-white educators in the school in this research study hold level one posts while management is fully white. Rhetorical questions such as: “Who resides in management and makes decisions governing the school?” is essential in understanding who powers the engines, which turns the wheels.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter selectively surveyed the literature on issues of racism. A conceptual framework was developed to understand and analyse issues concerning race in a general context so as to gain an understanding of the experiences of non-white educators in a formerly white-only school. Oppressions cannot be the outcome of race alone and therefore other important variables have to be taken into consideration. The domination model (Kitano, 1991) pointed out the role of actions and mechanisms in maintaining subjugation of the dominated group. Interrogation of the concept “whiteness” contributed to the understanding of how unequal power relations exist between dominant and subjugated groups. Adoption of colour-blind approaches served to heighten racial inequalities rather than eradicate it. Issues of diversity and tolerance have been investigated as a tool to overcome racism. Conflict is considered as an active mechanism to breakdown stereotypes and change the status quo. The implications of managers of colour is very significant in this research study as all non-white educators at this school held level one posts and management was fully white.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY: MAPPING THE WAY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented a survey of available literature on race, racism and interracial contact. It highlighted a range of topics, which dealt with privileging or subjugating groups of people. The dynamics between the dominated and dominant groups cannot be the outcome race alone. It is more complex and involves a range of other variables. It criticized race-neutral theories for supporting the needs of the dominant group and providing a substantiated excuse for not addressing racial issues or pretending that there are none because we have moved beyond race. This research study provides a reassertion of the importance of race amongst educators in changed racial contexts in schools, provided that it is not undertaken in a linear fashion.

This chapter will provide substantiation for the choice of the sample, namely non-white educators teaching in a formerly white-only school, and the research design used in the study. It will outline the questions used in the interviews, explore the impact of the researcher's position and the validity of the investigation.

#### **3.2 The Context and the Participants**

This formerly white-only school is situated in an upper class, previously white-only area. In 1999, the process of rationalisation and redeployment heralded the arrival of four female non-white educators to this school. This staff comprised of females only, with the exception of the principal who was a male. There were fifteen educators in total. Non-white educators comprised of twenty seven percent of the teaching staff.

The study focused on the experiences of non-white educators only. This comprised of one coloured educator, two black educators and one Indian educator. The four non-white educators were all level one and the management was all white. When attempting to understand holistic patterns of racial interaction in schools, the inclusion of only non-white educators can become contentious. The researcher argues for the position of non-white educators in racial studies as a subgroup that needs individual focus.

The respondents, themselves, provided validation for the choice of subjects interviewed. They showed a great appreciation for and interest in this topic. It focused on an area, which was very pertinent to them and gave them an opportunity to discuss issues of concern. It also provided support for their subjugated and minority status in that particular school. Further supporting evidence for the choice of non-white educators is provided.

Sefa Dei (2000:34) iterates that: “Antiracism questions the marginalization of certain voices in society and the delegitimation/devaluation of the knowledge and experience of subordinate/minority groups. It challenges the definitions of “valid” knowledge.” He encourages the narratives of victimhood as it provides opportunities to understand our social world. He supports the value of experiences and perceptions of marginalized educators in a racially changed context:

“The standpoint of marginalized people has special validity, and we need to incorporate the critiques and experiences of marginalized people in the process of knowledge production about race and racialized practices. An epistemic privilege of the marginalized and oppressed voices enriches and strengthens critical race studies because voices add experiential accounts to race knowledge production. Production of critical race and anti-racism knowledge requires the examination of the historical and daily lived experiences of subordinated groups in White-dominated society. It also requires the interrogation of the system supporting white privilege and dominance.” Sefa Dei (2000:36)

The above extract attributes importance to and underpins the need for marginalized educators to be given the opportunity to share their experiences in the context of whiteness.

Kitano (1991) asserts that views between dominant and subordinate groups are seldom congruent. A member of the dominant group may see marvellous progress in race relations, while a member of the minority may see little progress. Therefore views between dominant and dominated groups do not have to be explored in tandem and can form subsets in their own right. Kitano (1991:5) cited surveys, reported in the Los Angeles Times in 1989, which showed these contradictory perspectives:

- “Two-thirds of whites surveyed believed that blacks received “equal pay for equal work”, while two-thirds of blacks believed the opposite.

- Half the blacks said that the local police held them down while, while an equal percentage of the whites said that the police were more helpful than harmful.”

The above discussion provides support for the choice of non-white educators only.

Korchin (1980), cited in Mio & Awakuni (1999:25-26), related an incident that advocated the choice of marginalized groups for research and rejected the notion that a study is flawed if it had no white participants. The incident also demonstrated professional insensitivity to ethnic minority issues.

“He and a colleague were attempting to publish a study comparing successful and unsuccessful African American college students... “In the opinion of one consulting editor, the study was “grievously flawed” –there was no white control group”, (Korchin, 1980, p 263). Given that this was a study that examined subgroups of African American college students, it is curious that the reviewer would have made such a comment, he or she must have blindly following a covert, unintentionally racist dictum that states that no study is important unless it contains white participants. As Korchin put it, “What would happen, might we, suppose, if someone submitted a study identical in all respects except that all subjects in the study were white? Would it be criticized because it lacked a black control group?” (Mio and Awakuni, 1999:25-26)

In support of Korchin’s rhetorical question reference can be made to the published article by Levine-Rasky (2000): *The Practice of Whiteness amongst Teacher Candidates*, which was based on a Ph.D. dissertation completed in 1997. Here, of the thirty-five candidates interviewed at a Canadian University, only one was black. The inclusion of one black candidate is insufficient to portray the experiences and feelings of black as a subgroup. Thus, marginalized groups are getting lost in a system, which upholds studies on whiteness, while not making space for experiences of non-whites as a subset. This lends further support in the choice of this study area.

This study can be considered to be a micro investigation into the experiences of non-white educators with the notion that subordinated groups should be given the opportunity to relate their experiences. Such experiences can have a very significant position in understanding racism amongst educators in formerly white-only school contexts.

### **3.3 Qualitative Research Technique**

The critical question in this research study is: *How do non-white educators perceive and understand their experiences in formerly white-only schools?* Interviews, a qualitative research technique, was used to investigate how non-white educators' social experiences were created and given meaning. This research method gave voice to non-white educators and examined their perceptions and lived experiences. Generalizations were avoided by focusing on the individual experience of each educator. This technique enabled the researcher to discover the personal and individual view of each respondent.

### **3.4 The Research Method**

Hyman (1975) cited in Essed (1991) iterates that it has been shown repeatedly that black informants are reticent about discussing their experiences of white racism with a white interviewer. Some individuals may be too embarrassed to tell the truth, especially if they think that it portrays them in negative light (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Since the researcher is a non-white educator teaching in a similar context, shared experiences and natural involvement with the problem encouraged non-white educators to share their views without fear of repercussions. Therefore, this open and uncensored discussion of experiences assisted in obtaining a richness of data that met the criteria and anticipated outcome for qualitative research. According to Kitano (1991) researchers who share similar subordinated positions are sensitive to the moods and feelings of the population or subjects of the research study in a way that it would have been difficult for an "outsider." He explores the possibility that the "outsider" approaching the data from a more scientific and objective perspective may interpret less pertinent data than the "insider." Social science acknowledges the researchers' expectations, needs, experiences, racial and ethnic background, sex, personality, training, class position, reference, group status and ideology as shaping their research efforts.

The interviews focussed on personal experiences and perceptions relating to tensions, conflict, and sources of dissatisfaction and positive outcomes in a changed racial context. It explored incidences among staff and parents, which were defined by racial undertones. Perceptions of the management team were examined. All respondents

were asked to suggest recommendations that will improve their experiences in formerly white-only schools.

The initial interview lasted approximately one and a half hours per person. Thereafter, interviews of a shorter duration but greater frequency enabled the researcher to clarify experiences and perceptions of each respondent. A semi-structured interview schedule served as a basic framework. These questions were adjusted according to responses and were extended and amended to include personal experiences. The questions included:

- ❑ Tell me about yourself (age, number of years at this school, number of years teaching, class issues, etc)
- ❑ How did you feel when you were initially transferred to this school?
- ❑ Did you feel that other staff members were watching you?
- ❑ How do you describe your relationship with the white teachers?
- ❑ Are there any incidences, which caused you, distress?
- ❑ Where there any incidences with staff members?
- ❑ Where there any particular incidences with parents?
- ❑ Describe staff room interactions at your school?
- ❑ What topics are discussed in the staffroom? Are you happy with this?
- ❑ Are issues of race and racism discussed among the staff?
- ❑ What do you think about the management of the school? Are they instrumental in dealing with issues of race at your school?
- ❑ What do you like about the school?
- ❑ What do you dislike about the school?
- ❑ Are there any recommendations that you can make for better experiences of non-white educators at your school?

### **3.5 Validity of the Research**

Validity has been ensured through repeated interviews and cross-questioning. This process provided clarity on the respondent's experiences. The interviewer and the interviewees belong to the same racial subgroup added to the validity of the study.



### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the qualitative method as effective in obtaining data for a social study of this nature. A valid argument for the respondents being exclusively non-white was also presented. The researcher's own position as an "insider" and subsequent positive impact in this investigation is outlined with clarity. The interview process was outlined as an ideal instrument to collect data in social science research. Thus, this chapter has provided an understanding of methodology and data collection obtained through interviews. The results of the obtained from the said methodology will be presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS: UNSCRAMBLING RACISM IN A SPECIFIC SCHOOL SITE

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The interviews gave intense reflection of the lived experiences of non-white educators in formerly white-only schools. All educators interviewed showed some understanding of their subordinated positions in the school as non-whites and experienced dissonance about integrating into their multiracial teaching environments. The educators provided a kaleidoscope of experiences. This chapter begins with description of each educator. Responses of educators were slotted into the following common themes:

- Silent resistance by white educators;
- Language: a tool of exclusion;
- Watching games;
- Replacing white teachers, taking white jobs;
- Falling standards;
- Stereotypes about non-white schools;
- Resegregated staffrooms;
- White talk: class issues;
- Silence about race and racism;
- Racist semantics;
- Open conflict and tension; and
- Breaking barriers.

#### **4.2 Profiles of Educators**

The following discussion provides pertinent information on each educator. The profiling of educators are useful as it allows for incorporating other variables such as location, educational level, gender, class, and sexuality which highlights the complexity of experiences of non-white educators and negates any notion that particular experiences are the outcome of race alone.

#### **4.2.1 The First Educator**

She is a forty-five year old black female who had taught at homogenous black-only schools. The current school was her first and only experience of teaching in a multiracial school. She had been teaching at this school for the past four and a half years. She experienced problems with classifying herself into a particular class. She clearly brought to the fore the difficulties black women faced, even though they were teachers, as they did not have the full support of their spouses, who did not reside with them. Although they received the same salary as women of other races their problems were ten-fold, as they had to do so much more. This kept their class lower than that of their income and professional status. She also identified this as one of the factors that made her entry into this particular school problematic as it was a marker that clearly differentiated her from the other white teachers and made her feel different and less than her white counterparts. “How can you feel equal when you don’t live in fancy houses and drive fancy cars like them.” She was given the opportunity to teach in this upper class area but saw herself as never being able to live in it. She saw herself as a product of the apartheid era as she “came into the school disadvantaged.”

She had studied extensively and had a number of postgraduate courses. She was currently undertaking degree courses. She saw the school as negating her qualifications and minimizing them as some had been obtained at Black universities. She saw herself as being invisible in the school because “they do what they want to do and you just have to fit in. Nothing has changed and nothing is going to change...this is their school and who are we?” She did not spend much time in the staffroom as she went to the staffroom mostly for meetings and spent very little time socializing. She was adamant that it was a white staffroom and was forced to be present for meetings. She was seeking promotion and other posts where her abilities would be valued and utilized.

#### **4.2.2 The Second Educator**

A 35-year-old coloured female was the second respondent. She considered herself as struggling to remain in middle-class due to her husband being medically boarded. She experienced discord with the term race, as she did not know where exactly she fitted in. She then decided that according to the South African category that made her a

“hybrid” or “mongrel” and would be the category coloured. She had a mixed ancestry of Italian, Scottish and Zulu. Her discourse clearly enunciated an abhorrence for the South African apartheid system which has entrenched a denial of her Scottish and Italian background, which formed such an important aspect in her life. The apartheid system in South Africa had focussed on the fifty percent of blackness and categorized her accordingly. The richness of her background has been lost under the banner of “coloured.” This does not happen with the other race groups. She said: “You know that you are Indian and you know what that means. What does coloured mean? An implication of blackness....I find that hard to digest....where’s my identity?” She felt that focussing on the mixture of these bloodlines felt almost like an animal, a mongrel or a hybrid variety.

Her initial years of teaching were at a coloured school. She then taught at a formerly white-only school, for a short period, where she experienced tension, conflict and non-acceptance of her racial category. She was currently teaching at this formerly white-only school for three years.

She had a great sense of humour and considered herself as having a strong personality which “helps to quell any attempts at intimidation.” She was extremely eloquent and expressed her thoughts rapidly and fluently while showing critical engagement in the changing racial context. She admitted to a lot of conflict and tension arising out of her resistance to conform. She iterated that she was “not afraid to take these issues on” and at one time considered taking a member of management to constitutional court. She iterated that she did not care about this “as somebody has to speak up to put an end to this.” Thus, she engaged in open conflict in the school situation. She acknowledged the stress brought onto herself by “dealing with issues.” Being the only coloured teacher, she missed “the comfort-zone of being amongst her own people” and saw the changing racial environments as a “culture-shock.” Being the one to stir the pot has labelled her as a “troublemaker.”

#### **4.2.3 The Third Educator**

An Indian female educator who has taught for the past 16.5 years was the next interviewee. She considered her class to be upper-middle class. She has taught for

twelve and a half years in a former Indian-only school with a homogenous Indian staff. Her first experience of working with a multiracial staff commenced with her appointment at the current school. She constructed herself around Indianness and considered this as a vital aspect of her identity. She mentioned that she had made a concerted effort to display her Indianness through her conversations, her dress and enlightening her peers on auspicious occasions. She, however, mentioned that it was amazing that she had to do all this while the white educators' traditions were accepted as being known and normal. They did not have to explain their culture and traditions. She was aware of racism in the school and articulated her concerns in vivid experiences, which she recalled with vitality and enthusiasm. Although she focused on issues of concern, she talked jovially of new friendships formed across colour lines (including white and non-white teachers). She iterated numerous times during the interview that she valued these friendships and at no time must this interview be seen as a devaluation or negation of those friendships. She enjoyed her work tremendously and loved working at this school. She preferred strategic and amicable solutions to problems as opposed to open conflict, which she thought to have negative effect on relationships on the staff, which widened the gap between race groups. She thought that talking about problems in a controlled manner was more beneficial in the long run. She iterated that this could be difficult at times. Emotions tended to run high when problems were stamped out immediately.

#### **4.2.4 The Fourth Educator**

She is a forty-three year old black educator who had taught for the past sixteen years at a black-only school. She considers herself to be middle-class although she travelled to school by bus and did not own a car. Her reasoning behind this is that where she had come from and when she looked at the lower socio-economic class and the poverty and hardships that came with it, she was grateful for what she had. She also maintained that she would use her black community as a frame of reference as opposed to comparing herself to this upper class white elite. She spent the last four years teaching at the current school. She was very quiet and reserved and spent most of her time in her classroom. She had a few friends that taught in the same department as her and she felt comfortable with them. She had not ventured out to make friends with teachers from other departments. She saw many things that she was unhappy

with but felt powerless to intervene. She experienced difficulty in outlining specific incidents of racism and how she is being subjugated in the school. She did not spend time in the staffroom and when she was there she did not participate in the general conversations and only chatted with the person next to her who was inevitably a non-white teacher. She said that she was happy this way and did not want to get involved in the politics outside her classroom, which would impact negatively on her teaching life at this school. She considered herself as a simple person with simple ways and not having the power to change things in the school. She also saw the white-only management as being very strong and dogmatic. This intimidated her tremendously. Her contributions were short and not very extensive.

The above profiling of educators bring to the fore the individuality of each educator and dispel notions that non-white educators, in this study, are viewed as a homogenous group.

### **4.3 Themes Reflected in the Discourse of Non-white Educators**

Data on the experiences of non-white educators were unscrambled and categorized according to themes, which provided an understanding of non-white educators' perspectives on racism in this school. A discussion of the following themes will be undertaken from the interview categories, which focused on their personal experiences in the school. It included particular incidences amongst the staff, staffroom dynamics, the role of management in dealing with racial issues and recommendations for better experiences of non-white educators.

#### **4.3.1 Silent Resistance**

Non-white educators saw the behaviour of white educators as a form of silent resistance to their presence, of which they had no control. This was evident in the detached positions, which they upheld. An educator illustrated this in her description of her entrance into the school.

When I came into the school, there wasn't anybody who came and showed me what is to be done, told me where the stuff is. I had to figure everything for myself. They did not provide the support that was needed. I think it was their way of resisting our presence in their school, and adopting an attitude that if we black teachers are here in their white school, we should know what to do. This did not make me feel very

welcome. I saw how they treated other white teachers who came in after us. It was different. They were shown around the school. Formally introduced to the staff. Given help with the journals and so forth.

The effect of this, according to the domination model (Kitano, 1991), is avoidance and isolation of marginalized individuals through discrimination based on prejudiced attitudes. This act had served to disadvantage non-white educators understanding classroom procedures and succeeded in isolating them from the rest of the staff. It also served to reinforce the notion that they were black educators invading white space. This type of behaviour implied that if black educators came into white schools, they should be able to undertake their duties with proficiency and should not expect additional assistance.

#### **4.3.2 Language: A Tool of Exclusion**

Language was perceived as a marker of exclusion. This can be seen in the context where certain racial remarks were made about individual educators in Afrikaans, which lead to open conflict. A detailed discussion of this specific incident will be discussed in the theme conflict and tension. An educator, who is also Afrikaans speaking, described speaking Afrikaans in the staff room as a gatekeeper as to who joined in the conversation and who didn't. She stated the following:

they mostly spoke in first language Afrikaans, which in itself segregated everyone-often created a very tense atmosphere...English could be the preferred language of choice. Everyone would feel more welcome. In fact, I don't think that they realized what they were doing. They were accustomed to living in their world. They found it hard to make place for others.

The above extract addresses the possible linkages between race and language and introduces the debate of language as a marker of exclusion in changed racial contexts. Strongly encouched in this debate are the principles of linguistics, diversity and tolerance.

#### **4.3.3 Watching Games**

Revolutionary changes in the racial context of the school made working with different race groups a novelty. Non-white educators entering these predominantly white contexts felt that they were being watched. An educator, being the first coloured at the

school, felt that she was “an enigma” who was to be watched and her “differentness treated with amusement.” She iterated: “they were watching me all the time, they laughed a lot and that helped them to deal with me being so different.” Another non-white educator felt that the white staff were watching and evaluating the black educators as a group:

I always had the feeling that the rest of the staff were watching the black teachers very closely and “sussing” us out.

Watching the non-white educators carefully provided adequate opportunity to strengthen pre-conceived ideas or stereotypes.

Our children’s behaviour was always corrected in their lines. At the same time I had noticed that children’s discipline in white teachers classes were similar to that of our class but the management could only see our children misbehaving. That is because they were only looking at us....because they were only looking at black teachers, they can easily believe that black teachers cannot control their children. As you can see we actually didn’t do anything, they did it all by themselves. We just had to be there. They draw these conclusions and act like it is a fact.

Non-white educators also reported incidences of watching the behaviour of white individuals. The dual nature of the watching game can be seen in the following extract:

I was watching them without them actually realizing it. Sometimes, I would do it deliberately and they would never let me down. They would always respond in the same manner because these kinds of things were not done here.

Through the watching game they are able to utilize stereotypes as a mechanism to strengthen the differences between the racial groups. According to the domination model (Kitano,1991:14) this could result in cementing gaps between the groups and promoting isolation and segregation.

#### **4.3.4 Replacing White Teachers, Taking White Jobs**

All non-white educators agreed that their appointments had political connotations, which was seen by white educators as Blacks taking the jobs of their white counterparts. Many of the temporary, but qualified, white teachers lost their jobs, making way for non-white educators. This was seen as impacting on initial



relationships at the school. A non-white educator heard the following comment being made: “no place for white teachers to go.”

In respect of promotions at the school a white educator was quoted:

Why should we even apply? They are not going to consider us. All our hard work over the years is not going to be recognized now. There is no place for whites anymore.

Affirmative action, guiding political changes in the country, had become a reality in this school and had not been received very well. These comments reinforced the territorial behaviour of whites. There was a strong belief that whites were deliberately removed to make place for other race groups, which is a reversed form of apartheid.

#### **4.3.5 Falling Standards**

It was the first time that many white children were placed in classrooms of non-white teachers. This gave rise to many complains. Some white parents requested that their children be removed from the classrooms of black educators. However, the reasons, which they put forward, were not actually related to the race of the educator. The following are some of the reasons: “she can’t handle my child – she doesn’t understand his special case,” “my child said that she has been pinched by the teacher”. The principal was placed at the forefront of this conflict and had to placate the parents.

She had to assure them that their children’s standard of education is not being comprised. Assure them that the teachers were competent. Assure them learning and teaching will be going on. Although, she had tried her best to handle these parents, I felt that we did not need pacification to parents, we shouldn’t be put in a position where we had to prove ourselves. I don’t see white teachers being put in this position. It was this aspect that had irritated me mostly.

Frustrated by the situation, some parents took their own initiative in determining the competency of their child’s teacher. One educator described an incident where the parent had utilized the parent interview to determine her expertise in education. He restructured the interview into a drill session to answer insecurities he had about his child’s teacher.

He asked many questions on education and discipline in general and more specific questions on how I would handle specific problems of his child. The underlying reasons for him asking all these was to determine what are my views on teaching,

what knowledge do I possess, what are my potentials, how do I deal with discipline, how do I meet the specific needs of children and that sort of thing.....if his child had a white teacher, would this saga be carried out?

This provides evidence that non-white educators are placed in positions where they have to prove themselves before they are fully accepted in the school. This is not the case of white educators who are simply accepted into the school without any pre-judgements and the requirement to demonstrate their competencies.

Non-white educators overheard conversations, which encapsulated the notion of falling standards.

The school is becoming a dumping ground for the department and that they should not be made to....put up with teachers who were not properly trained or have the necessary experience....how they were going to provide quality education if this is going to go on

Racial changes in formerly white-only schools were associated with falling standards. The changing multiracial teaching environments were viewed in terms of the high standards, set by whites in their privileged systems, as crumbling to the ground. White educators now expressed despair at their loss of control and high standards, which have been acquired over the years.

Although non-white educators had high academic qualifications and professional degrees, they did not feel very powerful in the school. This, they felt were devalued because they were not obtained from prominent white universities of the apartheid era. An educator recalled a conversation between a black and a white colleague. The black educator was talking about undertaking postgraduate studies at a formerly non-white university. The white educator advised her to undertake her studies at one of the more prominent universities as she was spending a lot of money and should add value to her certificate. The educator thought:

I thought that this was such a racist comment, but the person making the comment actually had no idea or understanding of this. Does this mean that all our qualifications from non-white universities are possibly devalued in the school?

Therefore qualifications of white educators, obtained from formerly white-only universities of the apartheid era, were perceived to have greater value than qualifications obtained at formerly non-white universities.

#### **4.3.6 Stereotypes about Non-White Schools**

Preconceived ideas of non-white schools and non-white educators played an integral role in directing the behaviour of white educators. Conversations and comments made to non-white educators clearly revealed this.

“Don’t you’ll balance registers at you’ll schools. Have you not worked with a register before”...so from this I could pick up that we were seen as doing very little at our schools.

The embedded notion that very little work goes on in non-white schools and educators are irresponsible permeated through conversations like these. This made non-white educators feel uncomfortable, as they were perceived in a negative manner.

#### **4.3.7 Segregated Staffrooms**

Despite sharing working environments different race groups still remained segregated in the staffroom. An educator said:

I found that the black teachers came into the staffroom, poured tea, if they did at all, and only sat on one side, there was a specific corner where the black teachers sat. It was always near the door, they never ventured fully into the staff room. They would drink their tea and leave.

This positioning was evident when the non-white educators were initially appointed at the school. Over the years it had formed a definite pattern. This pattern did not respond to changing relationships amongst the staff. A physical investigation of the staffroom revealed “the specific corner” to be the smallest area seating area available in the staffroom. This area was physically separated from the other seats by the entrance and an indented area where the tea was laid out. The rest of the staff sat in a large semi-circle. This physically demarcated staffroom symbolized the entrance of non-white educators into a formerly white only environment as not being fully successful and in need of intervention. The domination model (Kitano, 1991) underpins segregation as leading to isolation of marginalized individuals. Divisions

between racial groups have ingrained itself into a pattern, which needs to be intercepted.

#### **4.3.8 White talk: Issues of class**

Conversations in the staffroom exposed the race-class nexus and showed how it impacted on the participation of all race groups. Class intersecting with race is the gatekeeper to conversations in this school. Non-white educators of lower socioeconomic class found it difficult to participate in some staffroom discussions and therefore experienced a sense of exclusion and isolation. A non-white educator in the following extract aptly portrayed this:

These topics are different topics from what we are used to. I mean what can we say about property prices booming in upper class white areas, where we have never lived or are unlikely to ever afford living. You know, apartheid has barred us out. It's something they know nothing about: living in apartheid areas. It's okay if you have enough money to live in these areas; then you can join in. That's why I say conversations are also racist. It doesn't allow everybody in. I mean all the white teachers are in because all the teachers in our school live in these areas and are economically privileged. We live in poorer areas and only come and teach in an upper class environment.

Class differences between white and non-white educators at this school can be seen as an outgrowth of apartheid. These entrenched inequalities through institutionalized racism could not disappear with the arrival of democracy.

#### **4.3.9 Silence about Race and Racism**

All educators stated that race was “not openly discussed in the staffroom” and occurred “only in segregated groups of whites and non-whites.” Democracy as a myth is reflected in everybody being considered equal and race being no longer a marker of social difference. The school was run in a neutral fashion. Issues of race were no longer pertinent. This allowed for the denial of the critique position of whiteness in the school and silence about issues of subjugation, dominance, race and racial issues. The silence surrounding race has left many non-white educators dissatisfied about many issues, which were festering beneath the surface and impacting negatively on their working experiences.

#### **4.3.10 Racist Semantics**

Non-white educators detect “race talk” in the dialogues of white educators. This brings their racial differences under the spotlight. One educator iterated:

by the way they mostly talk about white people and then they simply mention the person’s name and its fine. But when they talk about other races they begin their sentence like this: I had an Indian friend called..... When our secretary informs our principal that somebody wants to see him, and she speaks about a white person, she says that there is a gentleman by the name of Mr. John waiting to see you. His race does not have to be announced. But if the person is not white, you would hear comments like a black man, Mr. Myandu wants to see you. How come they never say a white man is waiting to see you and how come they never say a black gentleman is waiting to see you. Always a black man. I’m black and I see what they are doing.

Also evident is the acceptance of white as the norm and all other colours described as deviations from the norm. Non-white educators report that this type of talk serve to reinforce the barriers between the white and non-white educators as it breaks down the belief in the possibility of equity and diversity in the workplace.

#### **4.3.11 Conflict and Tension**

Conflict and tension was the outcome of perceived domination. An educator was extremely upset when she heard a comment being made in Afrikaans about her. The person making the comment thought that she could not understand first language Afrikaans. The Afrikaans-speaking educator had said: “..dat die naturelle rondom die plek loop en dit nie aangaan vir baie lank nie.” This meant that the natives were wandering around on the property and this won’t go on for very long. This created tension and eventually heightened into a situation where:

I had to call my union in, serve Mrs. X with papers, I wanted to take her to the constitutional court and haul her over the coals regarding this matter because she objected to our very presence on the property.

Another source of conflict was the incident surrounding parking at the school. All non-white teachers were advised to park their cars “at the far end of the car park towards the exit because the other parking was to be used by the teachers who were

there for quite sometime, and obviously that will exclude all us non-white teachers. I of course, did not obey this.” This incident caused dissonance amongst some staff members. One educator approached the principal about this incident. Although he assured her that she could park where she chooses to, as it was her right, he did not bring this topic up for discussion amongst the staff. This act can be seen as merely pacifying the educator. The principal was not instrumental in dealing with racism and contributed significantly to the silence about racial problems in the school. Failure to actively intervene will ensure its perpetuation in the school. The other non-white educators made a point of coming early and parking closer to the office block as they refused to be treated in this manner. They felt that this increased their visibility in the school and decreased opportunities for subjugation. Here, we can see how non-white educators have actively and silently resisted their domination and exclusion from the rest of the staff based on their race.

Tension and conflict also arose when non-white educators felt that the white educators were functioning in a way that upheld the status quo of the white regime. Incidents like determining a source for charity was perceived as having racial undertones. White educators identified the SPCA as needy while a non-white educator felt that indigent black individuals whose squatter homes have been burnt down should be targeted. Thus, incidents like this have become sites for acting out their tension and conflict.

#### **4.3.12 Management**

All four educators responded with their initial statement that the school comprised of a white management. Non-white educators saw this as an issue of concern. An educator viewed the current conditions as promoting whiteness in the school. She says:

Well, that’s the power. But, it’s white power only. I don’t how managers of colour will change things. I just know that if they are not there, it stamps white rule. Black teachers at our school are only at the bottom. It is not good.

Another educator saw changed attitudes amongst members of management as being more beneficial as opposed to a change in race. She saw “a more democratic style of doing things” as eradicating space for racism. Dictatorship created an environment

where racism is perpetuated. Another educator reported that she would feel more comfortable in this environment if she could see all race groups being in charge and not only whites. The apartheid era is still evident in the architecture of the school, which provides support structures for a fully white management team.

#### **4.3.13 Breaking Down Barriers**

All respondents reported that desegregation has also been useful in providing opportunities for improving interracial contact. Everybody got to know each other and this was helpful to break down stereotypes. There was focus on individual characteristics of educators without colour being the only marker. One educator has iterated that the changed racial context has resulted in “learning more about the different life-styles and cultures of the staff.” Another educator supported this by saying that we “understand better the differing viewpoints, which arise as a result of different life experiences that is due to our cultural, racial and language differences.” Acknowledgement of these differences has led to better understanding of each other, which is paving the path towards “a peaceful and racially integrated staff.”

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a profile of each non-white educator interviewed in this study. This was useful in providing an understanding of the race, class and gender nexus, as well as other interrelating factors, which created compounding patterns of social experiences. Paying careful attention to non-white educators’ individual experiences assisted in overcoming the notion that experiences within the school are a mere affirmation of the black/white paradigm. The analysis of data has outlined thirteen themes that underpinned the discourse of non-white educators in formerly white-only schools. The experiences, feelings and perceptions of a recently formed multiracial teaching environment are encompassed in themes. Themes embraced issues of racism and highlighted the lived experiences of non-white educators in this school. The following chapter will explore the notion of progressive and ambivalent non-white educators, the reconstruction of identities of non-white educators in a changed racial context and a fight for physical space.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This research study has been significant in highlighting the subjective experiences of non-white educators in a racially changed school context. It has represented their experiences in a formerly white-only school in the form of themes to illustrate areas of conflict, tension, discontentment and positive outcomes. This chapter will explore insights emerging from the findings, the limitations of the study, possibilities for future research and a conclusion to the research study.

#### **5.2 Insights of the Findings**

Educators differed in the way they approached issues of racism. Some were progressive whereas others were ambivalent. Non-white educators in this changed racial context found themselves rethinking their identity and fighting for space.

##### **5.2.1 Progression versus Ambivalence**

Progressive educators remained critical of acts within the school, which could signify subjugation and subordination of non-white educators. They actively explored the relationship between racism and practices among educators. They were sensitive to recognizing discrimination, were proactive in stamping their visibility, insisted on being heard and provided support to their subordinated counterparts. They believed that the school should actively promote equity. An educator viewed the development of positive relationships as being crucial in enhancing interracial contact. She saw interaction as a possible way of breaking stereotypes and forging new understandings and recognizing racial differences. She supported amicable solutions to problems. Another educator, in direct contrast, adopted a confrontational stand and engaged in open conflict while remaining firm on certain issues. She didn't hesitate to talk about the racism and enlisted the help of unions in dealing with certain issues which she felt was laden with conflict.

Ambivalent non-white educators are uncertain about where they stand on issues, and often battled with their ability to intervene actively in their contexts to bring about



change. Some non-white educators adopted a non-confrontational approach in dealing with racial problems. They silently resisted attempts at marginalization by coming early and parking in spaces from which they were specifically excluded. Only one educator approached the principal and voiced her dissatisfactions. An educator spoke at length of the importance of newly formed friendships with the white educators and in no way wanted to devalue this. The value she had attached to these friendships seemed to deter her in dealing actively with racial issues at the school. Two educators exited racially charged situations by receding into their classrooms and affirming that there was no space for them at this school. An educator battled with issues surrounding her visibility in the school. She was unhappy being at this school and felt very isolated. She was actively seeking more compatible working environments, where her abilities and value will be recognized. She hoped to exit this context as soon as possible. Another educator, although aware of racial incidences and problems in the school, had withdrawn from these situations and did not want to become actively involved in racial conflict. She spent most of her time in her classroom and her interaction was limited to those teaching in her department. She was content to undertake her work and go home.

### **5.2.2 Forging New Identities**

Non-white educators in this changed racial context are reconstructing their identities and are questioning their positions as racialized individuals in this school. Arriola (2000:322) succinctly identified that no single trait defines ones' identity and that "my being Mexican, Catholic, a woman who is lesbian-identified, a feminist lawyer, professor, and yogin are all important aspects of my identity."

All educators questioned the notions of their race and what it meant for them in a desegregated school. This arose out of the newly found multiracial context. Bhana (1999:22) suggests the need "to break down apartheid pathology that created bounded identities." They are now asking questions about the self, which they have not asked before. An educator experienced dissonance about her categorization of coloured and suggested feelings of being a "hybrid or mongrel." She also iterated: "What does coloured mean..... an implication of blackness...I find that hard to digest...where's

my identity.” Erasmus (2001:13,15) in his book “*Coloured by History Shaped by Place*” echoes her dilemma:

“When one lives aspects of both these cultural identities (blackness and whiteness) having to choose one means the denial of some part of oneself.... and that no matter what colour her skin really is, she has to be essentially either on the side of black or white.”

Couched in the discourse of the hybrid character of coloured identity is:

“the underlying notion that there is no such thing as coloured culture and identity...because coloured identity does not have an “essence”, in the sense that African ethnic identities are assumed to have one, it is not a “real” identity” (Erasmus 2001:21).

Erasmus (2001:21) encourages a re-construction of coloured identity, in a post apartheid era, to move beyond the notion that coloured identities are “mixed race” identities “but comprising detailed bodies of knowledge, specific cultural practices, memories, rituals and modes of being.”

All four non-white educators acknowledged the existence of the notion of falling standards and reduced value of academic qualifications obtained from black universities as impacting on their experiences in this racially changed context. Non-white educators are now questioning attitudes towards their qualifications as it formed an essential aspect of their identity. These qualifications were not viewed in a negative manner in their previous schools. These changed racial contexts are prompting non-white educators to question their positions in respect of qualifications.

One educator questioned the issue of class as impacting on her and her ability to participate in the school. She identified class as the gatekeeper to conversations and to joining the majority of the staff, which was white. She has identified class as a marker in forging her identity as a non-white educator in a formerly white-only school, which is situated in an upper class formerly white-only area.

### **5.2.3 Spatial Fights**

Spatial fights over parking have been acknowledged by non-white educators. Non-white educators were asked to park their cars at the far end of the parking lot, which is near the exit, as all other parking spaces had been utilized by white educators. This spatial orientation to parking can be transposed onto non-white educators positioning

themselves in the staffroom. Here too, they occupy a disjointed area in the staffroom, which is close to the exit. Once again this pattern has arisen and sustained itself in non-whites battling to obtain physical space.

Educators differed in the way they responded to their racial contexts. Some were ambivalent whereas others were progressive. The above discussions on identity reinforce the notion that identity is a fluid one. Changed racial contexts contribute to non-white educators forging new identities. Non-white educators stamped their visibility in this former white-only school through spatial fights.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

- It is difficult to justify all non-white educators' behaviour as a reaction to their subjugated status and race. One has to consider variables such as personality, gender, class, educational levels, sexuality and problem-solving skills, which could impact on their experiences. At the same time, it would be a great error to ignore non-white educators' race as directing experiences in the school.
- The research can be limited due to the analysis of the data where some of the richness may have been lost. This could have occurred when data was slotted into themes and then analysed accordingly.
- Since the researcher was both a subject and a witness to experiences in previously predominant white contexts, her ideologies and position, which consciously or unconsciously, infiltrate the analysis of data and writing of the report, may be perceived as a limitation. Kitano (1991) supports this by iterating that the "outsider" may question the objectivity and the biases of the "insider".

### **5.4 Possible Future Research**

Extended studies need to be conducted to determine the number of non-white educators in managerial positions in formerly white-only schools and their perceptions of participation in management. If racial discrepancies in managerial positions are a critical problem in formerly white-only schools, recommendations can be made for the appointment of non-white educators to managerial positions at these school sites. The scope of this study, being one school site only, is not adequate to draw valid conclusions concerning this marker of racial inequality. The study, nevertheless, can serve as a basis for future investigations.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This research study has brought into focus the structural and cultural contexts within a school where non-white educators have come to enact their racial identity highlighting its unequal effects. Essed (1991) maintains that although most of us would like to believe that we have put racism behind us, the modern forms of racism are indirect and insidious, needing vigilance to expose them as architects upholding stereotypes, prejudice, subjugation and domination. Delineating marginalized individuals experiences as a position “in tension” (Levine-Rasky, 2000) advanced one’s understanding of subordination and domination in this particular school site and indicated points where change may be initiated.

Efforts towards racial integration, in this particular school site, have not yet shown desirable results. This is due to the denial of racism and the adoption of superficial tolerance among educators. There is a lack of concerted effort required to openly discuss issues surrounding race. The silence that prevails serves to strengthen racial barriers and perpetuate differences. It is not a transient phenomenon that will fade with time. Racism amongst educators has to be confronted and appropriate steps taken to abate the growing tensions. There exists a distinct need for schools to come together in realizing the goal of “affirming unity in diversity in education” (Goduka and Swadener, 1999). The department’s role in initiating desegregation is not an end in itself. It needs to extend the mechanical process of desegregation to providing additional support to schools, marginalized groups in particular, grappling in changed racial contexts. Role-players at all levels (local, provincial and national) have to make a concerted effort to work together in creating environments in schools where all educators are treated equally and with dignity.

Positive changes just don’t happen by itself, it has to be worked at and agonized over. Openly talking about racism creates a context where we can ask questions, learn and grow in exciting ways that have been denied to us (Kivel, 2002). Schools should be encouraged to create a climate, which nurtures each educator’s construction of a knowledgeable, confident, self-concept, racial identity, cultural identity and cultural voice. They should promote educator’s comfortable, empathetic interaction with

people from diverse backgrounds and encourage and develop critical thinking about bias.

Some perspectives emphasize the role of societal structures as having organizational abilities to shape racial behaviour. Critical interrogation of marginalized individuals views cannot be overestimated, because these perceptions should be woven into policy, programs and goals (Kitano, 1991). Management should direct and support educators defending themselves and others in the face of discrimination. Discussions on race and relationships should be incorporated into the school planning where teachers interactively deal with certain topics. The above suggestions do not guarantee eradication of racism but provides the step to dealing interactively with racial issues in the school. Prejudice and discrimination are conscious aspects, or at least can be brought to their consciousness, which can be altered and changed under appropriate conditions (Kitano, 1991).

Educators suggest more openness and more non-conformist way of thinking. People must be open to different cultures, different languages, different lifestyles and different races. This will result in acceptance of differences and will highlight a host of similarities to bind people together, irrespective of race.

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